

Daniel Dix '76

Being a student-athlete at Houghton is not easy. It requires dedication to your classwork and to your sport, all the while trying to find the time and energy to nurture your friendships and your faith. The strong sense of community that teams often develop is apparent even to those who don't play sports. Daniel Dix, from the class of 1976, recognized the value of athletics in the broader context of a Houghton education, and while he didn't participate directly in intercollegiate athletics himself, he deeply respected the sense of commitment shared by those who work together toward a common goal.

In his academic pursuits, Mr. Dix forged his own path, showing interest in scientific research at a time when most biology and chemistry students at Houghton were heading into medicine. As President Mullen has observed, "even as a student, Mr. Dix was showing the kind of personal courage and willingness to take a different road that has served him well in research and industry." After Houghton, Mr. Dix went on to earn a doctorate in biochemistry from Temple University and did postgraduate work at the University of Colorado. He has served as the senior director of formulation development at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals since 1996, where he and his Formulations Development Group (FDG) hold several patents. The Formulations Development Group creates formulas to help stabilize the proteins in pharmaceuticals in order to provide time for the drug to be created, manufactured, distributed, and ultimately used by patients. Through this work, Mr. Dix and his team have been able to extend the shelf-life of many of Regeneron's drugs, helping to assure that patients get a drug that will be safe and effective.

Mr. Dix transferred to Houghton from Ursinus College, and he quickly became invested in a place that profoundly impacted his life. And the classroom was only part of the picture. He met Brenda Cummings from the class of 1975, and she became his wife. That led to more Houghton students. Their daughter Rebecca, who graduated in 2009, applied to Houghton and nowhere else – even though she was encouraged to consider other options. Rebecca was a member of the women’s soccer team, a group known for their deep sense of commitment to each other. Their son David, from the Class of 2011, played basketball, and was forever changed by his experience as a student-athlete at Houghton. Their youngest son, Michael, from the Class of 2013, played men’s soccer and was surrounded by student-athletes and coaches who shared his commitment to serve the Lord both in the classroom and on the field.

With his children always involved in athletics, Mr. Dix naturally became friends with the coaches and staff at Houghton. He connected with Houghton athletic director Skip Lord, and the two enjoyed running together during Mr. Dix’s many visits to campus. When asked why he supports athletics so fervently, he points to the Christian scholar-servant difference that he and his family have experienced over their long connection to Houghton.

Mr. Dix currently serves as the chair of the development committee for Houghton’s Athletics Advisory Board and is a member of the Athletics Task Force. Brenda and Dan were major donors to the Kerr-Pegula Athletic Complex, and the MVP Room that overlooks Burke Field bears their name. They have also supported other innovative projects, continuing to give back in ways that make it possible for future generations of young people to experience all that Houghton

has to offer, on and off the field of competition. Skip Lord, executive director of intercollegiate athletics, considers Mr. Dix to be “a trusted friend, adviser, and sounding board whose friendship I sincerely appreciate.”

In the spirit of so many Houghton alums, Mr. Dix is deeply committed to living out his faith in very practical ways. He is actively involved in his church. He serves on the Board of Directors for Inheritance of Hope, a nonprofit organization that inspires hope in young families facing the loss of a parent. Through counseling and retreat programs, Inheritance of Hope helps families navigate the challenges of a parent's terminal illness. And recognizing the potential value of athletics in the development of faith and character, Mr. Dix has coached youth basketball and soccer teams and has served as the president of a local youth league near his home for the last decade.

Mr. Dix is not someone who seeks the spotlight. He won't brag about his many accomplishments. Rather, working behind the scenes to help bring out the best in others, Dan Dix represents what the Houghton community values for our students and our graduates: academic excellence, professional accomplishment through his important contributions to the world of pharmaceutical research, faithfulness to his family and the Church, and a sacrificial commitment to his alma mater. Thus, it is most appropriate that today, on the occasion of his 40th reunion year, we honor Daniel Dix with the 2016 Alumnus of the Year Award.