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ALBERT L. HARVEY (1927-2010)

September 17, 2019

Mr. John Carr
2317 E. 11th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50316

Re: East High Class of 1956

Dear John:

I have met with Jeff White, the current president of both the East High Alumni Association and the East High Foundation. Historically, when I was president of both there were two separate boards, the Foundation made of the immediately preceding 8 Alumni presidents so that each could concentrate their efforts for one endeavor. A few years ago, they merged the boards. Jeff is really busy trying to balance both tasks so I want to help him.

I discussed with him that the return on investments for \$25,000 should allow for an annual \$1,500 scholarship into perpetuity since the Community Foundation is professionally managing the investments. He thought about that and agreed **and the Foundation Board has just announced that they have reduced the permanent requirement to \$25,000 from the previous \$30,000 requirement, so the Class of 1956 scholarship is now permanent.** That will make their marketing for new donors easier. A \$1,500 scholarship will be issued annually in our name.

This year the Foundation had \$187,000 available to grant scholarships, but did not have enough students applying for them. We discussed the alternative strategies to attract more participation. East does have a graduation percentage problem today. I think that they are currently way below 80%, and even that is not acceptable.

We also discussed the diminished attendance at their Alumni annual meetings. The Alumni meetings are currently held in the Community Choice Convention Center (formerly Veterans Auditorium in our day. That building has been completely renovated making three floors out of what was the main auditorium in our day.) [an aside: when I was still a student at East, I worked for the architectural firm that designed Vets. One of my jobs was to ascend to the rafters and climb the catwalk to the peak of the roof to count the rivets in the trusses. The catwalk floor is made up of 3/8" rods with 1/2" spaces between rods. I panicked when realized that I was standing looking straight down 87' to the floor. I held on with both hands and counted with my nose. I can see why they built two more floors in between.]

It does not have the same feel as the gymnasium we all played in at East. Nor do they have a well-known Alumni, or someone that may not be so well known, but has an extrovert personality with a taste for drama leading the East High fight song to put some life into the song that created the culture for the event. I recommended that they invite Kent Henning, now the President of Grand View University as the speaker, (they now have two colleges). Kent is the first business person serving as its president and he has more than doubled its size, both the physical size of the campus with a bridge over East 14th street, and the size of the student body. I suggested that they have him talk about the relationship of East High to Grandview, and what our scholarships mean to our students. Many of whom could not attend college without them.

In other words, change the focus and flavor of the Annual meeting so people can better understand how they really can make a difference for East High. Pep up their meetings and create some new traditions. Sack lunch dinners prepared by the lunch room staff are a thing of the past, but it did have the flavor of the East High we remembered. When I was president, we had 1,500 in attendance and that was only 10% of the dues paying members of the Association. When they moved, they killed the culture. They need to create a new culture by emphasizing the importance of Alumni for the preservation of our High School.

Have students who have completed their first year of college make a short presentation on what their scholarship meant to them. The three students that have received our scholarship have each told me that it made a difference of where they were able to go (Drake vs Des Moines Community College for one). Another told me that if the Alumni felt so strongly about helping her, she was going to make us proud of her. That is a pretty powerful message. That is what gave me the idea of having them speak to the Alumni. I thought she should be one making that statement to those attending the annual meeting.

My point being. Our class is really making a difference for the students we are honoring. I realize that I am far off of the map for many in our class who have a more traditional view when I say this, but for me, our only form of immortality that we know for sure really does exist is the degree to which the world is a better place because we as an individual have been here. This is just one small way for us to make that happen.

Why I am so wound up, I am just completing my second book and it is on that very subject, and I just sent it to the publisher today. My first book is titled *Why Was I Born?* (It is in its fourth edition). The second book is entitled *Fully Human / Fully Alive* and it should be out next month. But it does explain why I do what I do.

We, as a class we really are making a real difference in these students lives. And our scholarship is now perpetual.

Sincerely



Lyle L. Simpson