

Alex Rodriguez Courtyard Dedicated, Honoring All-Star's \$500,000 Donation

FEBRUARY 23, 2017



When New York Yankees All-Star Alex Rodriguez was a grade-schooler in Miami, he and his buddies would regularly sneak into 'Canes baseball games, slipping in near the right or left field poles just after school let out and oftentimes not making it home until midnight. It was the only way the boy from a single parent home would make it into the stadium, and he vowed that if he ever found financial stability, he would repay this debt to the University.

The longtime Board of Trustees member has spent 15 years doing just that, and for his latest contribution – a \$500,000 gift establishing the Graduate Entrepreneurship and Innovation Endowed Fund – the School of Business Administration dedicated the Alex Rodriguez Courtyard outside the School's Jenkins Building. It was a festive ceremony that drew not only Rodriguez's mother and siblings but School dignitaries including University President Julio Frenk, former President Donna Shalala, School of Business interim dean Anuj Mehrotra, fellow trustees, the newest Miami Executive MBA for Artists and Athletes class – and Sebastian, of course.

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 ”

ANUJ MEHROTRA
 Interim Dean, School of Business Administration

Standing under a green and orange balloon arch, Rodriguez talked about his lifelong love of the University that took hold during those Ron Fraser-era baseball games. “It made a huge impact on my life,” he said.

The opportunity to surround himself with the city's top business leaders as a member of the University's Board of Trustees, Rodriguez said, also provided a lasting impact. “I've never spoken up at a board meeting – I've come close a few times,” he joked. “I hope over the next 15 years, I'll get a chance to put to work what I've learned on this Board and be an integral part in what happens at this University.”

He spoke about his mentor and fellow trustee Stuart Miller, CEO of Lennar, who counseled him on, among other things, the need for athletes to save money during their earning years so they can enjoy retirement. Rodriguez's endowment will help fund enrichment workshops in areas like negotiation, multinational leadership and entrepreneurship for participants in the School's Miami Executive MBA for Artists and Athletes program and for other MBA students.

“This gift will have a significant impact on our students,” Mehrotra told the crowd. “The business world is experiencing rapid change like we have never seen before. It is the reason we are constantly seeking ways to bring innovation to ensure we are consistently relevant. We must make a diligent effort to translate scholarship into solutions, and this gift will help us with that.”

Rodriguez, who is no stranger to donating both money and time to the University, hit a homerun when he spoke last year to students in the Miami Executive MBA for Artists and Athletes program, Mehrotra recalled. “He shared his story of building a business career alongside his baseball career,” he said. “It's a great thing for our students to learn from somebody who has been in their shoes.”

After Sebastian led the crowd in a school cheer and Rodriguez unveiled the courtyard's new name emblazoned on the building, servers passed around peanuts and Cracker Jacks. It was a fine afternoon root, root, rooting for the home team, indeed.

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