



JOHN GARDNER CLAYTON

“Spirit of ’51” Award

John, you have been the pride and joy of Dartmouth and especially the Class of ’51 since the first day you set foot on the campus in the Fall of 1947. That season you and two other remarkable freshman quarterbacks - Ace Mueller and Bob McCraney - led Dartmouth’s freshman football team to an undefeated season.

That was just the start! The following year you nailed down the varsity quarterback job. You led the team to a much-improved 15 - 9 - 1 record over the next three seasons, receiving the George Bulger Lowe Award as New England’s top college football player. In December, 1950 you played in the 26th annual Shrine East-West All-Star Football Game in Kezar Stadium, San Francisco.

Never a Johnny One Note, you were an active member of Delta Kappa Epsilon and Sphinx. You went to the Tuck School, finding time while there to help coach Dartmouth’s freshman team, along with classmates Pete Bogardus and Ted Eberle. You went on to a contributive business career as a senior sales and marketing officer with Knapp Shoe Company and as President of the outplacement firm, Baker/Clayton, Inc.

You have always given back to the College. You have been a member of the Alumni Council, an officer of regional alumni clubs and an enrollment interviewer. You regularly serve as a mentor to Dartmouth football players and have been a member of the Athletics Committee.

And you have responded generously to calls from our class, serving as a member of our Executive Committee, co-chair (with Dick Price) of our 45th reunion, and as an Alumni Fund class agent. Since you and your wife Marcia moved back to the Eastman Community in Grantham, New Hampshire in 1992 your home has been a welcoming gathering place for ’51 classmates and Dartmouth friends of all generations.

Over the years you regularly contributed to the communities in which you and Marcia lived. In Hingham, Massachusetts you were a member of your church vestry, Commodore of the Yacht Club and Little League Commissioner. In Grantham, you have served as Chair of the Library Building Committee and member of the zoning board. We can’t begin to count the youth sports teams you have coached or the residents’ associations you have chaired.

More than anything else, family has been the centerpiece of your life. Along with Marcia, your two children and five grandchildren are the sources of your greatest pride and pleasure. Son Mark ’82 and his daughter Ellie ’13 carried on the Dartmouth tradition and inherited your athletic prowess, Mark in football and Ellie in women’s lacrosse. Daughter Sally played field hockey and lacrosse at Bowdoin. Family time in a sailboat or on the tennis court, ski slopes or golf course (can it really be true that you have shot five holes in one?) have all been life highlights.

This past summer you were inducted into Andover’s Athletic Hall of Honor in recognition of your remarkable three-sport accomplishments there. The presenter of the award summed up your impact, then and now, in these words: “I never saw a more dedicated, fierce and intense competitor than John Clayton on the athletic field. But I also never saw a kinder, warmer, or more friendly person off the athletic field. To know John is to know a real gentleman, a wonderful husband, a devoted father and a caring grandfather.”

Your fond and admiring Dartmouth classmates say “Amen!” to those words. We are pleased to recognize the many ways in which you have brightened our lives and positively impacted the lives of so many others by presenting to you the “Spirit of ’51” Award.