



# The CommonWealth

**A UMass Alumni/Business Affairs Publication of the Isenberg School of Management  
Vol. 15, No. 1/Winter 2002**

## **Alumni in Good Company**

*Isenberg School Alumnus Helps Fellow UMass Graduates Create Dynamic Alumni Network*

Two years ago, the Boston Globe, in its October 7th edition, lavished unprecedented praise upon UMass—exuding one kind word after another over the university’s improved public image, its academic ratings, its fund-raising campaign, and its energetic president, William Bulger. Last November, the university achieved another press milestone—this time from the influential Boston Business Journal. The Journal’s November 7th issue featured a front-page article devoted to a once far-fetched topic—big time networking among UMass alumni. Hence, the eye-popping tale—A UMass Revival: Entrepreneur’s Effort Yields Gathering of Alumni and First-Class Business People, which chronicled the successful grass-roots efforts of UMass alumnus Glenn Mangurian ’71 ’73 MBA to compile and jump start a network of UMass alumni in Greater Boston’s high-technology industries.



To date, Mangurian’s two-year initiative has beamed up 400+ alumni, including 220 active participants, many of whom attend Mangurian-initiated New Economy Breakfasts held three times a year at the DoubleTree Hotel in Waltham. “The breakfasts have been drawing forty to sixty alumni and a handful of students from the Isenberg School,” notes Mangurian. “Each event begins with a half hour of

schmoozing and networking. After that, I showcase an aspect of the University with an invited guest from the faculty or administration. Then, we devote the last 30 minutes to a featured alumnus or panel of alumnis around a topic of relevance to the group." The latter, observes Mangurian, have all been high-profile personalities, including Monster.com's CEO, Jeff Taylor '01; CMGI's CEO, David Andonian '79; and Forrester Research's late president, William Bluestein '78, '89 Ph.D. The most recent breakfast, in October, featured a panel of four UMass alumni with key posts at Boston area media and public relations firms. The next breakfast, scheduled for February, will depart from the alumni-speaker model, reserving the floor for UMass President William Bulger.

"The excitement at the breakfasts is fantastic," remarks Isenberg School alumna Beth Gamel '78 MS, executive vice president of Pillar Financial Advisors in Waltham. "The moment you walk into the room, you realize that you're sharing the same social and physical space with movers and shakers from the most dynamic sectors of the Massachusetts economy. That includes the speakers themselves, who are extremely high-level figures. Everybody in the room, of course, is a UMass graduate and proud of it. For all of us, there's an unmistakable sense of connection and community."



That sense of collective empowerment wouldn't have been possible without Mangurian. Four years ago, the Isenberg School alumnus left CSC Index (the Cambridge consultancy that invented and introduced the world to reengineering) after excelling for twenty-one years there as a Senior Vice President and consultant to Fortune 500 firms. "I was frequently on the road serving clients all over the world, none of whom were in New England. I wanted to spend more time with my wife and kids, who were in school (His daughter, Laura, is currently a freshman at UMass). Having declared victory on one career, I wanted to drive to my clients and target my consulting to New England-based companies. In 1999, Mangurian and another former CSC Index consultant, Karen Temkin, set up shop in his Hingham home, calling their new consulting partnership FrontierWorks (<http://www.frontierworks.com>).

"Transitioning from a large consulting firm with its vast support systems and infrastructure to a start-up in my basement was surprisingly refreshing. I loved the entrepreneurial challenge. I became the CEO, head of the mail room and receptionist overnight."

Mangurian sees his firm's mission as equipping its business clientele with the strategic and tactical tools to capitalize on emerging digital opportunities.

"Established companies are often handicapped in their ability to recognize and execute on technology-driven business opportunities. Emerging companies have a different set of issues—how to operate in today's dynamic markets. We want to be the 'guides' to regional business leaders as they navigate through the 'whitewater' of today's digital business challenges.

"We entered the marketplace with forty years of consulting experience, but unfortunately none of it was with Massachusetts clients," Mangurian recalls.

To get a handle on his new marketplace, the SOM alumnus began to assemble his own data base of potential clients.

"Every day, I'd read through business publications; if I found a company that was unfamiliar, I'd go on the web, read up on the firm, and investigate the backgrounds of its leaders." While building his data base one by one (today the number exceeds 3,000), Mangurian noticed a curious phenomenon: "Early on, I noticed a surprising number of UMass graduates among my pool of executives. I decided to make a note in my contact list whenever I discovered a UMass alumnus." In April of 2000, Mangurian, a member of the Isenberg School's Business Advisory Council, brought a list of 23 unfamiliar UMass names to a lunch date with Tom O'Brien. "To my surprise, Tom, who is a great networker, didn't know anybody on the list," recalls Mangurian. "Suspecting that I had stumbled onto an untapped asset, I expanded my own search to include CFOs and other senior executives." With the UMass data base at around fifty, Mangurian e-mailed the group, inviting them to meet for a preliminary breakfast—paid for by him—in June at the Marriott Hotel in Newton. To Mangurian's astonishment, twenty-five enthusiastic, influential UMass alumni showed up. "There were executives from high-technology and professional services firms, as well as lawyers and accountants. They all agreed how good the private schools were at networking and how crucial it was for UMass alumni to improve their own lot in that sphere."



Encouraged by the June turnout, Mangurian redoubled his data base mining in preparation for the group's first official breakfast, at the DoubleTree Hotel in October 2000. "By the time I sent out e-mail invitations, the database had grown to one-hundred. The breakfasts, I thought, needed a focus beyond the networking. What better solution than high-profile alumni speakers exploring cutting-edge issues? When I asked fellow graduate and friend Beth Gamel whether either David Andonian or Bill Bluestein would make a strong first choice, her response was decisive: Have them both; you'll get fifty people minimum! Beth was on target. Our September breakfast drew sixty-five."



In planning for the September breakfast, Mangurian realized that he had created a phenomenon whose demands exceeded his own personal resources. For support, he returned to Tom O'Brien, who offered to reserve the hotel space, collect fees from the attending alumni, and handle other administrative details. "In asking Tom for help, I trusted his professionalism. When SOM development director James Mallet asked me if he could attend the September event, I told him that I wanted the alumni to establish ownership over the network and the breakfasts first. (Mallet has attended every meeting since.) That's one of the strengths of this group—the alumni really own it." Another distinguishing characteristic is its composition. It's a veritable Who's Who of influential UMass alumni in the Bay State's cutting edge industries.

Early on, Mangurian learned from UMass officials that the university does little to segment its alumni mailings beyond class year, majors, and geographical region. His own list then is an unprecedented compilation of what he deems as “perhaps the most powerful, senior alumni group in the university system.” And Mangurian has segmented that group further into 12+ employer subgroups in such business areas as biotech/medical, e-commerce, accounting, financial services/investments, interactive marketing, management consulting, and information research. “Half of the alumni graduated from the Isenberg School; the other half from the rest of the university. It’s a true pan-university group,” exults Mangurian. And it’s a group that Mangurian cobbled together almost entirely via e-mail.

Just after the February 2001 breakfast, featuring Jeff Taylor, Mangurian decided to tighten up his list, which had swollen to four hundred. “That’s when I decided to see who was really interested by e-mailing everyone in the group and asking them to opt in through an e-mail response.” To Mangurian’s delight, 220 chose to stay connected.

That set the stage for the June 2001 breakfast, featuring a panel of venture capitalists. It was an event that Mangurian was not to attend. Over Memorial Day of 2001, Mangurian ruptured a disc in his back. After a series of events, he notes, he was left paralyzed from the waist down.

With the help of his family, friends and his professional network, Mangurian continues to view his glass as half full, and then some. “I don’t focus on all the things I can no longer do. Rather, my energies go toward leveraging my assets and inventing the next phase of my life.”



Mangurian sees parallels between his personal crisis and overcoming obstacles in business. “Our biggest challenges often come out of left field. Many of today’s high-tech business were flying high 18 months ago. Today, younger, first-time entrepreneurs have learned some hard lessons. Even more seasoned leaders are struggling with shrinking markets, impatient investors and dwindling cash. I believe I’ve got some hard-earned personal experiences to offer business leaders as they struggle with their challenges and the issues of growth.”

Mangurian was utterly in character then when, assisted by his wife, Gail, he rolled out past forty-odd UMass alumni to preside over the October breakfast. “Glenn’s energy and entrepreneurial spirit have a great deal in common with participants at the breakfasts and UMass graduates in general,” insists John Vaillancourt ’82, an Isenberg School accounting graduate and breakfast stalwart who is chief financial officer with Fidelity’s Insurance.com. “UMass alumni are scrappers and extremely hard workers. They take nothing for granted. They are unpretentious results-oriented pragmatists from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. One of the objectives of our new economy group is to build some brand equity for them by getting the word out about these winning qualities. A second is to identify and leverage opportunities through our own influence and networks. I think Glenn’s work is typical of the 80/20 rule—where, in this case, a small, involved entrepreneurial group leverages its impact way beyond its numbers. We own this thing and we want to keep it that way. But we want the University administration as a partner.

"There are certain kinds of initiatives within the alumni ranks that are best undertaken by the alumni themselves," observes UMass journalism professor Ralph Whitehead. "It's no accident that highly entrepreneurial alumni would take it upon themselves to create their own network of influence and affiliation. At the same time, it's important for the university to nurture those efforts."

Isenberg School operations management professor Alan Robinson concurs. "For the new economy group and similar undertakings, the university's optimal role is as an enabler rather than a director," observes Robinson, who is coauthor of *Corporate Creativity: How Innovation and Improvement Actually Happen* (Berrett-Koehler).

"The university should be supportive rather than controlling of the group's activities. That's because its self-organizing network structure and the intrinsic motivation of its diverse participants naturally lend themselves to the generation and pursuit of richer ideas and opportunities. That self-organizing principle is how many a start-up forms. UMass has much to learn and gain by nurturing the new economy group and others like it."

Mangurian couldn't agree more. "It's extremely likely that other successful alumni will emerge from the shadows as they discover the power and pride of the emerging UMass network," he predicts. "Without reservation, it's a win-win opportunity both for those alumni and their public university."

For further information about the New Economy Breakfasts, contact [gmangurian@frontierworks.com](mailto:gmangurian@frontierworks.com).

<b>High Profile UMass Alumni</b> Some formidable movers and shakers on Glenn Mangurian's alumni list:		
<b>Paul Milbury '74</b> , CFO, Avid Technology, Tewksbury	<b>David Andonian '79</b> , President, CMGI, Andover	<b>Carolyn Macedo '88</b> , Senior vice President, Silicon Valley Bank, Newton
<b>Gordon Hoffstien '74</b> , CEO, BeFree, Marlborough	<b>Jeff Taylor '01</b> , CEO, Monster.com, Maynard	<b>Marian Heard '76</b> , CEO, United Way of Boston
<b>Robert Mahoney '70</b> , Vice Chairman, Citizen's Financial Group, Boston	<b>John Brooks III '72 '73 MBA</b> , Founding Partner, Prism Venture Partners, Westwood	<b>Elaine Guiney '66</b> , Massachusetts Director, US Small Business Administration, Boston
<b>Brian Delaney '74</b> , President, Clarke & Co., Boston		