



JOE LOPARDO '11

A NATURAL ENTREPRENEUR

Jumpstarts Sigma Pi Tradition

Joe Lopardo '11 has an insight and a passion for life beyond his years. He started his first business during his junior year at Monmouth. Equipped with a real estate license at 19, he recognized a need connecting home rental properties with students.

“I’ve always been involved in creating something,” Lopardo said, adding that he likes motivating others and pushing the boundaries of success for both himself and others.

Since his days at Monmouth, he has started several small companies like urJelly, an online advertising site that tailors products, businesses, places and pictures based on user interests, and Plush Engagements, a wedding service company showcasing the talents and services of top quality wedding specialists to prospective brides and grooms.

Lopardo now works for Contently, a small technology company in New York, whose mission is to empower talented journalists and creative storytellers to strike out on their own as traditional publishing outlets are disrupted by digital technologies.

In his spare time, Lopardo helps budding entrepreneurs start up their own businesses. One of his recent stints was with Lean Startup Machine, based on ideas from Eric Ries’ book *The Lean Startup*. Lopardo said he hopes to eventually own a large company driven by a philosophy of serving a greater social good.

Despite his focus on building businesses, Lopardo readily cites Associate Dean Michael Thomas, a poet and Fellow of the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, as one of his most influential professors as a student. “During my senior year I was forced to take an elective, so I enrolled in a poetry class thinking it would just be another class,” Lopardo said.

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Professor Thomas [who is also the director of the Visiting Writers series] and the work he shared became an absolute inspiration to me over the course of that semester.”

“He opened my mind up to a whole new way of thought—full of selflessness, generosity, and understanding. He made a huge impact on my life both in and out of the classroom as I still use and teach the lessons he shared with me several years ago. I stay in touch with him and am honored to call him a friend.”

The mutual respect is evident. “Of the many students I have taught over the past 17 years at Monmouth, Joe Lopardo is one of those students I will never forget,” said Thomas. “His sense of wonder and his generous spirit inspired me to teach freely and passionately during that spring semester of 2011. He helped me to understand the real rewards of teaching a poetry class to a range of students from all majors. I have taught that same Perspectives course every semester for four years. His section was unique and truly memorable, but it was Joe who brought out the spontaneity and joy in learning for others.”

Lopardo is good at taking experiences and using them as a learning tool. When he decided to make it his mission to organize a reunion of his Sigma Pi fraternity brothers, his entrepreneurial spirit helped make the event a huge success.

“During my four years as an undergraduate at Monmouth I had the hunger to become a part of something bigger than myself and to leave a lasting impact on the University and some of the students who have the opportunity to walk the beautiful halls of Wilson,” Lopardo said.

Lopardo said he found his calling when he joined the Sigma Pi fraternity at Monmouth. “This group of men became not just my fraternity brothers but my family,” Lopardo said. “The lifelong friendships and bonds that we created are unmatched in our eyes.”



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He introduced a new tradition for Sigma Pi by meeting on February 28 as part of a yearly Founders Day celebration. The result was a reunion of more than 50 Sigma Pi brothers ranging from age 18 to 70.

“When our Founders Day came around this year I wanted to make sure to do something special. In the past, it had been a forgotten tradition. Undergrads knew of the day, but nothing was ever planned,” Lopardo said.



Lopardo decided to mark the day and turn it into a celebration of Monmouth Sigma Pi members, both past and present. “With brothers ranging from undergrads 18 years of age to alumni 65 and older, we brought together all generations for one amazing event,” Lopardo said.

He said he hopes to double the number for next year. “There were a lot of tears, happiness and rekindled relationships.”

This spirit of camaraderie and leadership pervades the 117-year-old Sigma Pi fraternity whose mission is “to advance man’s quest for excellence.”

Two members of the Delta-Beta chapter at Monmouth University, Anthony Horan (chapter president) and Andrew Mucci (recruitment chairman), were recipients of two scholarships from the Sigma Pi Educational Foundation thanks to fellow Sigma Pi brother and Monmouth University Trustee, David Reale '96 who sponsored both the Red Clover Award and the Dr. Joseph B. Mosca Scholarships.

The Red Clover Award, established in 2009, awards \$500 to recognize the contributions made by newer fraternity members toward the ongoing success of the chapter. The annual scholarship is open to any initiate from the prior academic year who is a full-time, matriculating student at the time of application.

The Dr. Joseph B. Mosca Scholarship, established in 2013, was created to honor Dr. Joseph B. Mosca and his contributions to the chapter. Dr. Mosca is associate professor in the Leon Hess Business School’s Department of Management and Marketing. The annual \$500 scholarship is open to all active, undergraduate members of the Delta-Beta Chapter in good standing with at least one full semester remaining as a full-time student at the time of application. [MU](#)

CENTER PHOTO, FROM LEFT: ANDY WILDER '73, ANDY SMITH, FRANK RIZZUTO '92, BILL STACK '70, BARRY REICH '70, AND JOHN MCCOURT