



RIT creates E. Philip Saunders College of Business

Local entrepreneur's \$13 million gift will fund scholarships, enhancements

Enhancing its reputation as a national leader in undergraduate, graduate and executive business education, RIT on July 11 announced the formation of the E. Philip Saunders College of Business.

The new name honors E. Philip Saunders, founder of TravelCenters of America Inc. Saunders has committed \$13 million to the university's academic business programs – intended to finance scholarships, recruit and support faculty, improve facilities, and create an endowment for future initiatives.

"Phil Saunders has made a spectacular impact during his career as an entrepreneur," says Albert J. Simone, RIT president. "His \$13 million investment in RIT will produce a similar impact by helping us reshape traditional business education and by paving the way for a new generation of entrepreneurs and visionary business leaders. It is in that spirit that we dedicate the E. Philip Saunders College of Business in his honor."

"Educational opportunities are the key to advancing America's leadership in a global economy," says Saunders. "Under Dr. Simone's leadership, RIT consistently showcases its ability to create a range of business solutions by fostering innovation. In making this gift, it is my goal to further energize RIT's position as a center of excellence for entrepreneurship and innovation."

Saunders, a lifelong resident of Livingston County (south of Rochester), has designated a portion of his gift to benefit students from that region. Each year, one graduate from Livonia, N.Y., where Saunders attended high school, and another from Dansville, N.Y., where he currently lives, will be awarded \$20,000 annual scholarships to the Saunders College, renewable for four years.

"Dansville is a pretty (economically) depressed community," Saunders said at the news conference, "but there are a lot of smart kids there. Hopefully these young

scholars will come here, learn what they can and then become leaders in our state."

The announcement of the new Saunders College was made in front of the Max Lowenthal Building, which has housed the College of Business since 1982. RIT has invested in renovations to the facility (see accompanying story) underway this summer.

"Improvements to this building will significantly enhance the community spirit within our business school by providing a physically attractive ambience where students can study and congregate," says Wayne Morse, interim dean of the Saunders College. "Mr. Saunders' generous gift will amplify our ability to maintain a state-of-the-art environment that will attract and

Above: President Simone, E. Philip Saunders and Board Chairman Michael Morley '69 (left to right) donned caps sporting the business college's new name at the July news conference.

serve top-tier students and faculty.”

Tiffany Duncan, an MBA student in the Saunders College, believes Saunders’ generosity will have a profound impact on students. “We enjoy many outstanding faculty members today, and this gift will enable the college to bring in leaders from academia and the business world to share their knowledge and invaluable experience with us.”

President Simone noted that he hopes his friend will teach some classes and share his business acumen.

“Phil is a modest guy,” said Simone, “but his entrepreneurial success is the stuff of legends.”

Saunders expressed his hope that graduates of the college will stay in the area and become entrepreneurs, creating jobs that are so vital to the local economy.

“As an entrepreneur, you must be hard-working, driven, organized, have a desire to win and know how to regroup in the wake of failure,” says Saunders. “Our role is to create an atmosphere that enhances students’ creative instincts by providing the knowledge and poise that ultimately positions them for success.”

The timing of this gift ensures its



Saunders chats with MBA student Tiffany Duncan.

inclusion in the university’s \$300 million Campaign for RIT. Saunders’ \$13 million commitment reflects his appreciation for President Simone and his personal dedication to entrepreneurship and cutting-edge educational programs that meet real needs.

The E. Philip Saunders College of Business enrolls more than 1,200 undergraduate and graduate students. The college is spearheading an initiative to establish a university-wide Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and is also creating a new research center and academic major in consumer financial services.

Paul Stella

Extensive makeover underway this summer

The home of the new E. Philip Saunders College of Business will reopen this fall with a renovated main entrance and significant interior improvements.

According to James Yarrington, director of campus planning and design services, the outdoor facade of the Max Lowenthal

Building will have a new look and indoor renovations will reconfigure classrooms and computer labs to make better use of existing space. Plans also include a large lecture theater space on the main floor, new study areas, lounges and vending, and a conference room with adjacent breakout area and kitchenette.

“Aesthetically, we are trying to let the life and excitement within the building become noticeable to people walking by, complementing the

recent changes on the RIT landscape,” Yarrington says. “Basically, Lowenthal has good ‘bones,’ but always appeared to be hermetically sealed – sort of opaque and forbidding. Now its appearance will be airy, welcoming and inviting.

“We hope to leverage a relatively modest budget amount of \$3.1 million to create a major positive impact on this 30-year-old facility,” Yarrington says. “The design calls for more transparency across the east and north sides of the building, and a new two-story main entrance with a canopy.”

Jerry Curnutt, assistant dean for administration, says the improvements will place the Saunders College of Business in a more competitive position with other business schools with updated facilities.

“We feel the improvements to Lowenthal will significantly enhance the community spirit within our business school by providing a physically attractive ambience where students can study and congregate,” Curnutt says.

Marcia Morphy

Saunders’ many successes were driven by America’s transportation industry

Philip Saunders doesn’t believe in taking the road less traveled.

This forward-thinking entrepreneur became a driving force in the highway transportation industry by offering something no one else thought of: a one-stop rest area for truck drivers needing repair service and maintenance, refreshments, motel service and personal amenities. TravelCenters of America, which he founded in 1972 as Truckstops of America, became the genesis to his other companies, including Econo-Car International and Travel Ports as well as ventures such as Griffith Energy, Sugar Creek Corp. and Richardson Foods Corp.

During the past 10 years, he has served on the board of Excelus Inc. He previously served as chief executive of American Rock Salt Co. and remains chairman of Genesee Regional Bank and chairman of Griffith Energy. Saunders also has been very involved with the American Red Cross nationally, including the disaster relief blood drive campaign, Drive to Save Lives: Give Blood.

In 2005, RIT named Saunders the recipient of the Herbert W. VandenBrul Entrepreneurial Award, which goes annually to a successful individual who developed a business that improved the Rochester economy or whose innovative management skills have changed the course of an existing business.

Saunders has many previous connections to RIT. He also serves on the board of Venture Creations (formerly the RIT High Technology Incubator), the President’s Roundtable, and the College of Business Dean’s Search Committee.

Saunders, a life-long resident of Livingston County (N.Y.), is married and has four children.



Renovations now in progress will be completed in time for fall classes.