



YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

ALUMINARY

Bob Fockler '81, *Committee to Nominate Alumni Trustees Chair*

After three years of “daunting and fulfilling work” on the Committee to Nominate Alumni Trustees, current chair Bob Fockler '81 says, “The quality of alumni that we consider for service on the board is incredible and just awe-inspiring. It makes you feel really great about Princeton.”

Bob has been feeling great about Princeton since arriving on campus in 1977 from Memphis, Tennessee. A history major with a love for music, he played in the prestigious jazz and wind ensembles, as well as in the band, serving as president his senior year. “I loved traveling with the band, going to football games in the fall. You can’t be in the band without having a unique, warm feeling for Princeton. It’s easier to bleed orange and black when you’re wearing orange and black.”

And when you marry a Princeton Tiger.

“We were always involved with Princeton one way or another,” Bob says of himself and his wife, Cristina “Tina” Seeley Fockler '81, whom he dated all four years at Princeton. Before he began volunteering, the pair mostly attended their major Reunions. Eventually their trips became more frequent as they accompanied her father, Ted Seeley '49, to campus to join the Old Guard. (Tina’s grandfather, two uncles and brother also attended Princeton.) Last year, Bob and Tina added P-rade marshal to their resumes, but unfortunately their stint was cut short due to lightning strikes in the area. They’ve signed up again this year.

While Bob built a very successful career as a commercial and investment banker following graduation, he says that his work became less fulfilling over time. “After I made a certain amount of money, it didn’t mean as much to me. I really wanted to do something more important for the community.” In 2006, he took a large pay cut to become president of the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis where he had served on the board and was attracted to the organization’s mission. The foundation manages about 1,000 charitable funds with assets of \$469 million. He’s been in that role



Photo by Larry Kuzniewski

now for 13 years, having grown the foundation to be the largest grant maker in Tennessee and one of the largest in the south, giving away \$178 million last year.

His desire to do more also spilled over to his volunteer efforts for Princeton. Already a longtime Alumni

Schools Committee volunteer and active in his regional association, Bob became involved with the Princeton Prize in Race Relations in 2007, after he was contacted by his friend Buck Brown '85, who was eager to bring the program to Memphis. “I think we’ve made a real difference, both with the Princeton Prize nationally but also here in Memphis with getting the Princeton Prize known, and that is particularly important in a place like Memphis

where issues of race are always so seemingly close to the surface.”

As the trustee election draws near — “everyone, please vote!” — Bob is grateful to be a part of such an important process and excited to be back on campus soon. Most important of all, he’s hoping for blue skies for this year’s P-rade!



circa 1979