

1987 alum heads National Alumni Association



George Bassi was named national alumni association president at homecoming. He is pictured with wife DeeDee and sons George Rein and Bert.

Leland native George Bassi enjoys the role

BY MARK H. STOWERS
The Cleveland Current

The Beach Boys wrote and recorded "Be True to Your School" back in 1963 before George Bassi was born. The song pays homage to their Southern California high school but it could be Bassi's theme song. The 1987 double-major — Accounting and Computer Information Systems — is the new Delta State National Alumni President. Bassi started the new position that is a two-year term during homecoming weekend in October.

"I work with the board and we work with the staff to oversee operations of the alumni association," he explained. Bassi underscored that it's "the staff that drives the office. We basically are just there to assist with ideas and sift through priorities and make sure the visions of the university from the alumni standpoint are carried out."

Bassi got his feet wet in the fundraising field after receiving his degree from Delta State. Upon graduation, his first job was a five-year stint working for the DSU alumni office. From there he parlayed his education and experience into the job of director of the

Lauren Rogers Museum of Art in Laurel for the past 17 years. But his job as National Alumni President is more about people.

"The alumni association works off of dues and we don't actively go out and actively fund raise, the foundation does that," he explained. "We are more into 'friend-raising' as opposed to fund raising."

Taking over as President, Bassi's first official duty was a royal one.

"My first official duty involved half-time of the homecoming football game," he said. "I got to help with the crowning of the homecoming queen."

Bassi admitted that working in that official capacity was exciting and fun but the reality of the moment aged him a bit.

"Makes you feel old," he said laughing. "There were actually a couple of people in the homecoming court that I'm looking at and thinking 'I went to school with your dad.'"

Married with two young sons, ages six and eight, Bassi completed his Master's Degree in Public Relations/Mass Communications at the University of Southern Mississippi. He actually left Delta State to

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get his Masters and worked for the USM alumni foundation for a year then left to work at the museum.

"I came to the museum originally to be director of development — to do fund raising," Bassi said. "Even though we are an art museum, my main role is fund raising."

Opened in 1923, the 22,000 square-foot museum has five permanent collections. You can learn more about it at www.lrma.org. But Bassi enjoys making the three-and-a-half hour drive from Laurel to his alma mater to bring his boys back to the Delta area and work with

something dear to his heart.

"The key is I love Delta State and it meant a lot to me as a student and a lot to me when I worked there," he explained. "Even though I've been away for awhile now, it's amazing how my love and appreciation for the university has gotten stronger. And I can bring that hopefully to the board and the alumni association and relay how much the university meant to us as students and also why we need to be a part of it and support it."

As president, one of Bassi's goals "is to involve as many people as we can in the life of the university. Especially in this time of budget cuts. Now more than ever, people who

have benefited from a degree there have to understand that they need to participate and be involved."

Alumni and friends can help by joining the alumni association and be active in alumni chapters around the state and country.

"We hope they can send us students," he said. "Referring students is a great way to give back. And you can get involved in the program that touched them while they were there and to reconnect to that degree they got. And ultimately we want to keep them involved with the university through giving to the foundation."

Bassi is just looking for alumni and friends to be "true to their school."