



## MidAmerica Nazarene University: *Bright Futures*

MidAmerica Nazarene University's (MNU) bold vision is to impact the world for Christ by equipping servant leaders who are recognized for their excellence, integrity and spiritual vitality. Since its founding in 1966, MNU has remained constant in its mission, but following many years of financial challenges and the natural inclination to pull back and default to belt tightening, it became clear the approach was not sustainable.

Changes in educational methodology and structure, along with the University's ongoing financial needs, necessitated a renewed strategic plan and, ultimately, a comprehensive fundraising campaign.



Ultimately, *Bright Futures*—a successful \$88-million campaign—far exceeded expectations. Prior to initiating a campaign, one of the first hurdles MNU faced was its decision to enlist professional fundraising counsel to help guide the process.

Offered Senior Vice President for University Advancement Jon D. North, "What began as an exploratory lunch meeting with Kinetic's Matt Beem turned out to be a truly transformative connection for the University." At the time, MNU was of the mindset that they would "... do it ourselves." But the meeting with Matt, coupled with feedback from community leaders regarding Kinetic's steady success over many decades, led them to step out and try something new.

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“Jon is one of the most successful and accomplished fundraisers I’ve ever had the privilege to know,” said Beem. “He understands the big-picture needs of MidAmerica Nazarene University. At the same time, he has the ability to focus on vital relationship development and enrichment activities as well as expertly manage the many details of fundraising. These are important tasks that often require very different skill sets.”

North shared, “Not only did Kinetic help us form a facility task force to develop a forward-thinking list of goals and recruit an incredible group of volunteers including campaign leadership, but Matt influenced us to think about fundraising in a new and constructive way. Over time, our understanding of philanthropy shifted from raising money to offering tailored opportunities for donors to have meaningful engagements with the University and its mission.”

“Matt would always talk about building a culture of philanthropy. He provided incredible counsel and volunteer training that gave us the confidence to do more than we had imagined. That shift has been seismic—from focusing on and worrying about money to achieving goals beyond what we had anticipated.”

What had appeared impossible became, with Matt’s regular counsel, merely daunting, then conceivable ... then probable and, ultimately, accomplished and exceeded. Now that so many achievements are evident to all, there is fresh momentum for doing even more. Individuals who may have watched from the sidelines during *Bright Futures* are showing up to be part of MNU’s next, inevitable wins.

An especially meaningful gift to *Bright Futures* came from Edgar and Maron Moore through the Moore estate—a \$9.5-million gift, the largest one-time gift in MNU’s history at the time. Mr. Moore and his wife first became involved with the nearby school in the ‘60s. The University’s Founding President Dr. Curtis Smith had encouraged Edgar to finish his degree at MNU, which he did, graduating at 63 years of age. Decades later, the giving and receiving of genuine love and appreciation came full circle.

During the campaign, MNU was also awarded a \$2-million challenge grant from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation for the construction of a new athletic stadium and several athletic facility upgrades; and another \$1-million gift was received from the Mabee Foundation to fund a scholarship endowment. Said MNU President Dr. David J. Spittal, “The Mabee Foundation is a big part of every MNU student’s life thanks to its generous funding of multiple building projects throughout our history.” In addition to other challenge grants for capital goals, the Mabee Foundation has provided gifts to MNU totaling over \$7 million.

According to Beem, “The members of Jon’s team, each of whom is amazingly skilled and passionate in their own rights, have had strong respect for and confidence in Jon which further fueled MNU’s high-performing development team and its success.”

“Matt inspired us to ‘do the moment justice’ as we connected with donors about their gifts,” offered North. “As donors’ confidence in the campaign grew, many returned with a second and third gift. This confidence-building went both ways, and we have the Kinetic team to thank, as we now understand, firsthand, what it means to build a culture of philanthropy.”

