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Alumni Snapshot

Liberty University

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Alumni Snapshot

February 01, 2009

NAME: Alan Rowe was Liberty University's first-ever Business graduate in 1979. Rowe was a featured speaker on Business Executives Day during Alumni Weekend in October and met with Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. (right).

GRADUATING CLASS: 1979

RESIDENCE: Belle Isle, Fla.

FAMILY: Wife of 22 years Machele, from Memphis; sons Taylor (17) and Kendall (13); daughter Monica, (11)

OCCUPATION: President and CEO of First Commercial Bank of Florida

HOBBIES: Football, basketball, boating and skiing

AFFILIATIONS: Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau of Central Florida, Kiwanis Club of South Orlando, Rotary Club of Orlando, Orlando Union Rescue Mission Foundation, The Beacon Foundation, United Way Division Chairman, YMCA Board of Directors, The Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation Board of Trustees, First Presbyterian Church of Orlando

EDUCATION: M.B.A., University of Memphis (1981); B.S. in Business, Liberty University (1979); A.A. in Business, Brevard Community College; American Institute of Banking Certificate; Professional Master of Banking diploma, LSU School of Banking

Why did you choose to attend Liberty University?

My childhood church, First Baptist Church of Merritt Island, Fla., was such a big part of my life growing up on Florida's Space Coast. They had a great youth and music ministry where I met many dear friends that I have to this day. I played trombone for the church's brass ensemble, and one year a singing group from Liberty came to our church, and I went to hear them. Several of us were very impressed with the young people and the story of a pioneering Christian college up in Virginia. I'm a fourth-generation Floridian who had literally never seen snow, and the idea of living somewhere with a change of seasons was intriguing. So, after checking out the school, several of us enrolled and went up there in 1977. I originally planned to walk on for the football team at Liberty because I had played for the state championship team at Merritt Island High School, but couldn't afford to give up the earnings from my summer job to go up early for summer training. I got assigned to the athletic dorms on Treasure Island anyway and had a blast meeting great kids from all over the country.

What is your fondest memory of liberty?

It was a great honor to be the first-ever Business graduate from Liberty in 1979. Because I had attended Brevard Community College in Florida and already received my Associate of Arts degree in Business, I transferred in as a junior. I also have memories of many great friends I met from all over the country at Liberty. We had a blast down on Treasure Island playing flag football all the time and pulling pranks on one another in the dorm. One particularly hilarious night was when some of my Florida friends, whom I had taught how to water-ski growing up, took me snow skiing for my first time at Wintergreen [Resort]. While I usually pick up sports pretty quickly, I was a one-man wrecking ball on the slopes and kept trying to snow ski like you're supposed to water-ski — which doesn't work! They were having so much fun watching me crash and burn all night that they didn't even ski off and leave me, they just kept watching and laughing so hard they were crying.

How did Liberty prepare you for your life after graduation?

In addition to receiving a great academic education, the real differentiator was the distinctively Christian values that you would rarely find at a secular institution. We were taught how important having integrity in your business dealings is, and we were taught strong leadership skills and how to effectively build teams and work with others.

What would people be surprised to know about you?

Even though I'm in a serious and somewhat stodgy industry (banking), I've been told I have a great sense of humor. The banking business, especially in Florida, is brutal right now, but we still try to have some fun as best we can in our workplace. I haven't admitted this to many people, but one of my favorite all-time TV shows is *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

