

RECONNECTING AND SHARING THE MESSAGE:

It's Up to Us

Mike Conaton's passion for serving others starts with his personal mission: "Be a person for others, who doesn't give in to himself."

As a long time donor and board member of Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology (MTSM), Mike's guiding principle is an inspiration to those who know him.

"Mike is just an amazing human being," said Dr. Lori Rassati, Vice President of Development & Relations at MTSM. "He's a great example of what it means to be a true servant leader."

Mike, a Marine veteran who attended Xavier University on a football scholarship, graduated in 1955 with a bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy. He joined the Midland Company in 1961, was president from 1988 to 1998 and vice chairman for four years after that.

Mike is motivated by his Faith and his Jesuit upbringing. One of his concerns right now is reconnecting Catholics back to the Church and sharing the mission of MTSM.

"The Seminary is an integral part of the overarching Catholic community."

"The virus has created many challenges for priests and churches, but it's also allowed folks to enhance their Faith," said Mike. "I can go to Mass every morning on the television and that's one way to stay connected. But it's incumbent upon us as a community to reach out and be there for each other."

One of the reasons Mike supports MTSM is because he believes in the mission of forming men and women to faithfully follow Christ through vocations. Having been involved with financial and administrative committees at MTSM and as a board member, Mike not only understands the importance of preparing seminarians to become future priests, but is keenly aware of the need to promote the Seminary in order to engage current and future supporters. That led to the establishment of the Conaton Vocations

and Student Recruitment Endowment in 2009. This endowment supports recruitment and marketing initiatives. "It's essential for people to know what the Seminary does and why it's so important – to really market it – MTSM has a great message and we're trying to share that," said Mike. "The Seminary is an integral part of the overarching Catholic community; without our priests, we lose that."

Mike has spent a majority of his life serving the Catholic community, providing advice and guidance to corporate and charitable boards throughout his career and into retirement. He was Xavier University's board chairman from 1985 to 2004 and served as the University's interim president in 1990-91. Mike continues to serve on XU's board of trustees and St. Vincent de Paul's advisory board of directors. Previously, he served on the boards for the Catholic Community Foundation and St. Xavier High School, as well as the board of directors of Key Bank, Society National Bank, Ameritrust Company and the Metropolitan Club, among many others.

As a testament to his community involvement and commitments, Mike has received several accolades. In 2018, he received the Papal Honor of Order of Saint Gregory the Great, the highest honor for a layperson. This honor was bestowed in recognition of Mike's service and support to the Church and community. He was also honored for his community involvement by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul-Cincinnati at their 2017 "Celebration of Service" dinner. XU opened The Conaton Learning Center in 2009, and he was awarded both an honorary doctorate and the Paul L. O'Connor Leadership Award for his contributions to the University. Mike continues to be active in the Catholic community and at Our Lord Christ the King parish where he and his wife, Nancy, are members.

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