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James Metzger of Whitmore Group supports Hofstra lacrosse

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Former lacrosse player Jim Metzger is supporting [sports](#) and other programs at Hofstra University. Credit: Whitmore Group

James Metzger has traveled a long way during the last 25 years, if you consider the back and forth between Suffolk and Nassau counties a long trek. Actually, he has journeyed full circle, returning to his sports and education roots at Hofstra University.

The former lacrosse player recently re-connected with the university's athletic program, and he has become, as he was as a player, the "attackman" to help drive the latest contribution for Hofstra's sports complex. With his support, a new hall of honor for lacrosse was dedicated during mid-March.

From his All-America honors at Half Hollow Hills East High School in Dix Hills, Metzger entered Hofstra and played during the 1979 and 1980 seasons. He was named to the 1980 Division I All-American lacrosse team following his sophomore year. During that season, Metzger established a school sophomore record of 4.9 points-per-game that still stands. That record also ranked as the second highest points-per-game average in Hofstra lacrosse history at the time, and it currently ranks as fourth best all time at Hofstra. A few years earlier, Metzger had won the 1977 Ray Enners Award for Outstanding Lacrosse Player in Suffolk County.

After that sustained success during his late teens and early 20s, Metzger chose to exit the game after his sophomore season. He left his stick, helmet and gloves in his locker and did not watch another lacrosse game for 25 years.

Sports and Business Connection

Metzger immediately took his love of competition into the business world, specifically the insurance field. During 1989, he founded the [Whitmore Group](#), a Garden City-based full service insurer that ranks in the top 10 of insurance providers on Long Island based on the rankings recently published by LI Business. It is one of the largest privately-held independent insurance brokerages in the New York metropolitan area, providing commercial property and casualty, a specialized funeral services program, personal insurance, health benefits, life insurance and estate planning, financial services, real estate insurance programs and claim services.

“The years I spent at Hofstra, plus my prior athletic experiences in basketball and football, helped me build the foundation on which I built my professional life,” said Metzger. “Business is a team game. My business is relationship-driven with my clients and my staff.”

During the last several years, to help his nephew with the lacrosse recruiting process, Metzger reconnected with former Hofstra teammates. As they coached Metzger’s nephew or assessed the young man’s talent, the gathering of former players increasingly talked fondly about their Hofstra days.

This opportunity to come back to the game also allowed Metzger to reconnect with Hofstra. He decided that he wanted to help grow the university’s reputation and brand through support of its athletic programs, and he has become Hofstra’s leading athletic benefactor.

New Facilities, Players Exhibit

The first Hofstra project established with a gift from Metzger was the complete renovation of the men’s lacrosse locker room. The Royle-Sombrotto Locker Room was named for Metzger’s former Hofstra coach, Harry Royle, and teammate Vinnie Sombrotto. Sombrotto was a four-time USA player and Hofstra All-American who grew up in Port Washington and attended Chaminade High School.

The latest project at Hofstra funded by Metzger was christened the Traditions Project. Before the March 13 Hofstra lacrosse game with Johns Hopkins, the ribbon was cut for a new permanent exhibit at the university’s lacrosse home, Margiotta Hall, that celebrates the history of Hofstra’s

men's and women's lacrosse programs along with the school's football program. The exhibit also honors all the players who have competed in these sports at the university.

A second component of the Traditions Project included the establishment of a new lacrosse office suite to acknowledge the contributions Metzger made to the sport of lacrosse as both a player and benefactor to the Hofstra University community. The lacrosse offices are named for Metzger and former Lacrosse All-American Kevin Huff, a Smithtown High School graduate who has coached lacrosse at Smithtown for 25 years.

As a business owner, Metzger also is committed to more than sports at Hofstra. He has funded a summer internship program in the university's Center for Civic Engagement in honor of Michael D'Innocenzo, a favorite history instructor. The gift provides for the Metzger-D'Innocenzo Endowed Summer Internship.

"I am proud again to be associated with Hofstra University," added Metzger. "Life is all about comebacks and this is the right opportunity to make up for lost time."