

Paul Tom influence is decades deep

The perspective from one graduate

By Oonagh Holmes ('93)

Within weeks of graduating with a BBA, Martin Suter ('88) found himself on a plane to Beijing and, with over two million miles flown, and having lived and worked around the world, he has barely slowed down in the 20 years since. Armed with his Acadia business degree, an interest in travel, and an entrepreneurial spirit, the original founder of Cajun's has become an expert in the area of intellectual property licensing. Over the years, Martin has negotiated and signed deals with companies as diverse as Dow Chemical, Fujitsu, Microsoft, Motorola and Netscape, to name but a few.

"Martin is arguably the preeminent expert on licensing intellectual property (IP) as a business development strategy," attests Allen Kupetz, Executive in Residence at Crummer Graduate School of Business. "He has repeatedly signed major IP licensing agreements on behalf of multiple employers and is also an accomplished public speaker and a talented writer."

Currently on his sixth start-up, with a couple of stops at big companies thrown in for good measure, Suter is starting to think about what it means to give back. A frequent speaker at Florida business schools, where he lives with his family, Debbie (Tracey) ('88), and his two sons, Roark (16) and Riley (14), Martin is

trying to bridge the gap between what is found in textbooks, and the real world.

"Technology licensing lies at the heart of industries like high tech and biotech. Companies like Microsoft, Qualcomm and others are essentially licensing companies, and I find it fascinating to think that the entire PC industry traces its origins back to a licensing deal between IBM and Microsoft. Textbooks just don't cover this stuff."

"I've been extremely fortunate to have been directly involved with key players at major inflection points in the evolution of high tech," said Suter. "To have sat across the table from guys like Mark Andreessen and Jim Barksdale (founder and CEO of Netscape) when the Internet was nascent, to have been on stage with Scott McNeely in front of 10,000 people or accepted an award from Bill Gates, my years since Acadia have exceeded my wildest dreams."

"When I was a student at Acadia, the professor who had the greatest impact on me was Paul Tom. He was very successful in business at both IBM and Touche Ross, yet he chose to teach at Acadia and to live in Wolfville, where he established himself as one of the pioneers of Information Systems Theory, writing two textbooks. He was an inspiration to me, and who knows, I may follow in his footsteps back in Wolfville someday too!"



Photo submitted

By Myles McNutt

Debating from Past to Present at Acadia

In March 2008, Acadia students were in a heated battle against universities from across the country in a test of will and determination. They were, however, not part of Acadia's hugely successful CIS finalist basketball team; as opposed to feats of athleticism, their competition is a challenge to their wit, their argumentation, and their ability to think on their feet. They were members of the Paul Tom Debating Society, and they were competing at the national championships of the Canadian Undergraduate Society for Intercollegiate Debate (CUSID) at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Like many of Acadia's societies, being a debater on campus cannot be taken out of the context of the university's history. Flip through the archives of the Athenaeum or the Acadia Yearbook and you'll find articles about debating on campus stretching back nearly a century. This year's president, Amy Kipping, is working to make sure that the society is aware of the debating legacy.

"While representing this institution on the national stage is a huge honour, there is greater honour found in continuing on the legacy of the debaters who came before us, and who started this wonderful tradition," says Ms. Kipping.

That tradition, as Ms. Kipping is finding out, is full of fantastic achievements and remarkable continuity. In 1928, debaters at Acadia were arguing the validity of the Bolshevik economic system and competing at the national level; debating today is remarkably similar, although the U.S.S.R. is perhaps no longer a topic of choice in particular.