

“FIVE QUESTIONS WITH MIKE ROBERTSON ’65”

1. What was your most significant athletic moment at Saint Thomas Academy?

This one is easy. Our 1964 STMA football team beating Bishop Cretin 19-13. That was my senior year. I’ll never forget that Friday night, October 23, 1964, at O’Shaughnessy Stadium. It was very special, as we had not beaten Cretin in nine years and the 1963 loss, 14-12, a year earlier had been especially frustrating. I still smile when I think about it – a total team effort, a great game plan devised by the coaching staff, and one heck of a party after the game!

2. Who was the most influential person during your Academy days and how did he inspire you?

This question is difficult, as there were several people who were equally influential during my Academy days. My father, Norb, who was a high school coach and teacher at Alexander Ramsey during my years at STMA, was not only my biggest supporter, but also a valued constructive critic and academic advocate stressing the primary goal of obtaining a quality education. Bill Ridley came to STMA late in my Academy years but his methods, his demeanor and his positive outlook on life are forever ingrained in my character. Terry Flynn was a wonderful teacher and coach as well as a role model. He had the gift of getting the most out of his players with a delightfully dry wit. Lastly, Gerry Brown, early in his career at the Academy, was a valued mentor for my journey into adulthood. He taught me how to compete and how my Academy experience would impact my future. I will always be deeply indebted to these men and to Bob Byrne, Joe O’Brien and Father John Lee – they were all “about the kids.” They had no expectations of personal gain, only to have a positive influence on the young men at Saint Thomas.

3. How did the Academy prepare you for your athletic success?

The fine caliber of coaches, the outstanding teammates, and the excellent competition we faced prepared me for higher level competition. The coaches demanded 100% effort, both in practice and during the game. They expected total concentration and attention to detail, instilling confidence and the desire to win. Our coaches always taught us to be gracious in winning and unsatisfied in losing. My teammates strived to improve and compete at a top level. They wanted to win and did whatever it took to do so. Any success I may have had was due to their fine efforts. We always played top level competition in all sports. This helped us to develop and forced us to play at a higher level.

4. What does the word “team” mean to you?

There is just the word “team,” which is a group with a leader, bound together by a common goal. Each one of the individuals within the team usually has a specialty, which is important to the whole. Combining these specialties together in a team determines a team’s success. A “good” team has a coach who is a skilled motivator, master tactical planner and a part time psychologist, who has a genuine interest in the team members. The players are highly motivated, willing to work hard while performing together as one unit, using their God-given talent to achieve a common goal. This is the recipe for a successful team.

5. What does it mean to you to be an Academy alumnus?

Foremost, the fine Christian ethics engrained in me at Saint Thomas have been the credo I have tried to measure up to. I am proud to be a graduate of STMA, and a member of that special group of men – past, present and future – who share the strength of its college preparatory curriculum, school traditions and character-building values. I owe much of my success in college and the career that followed to the Academy. Although, I was never an “A” student in high school, I was fully prepared for my pursuit of a higher education at Boston College as well as challenging life experiences beyond graduation. The character-building values instilled in me by inspirational role models at the Academy steered me in the right direction many times. As an alumnus, I am proud to be a beneficiary of that tradition and aspire to share the same values practiced at the Academy.