

NEWS

Assumption University gala celebrates \$50.6M raised in fundraising drive

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WORCESTER — Seven years and a historic \$50.6 million raised in funds later, Assumption University celebrated the success of its "Light the Way" capital campaign last week with a gala.

Started in 2015 with an initial goal of raising \$35 million for four fundraising priorities, which included constructing a new academic center, improvements to athletic facilities and increasing resources for the endowment and scholarships, the university managed to raise 45% over its original goal.

"Your generosity of time, talent and treasure significantly enhances the strength and quality of Assumption and our ability to serve students," said Board of Trustees Chair Fran Bedard at the gala. "This successful campaign has a transformational impact on the university and provides great momentum as we continue to enhance our university status."

The Light the Way campaign began with a "silent phase" in 2015 before launching publicly in 2017 with its original \$35 million goal and four fundraising priorities, a university statement said.

The campaign helped establish more than 44 scholarships and endowed funds to support students and faculty initiatives. The university also raised more than \$500,000 for the Coronavirus Financial Aid Relief Fund, which helped students and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, due to being able to raise nearly \$16 million more than planned, the university was able to "broaden its growth, both physical and financial," including the addition of the Tsotsis Family Academic Center and the Richard J. and Sophia Catrambone Health Sciences Center, the statement said.

The school also broke ground this spring on upgrading the softball field to a multi-sport artificial turf facility, which was made possible due to a matching grant provided by Assumption football alum Brian Kelly.

It was also able to launch partnerships with organizations, such as one with the Worcester Red Sox that provide students "exciting opportunities" for internships and community engagements, the statement said.

With these new additions to the university, the school was able to expand and organize into five schools including the Froelich School of Nursing, Grenon School of Business, D'Amour College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, School of Health Professions and School of Graduate Studies.

This helped pave the way for approval when the institution transitioned from a college to a university in June 2020.

"The sun is rising on a day bright with possibility at Assumption - one where we embrace our Catholic identity in educational terms and welcome all, no matter who they may be, who seek to pursue the truth in the company of friends," said Interim President Greg Weiner.

Bedard credited President Emeritus Francesco C. Cesareo with the campaign's success and for "meeting with alumni and friends of Assumption to share a compelling story of the value of an Assumption education – and why they should make a selfless sacrifice to support the institution."

During the gala, Bedard announced that the university would honor Cesareo by renaming South Hall to Cesareo Hall.

"This campaign has been transformative for Assumption," Cesareo said. "The true essence of this campaign and its priorities was the students – this was a student-centric campaign which was only fitting since my presidency was always student-focused."