



# Walking Alongside Ann Hohn, A'83:

HER SERVICE JOURNEY FROM DUQUESNE GRADUATE TO THE  
2020 ALUMNI AWARD WINNER FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

By Tracy Jackson

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Service is rooted in the core of Duquesne's spirit—it's at the heart of who we are, and that passion and drive to walk alongside others doesn't go away once you leave the Bluff. Duquesne alumni believe that equity and opportunity begin at home and are trusted University brand ambassadors who bring their heart for service to our surrounding communities. **Meet Ann Hohn, A'83**, whose desire to help others and commitment to service started on the Bluff some 30 years ago.

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**Q: What did you study during your time at Duquesne?**

**A:** Communications. Well, actually back then it was called speech communications and theater and my minor was in journalism. Communications is a very broad sounding degree, but at the basics, you at least know how to communicate—you know how to write, you know the basics of journalism, the basics of good writing, the basics of good speech—that's transferable into any career.

**Q: How did Duquesne help prepare you for your career?**

**A:** Duquesne prepared me by giving me such a well-rounded, full education that allows me to continue to learn and to continue to expand my expertise into areas that I would never have thought of in a million years!

**Q: You're the chief operating officer at Make-a-Wish Foundation (Greater Pennsylvania and West Virginia). What did you learn outside of the classroom at Duquesne that you use today in your leadership role at a major nonprofit?**

**A:** I learned sisterhood. The deep connections and friendships that I made at Duquesne, that sisterhood was a great lesson in building who I am today. Building the person, not the brain, but the person and the heart.

**Q: You were a member of Sigma Lambda Phi (now Sigma Kappa). What types of service projects were the sorority members involved in?**

**A:** We had a social requirement, but we also took part in the dance marathon, and different volunteer programs. We were serious minded women, smart women who went on to become pharmacists, nurses, accountants and communicators.



Hohn and her rescue dog, Lucy.

**Q: How did being involved in those service-related projects impact you as a person?**

**A:** It taught me that there was something more outside of just going to school or going to work—that there was a requirement in life to do more. As a citizen of the world, there’s a requirement for you to do more—which is why I volunteer and why I sit on certain boards. I think that’s just something that we’re supposed to do.

**Q: How did you get involved in volunteering at Duquesne?**

**A:** I get communications from Duquesne all the time, and I saw the opportunity to apply for the Alumni Board of Governors. I’ve done very well in my career, but I will never be a person whose name is on the wall for giving a lot of money. But, I had time and a wish to broaden the appeal of what alumni can bring back to a university at any stage in their life and in their career.

**“The deep connections and friendships that I made at Duquesne, that sisterhood was a great lesson in building who I am today...”**

**Q: What types of projects did you work on while serving on the alumni board?**

**A:** I was put on the marketing committee of the board and one of the first things we created was Dialogue With Dukes, which is the survey process of asking alumni what they want. I’m proud to say that they’re still using that tool. It was eye-opening to see like-minded people out there in the alumni world who were just looking for a way to help. They could be in Florida, they could be in California, but they were all looking for motivation and projects.

**Q: You went on to serve as president of the Duquesne Alumni Association. Can you talk about one of the best parts of this service role?**

**A:** For two years, I got to see the business side of Duquesne, not the education, not the mission, not the warm and fuzzies, but how it’s run...how you make the sausage. I have one more year as past president on the alumni board.

**Q: What’s next for you at Duquesne?**

**A:** I don’t know what’s next. I don’t want to stop volunteering for Duquesne. I do know that I will always support the alumni office and the alumni board and its events. I have made the greatest friends—not just the board members but the staff. It’s just been such a great experience for me that I didn’t even expect.

**Q: What advice would you give to alumni who may be interested in volunteering at Duquesne?**

**A:** The alumni office is finding amazing ways for alumni to fit as volunteers. And it doesn’t have to be in Pittsburgh—it’s happening all over the country and internationally. I encourage people if they want to volunteer at Duquesne, they’ll find out what that means to you and put you in the right spot. ♦