

May the Force Always Be with You

By Joel Seligman

"May the force be with you." With these words, Ed Hajim '58 has ended his remarks to graduates at dozens of ceremonies during his eight years as chair of the Board of Trustees.

At this May's board meeting, Ed will complete his service as chair. Ed will leave a remarkable legacy. During the past eight years, our University has undergone a transformation, and we owe especial gratitude to the support provided by Ed and the board. Ed has been my friend, the person to whom I speak whenever a critical issue occurs, my boss, my partner. Ed has been the inspirational leader of our *Meliora Challenge* Campaign, helping to ensure that it has far exceeded its initial \$1.2 billion goal. He has the ability to capture the attention of an audience within the first few sentences of his remarks. He is a true leader.

Since joining the board in 1988, Ed has held key roles on our board concerning investment policies, advancement initiatives, and strategic planning efforts. When it came time to select a successor to now Chair Emeritus Bob Witmer '59 in 2007, Ed was the unanimous choice.

Ed personifies *Meliora*. He has lived the ideals of ever better his entire life, rising from remarkably difficult beginnings to become a highly regarded executive on Wall Street. Often referring to the River Campus as his "first real home," Ed earned an NROTC scholarship to study chemical engineering at Rochester, where he became deeply involved in the life of the University. He held leadership positions in student government and in his fraternity, Theta Chi, and founded the humor magazine *UGH*.

He often proudly recites his class chant, "Better than good, better than great, we are the class of '58." At our 50-year medallion ceremonies for alumni, Ed greets a substantial number of earlier graduates as friends.

After serving in the Navy, Ed earned an MBA from the Harvard Business School, and built a remarkable career in finance. He was the youngest board member at Lehman Brothers and later served as chairman at Furman Selz. Ed became chairman and CEO of ING Aeltus Group. After 2002, he served as president of Diker Management.



BOARD CHAIR: The namesake of the Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, Ed Hajim '58 (center) has worked closely with President and CEO Joel Seligman (left) and Hajim Dean and Provost-elect Rob Clark in his role as chair of the University's Board of Trustees. Hajim is stepping down this spring from his role as board chair.

At each step of the way, Ed was a savvy investor, a shrewd businessman, and a boss who knew as many of his employees as he could, making sure that their marriages, children's births, and other life-changing accomplishments were acknowledged and that business successes were shared with those who contributed to the enterprise.

Ed is a remarkably generous man who recognizes the transformational impact that universities like Rochester can have not only in the lives of individual students and their families, but also on the economic and social fabric of the nation as a whole. In 2007, he made a \$30 million commitment to the University, the largest single gift commitment in our history. This lead gift was a critical catalyst in launching *The Meliora Challenge* Campaign. In recognition of Ed's generosity, the Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences was named in his honor in 2008.

Ed directed that a substantial portion of his gift be for student scholarships, and he makes a point of meeting each Hajim

Scholar in person. Scholarship support was decisive in Ed's decision to attend Rochester. Ed never forgot. Ed also has created scholarships for students at Harvard Business School, the University of Vermont, the University of Denver, Westchester Community College, the Brunswick School, and Middlesex School.

Let me thank Ed's wife, Barbara, and Ed's family also for their support and genuine love and appreciation for the University. They also are part of the Rochester family and I value their friendship.

Ed is indefatigable. Long after he steps down as chair, I anticipate, like Bob Witmer, he will continue to provide valuable support to our University and board.

Ed has been—and will continue to be—a force at Rochester, always challenging us to be a better institution and a better community. His inspiration now is part of our history. His contributions as a leader and in philanthropy have altered the trajectory of our future.

May the force always be with you, Ed. **R**