Thomas A. Franko

There are a number of themes that encapsulate my memories of how my experiences and learning at Fairfield shaped my life since graduation. Using those themes, I will try to talk about my life.

Lifetime Learning

When we graduated, I was thinking about graduate school or law. The Viet Nam conflict, and my desire to start a life with Bethany, sent me in another direction. After a few weeks at Southern Connecticut State, I became a fifth grade teacher in rural Upstate New York, Copenhagen Central School. I soon moved up to be the junior high English Department (a department of one). I had to figure out curriculum, internal policy, a different life style, and really cold, long winters. I took graduate courses at SUNY Oswego and St. Lawrence University. I also learned, in no particular order, how to be a JV wrestling coach, director of student plays, scoutmaster, president of the faculty union, and chair of my parish fund raiser. After four years, I realized that all in all teaching was not my future, it was either teach or seek a new career in administration. I applied to and was accepted at Fordham University School of Law. This was a move to NYC and a realization after one year that I needed to earn money while going to Fordham full time. Beth was doing her best as a teacher in a Catholic school in East Harlem. I saw a flyer that Shearson Hayden Stone's legal department was looking for a law student to work on some mysterious area called Rule 144 sales. General Counsel Phil Hoblin- a 3 F man (Fordham Prep, College, Law) was willing to take a chance on a semi-2 F man (Fairfield and Fordham.)

I was soon learning about securities regulation, litigation, corporate governance, brokerage operations, even how to send internal wires- Figs-H-Ltr. I learned how to be second chair in arbitration, write an answer, and lug the boxes of documents to a hearing.

From Shearson to EF Hutton, the New York Stock Exchange, a start up broker as its general counsel, LF Rothschild, and finally Pershing Division of Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette. I learned more regulation, handling litigation, negotiating skills. At Pershing, I continued to learn as a manager, senior officer, member of risk management groups, speaker at seminars, and international law as we expanded to London and Japan.

I was asked to serve on Fairfield's Board of Trustees by Father Al Kelly, SJ and that was a great learning experience as well. The internal workings of a great university

and the opportunity to learn from highly accomplished fellow alumni-trustees and Jesuit members of the board was and is a highlight of my life.

Today, I continue to learn as an expert witness and consultant. In my current service on my Town's Planning Board, I continue to learn about land use law and public feelings about this highly charged area.

What we all learned at Fairfield —deep dive learning, reflection, and the connectedness of everything one learns— served me well and made that possible.

Strong Sense of Morals and Ethics

Learning to do and stand for what is right is a life time project. For me, it started with parents who demonstrated high standards and demanded it of the children, was inculcated at St John Nepomucene in Bridgeport, continued with the fathers at Notre Dame High, and was rigorously taught at Fairfield. Obviously, in the financial services industry there are many opportunities to consider and decide what is the right course. I am proud to report that on retirement I was cited for being a steady hand for right as Pershing's General Counsel.

Clear Thinking and Clear Writing

One thing stands clear from our days at Fairfield, we were made clear thinkers and clear writers. It may have been Walter Petry asking over and over what exactly did Jefferson say or on Joe Grassi asking to explain Plato, or parsing a poem in a literature class, or writing a paper in Music Appreciation, but it was always there. These habits of clear thinking, articulation, and clear writing continue and form a basis of success. I think of smart associates at Pershing asking me to edit their annual self-assessment, of drafting and redrafting answers in litigation and business reports, and being the go-to person whenever clear writing is needed.

Leadership

Habits of leadership by having articulated goals, expressing them well, and self assurance were all part of the experience at Fairfield. For me, it was participation in Student Government and membership in Phi Kappa Theta, Fairfield's experiment with fraternities. Whatever leadership means, it began at Fairfield and continued as President of a teachers' union, corporate general counsel and senior officer, chair of securities industry committees, trustee, planning board chair and Grand Knight in my local K of C.