

## **PROFILE ON DAVID MAY**

David May, Associate Vice President for Business Affairs at UNH, is retiring after 24 years of service to the school. His has been a huge job, with oversight of dining facilities, housing, campus recreation, the MUB, the Whittemore Center, the bookstore, parking, transportation, printing and mailing services, and other enterprises.

### **Food service**

David studied Hotel Administration at UNH. After graduating he worked for a company called SAGA that provided contracted food service for colleges and universities. His first post was at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. He met Lisa Carrick one Saturday night at a dance club and not too long after they were married in the Wesleyan chapel. Lisa is a food service designer so, even after 41 years, they do not lack for topics of conversation.

After Wesleyan, SAGA, later acquired by the Marriott Corporation, sent David to the University of South Carolina in Columbia. He met Jehan Sadat, Anwar Sadat's wife, and George and Barbara Bush at a catered event there and coordinated a three-day Caribbean Leaders conference attended by President Reagan that featured a pig roast for 600. He worked later at Emory University, Trinity College, and Merrimack College and, after a final position in health care services with Marriott, he was hired by UNH as Director of Dining Services.

### **Buffalo**

David was raised in Tonawanda outside of Buffalo, New York. He still roots for the Buffalo Bills, Buffalo Sabres, and Buffalo Bisons (redundant as that might be), a AAA baseball team, but he has always been a Yankees fan (Nobody's perfect).

Growing up, there was a lot of grilling in the summertime. David's mother loved to cook and he remembers fondly her German potato salad (but not so fondly her liver and onions). His grandmother was an exceptional cook. The family went to her place every Sunday for dinner. "She was secretive about her recipes. If you asked what was in a dish she would give you most of it but always leave out a key ingredient, at least that's what my mom said."

### **The restaurant business**

David worked in restaurants throughout high school and college. At one time he could crack four eggs at the same time (in two hands) without getting any shells in the bowl. He honed his broiler skills running the kitchen at the Isaac Dow House, which was located in Newington off Woodbury Road in the historic yellow house near the turnpike. He would have 50 steaks going on the broilers at the same time along with prime rib in the oven, and seafood, scallops, and French onion soup. "It was a great restaurant. That's the kind of

place I wanted to open.” But he loved the campus setting and ended up in college food service instead.

David notes how challenging the restaurant business is and laments the unexpected problems posed by the pandemic. “These places are small, most are independent, they have big costs before they even open their doors, and they don’t own the real estate. This past year their seating was cut dramatically, they lost their indoor bar, and they had to let many on their staff go. Some of the stories are heartbreaking. But those who got creative will survive.” He hopes that restaurants in the Seacoast region “have a *wicked good* summer” (This from a New York Yankees fan).

### **UNH challenges with pandemic**

UNH experienced similar hurdles but on a much larger scale. David said “UNH performed well during the pandemic. We did the testing, required masks, changed how we set up our operations, and created a hybrid model for education.

“We met bi-monthly with the Durham Landlords Association and worked closely with the Town, including the Town Administrator and the Fire and Police Departments. Sometimes things got complicated but we got together and solved the problems. It is a true partnership.”

### **Food service at UNH**

So how is the food at UNH? “It’s top notch. We have really good culinarians [i.e., chefs] and a hard working crew. They are very customer service oriented.”

In successful programs, like at UNH, “The food is cooked to order right in front of the students. You see the pizza coming out of the oven. You select the vegetables for your stir fry and watch them prepare it. You see your burger getting cooked on the char grill. It’s fresh. It’s hot. You have lots of choices. It’s really a show.”

He adds that the quality of the food is a big driver for students in selecting schools, along with housing, safety, recreation and, of course, academics. During David’s tenure, UNH has won over 30 awards for its food service program from the National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS).

### **The future of UNH**

What is the future of the university especially with the challenge of on-line learning? “This institution will be here forever.” David believes in the value of the full college experience. “Four years in your bedroom at home? I don’t know how that prepares you for the workplace. A residential campus in a beautiful community can give you a well-rounded education and a grounding in life. What better way to learn how to deal with people than to live in a residence hall or an apartment? It is the whole experience that is important, not just going to class, but also pursuing your passion with a sport or in a student organization.”

## **Retirement**

David's last day at UNH will be Friday, June 25. Dr. Stacy Hall and Bill McNamara will be taking on his responsibilities. "They will do a great job. I am really happy to see them get promoted and have this opportunity."

He has lots of gardening to do and projects around the house. He plans to enjoy Lake Winnepesaukee and maybe travel to Hawaii, Scotland, and back to Italy. But mostly he looks forward to spending time with his four grandchildren. "They light up my life."

David has ideas for his next venture, but it won't be a grind. He won't miss the late night phone calls informing him of a major leak in a residence hall. But he will miss the day-to-day interaction with the staff and colleagues around campus.

So what kind of food does David like? Italian and Southeast Asian cuisine, in particular, "But nothing is better than a thick one-inch New York sirloin medium rare with a baked potato and sour cream and a cold beer. Or maybe a glass of wine – a good smooth red."