
Walking on to both the Big Green football and baseball teams, Brian Conroy '86 learned what it means to be a good team member and translated that to success in the business world.



CHAMPIONING DARTMOUTH STUDENTS

BRIAN CONROY '86

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rian Conroy '86 can remember those Saturday excursions to Hanover with his father Peter Conroy '56, like they were yesterday.

"We would drive up from the Hartford area for round trips when I was a boy," he recalled with a faraway smile. "Mom would say, 'Take the kids and we'll see you for dinner,' so the old man would load us into the Chrysler and head north.

"If Dartmouth lost, not a word was spoken on the trip home. For two hours. I have vivid memories of the old man pounding the dashboard on the way home recounting plays in his head. He was a passionate Dartmouth football fan I can tell you."

It wasn't just Dartmouth football that mattered to "Cube" Conroy, his son will tell you. It was the college itself.

"My father had a passion for being a member of a team, for being loyal and for Dartmouth. It was what I grew up with. It was part of who we were as a family. Dad was involved with his class, mini reunions and things of that nature. Dartmouth was a part of who we were growing up."

And it has remained a huge part of his son's life. An engaging Wall Street veteran, Brian Conroy has been a highly regarded career consultant, adviser, mentor, confidant and dear friend to dozens upon dozens of Dartmouth students and student-athletes.

Even three decades removed from his days in Hanover.

Even 3,000 miles away in London, where today he serves as the president of Fidelity International.

As Dartmouth would in his college years, Connecticut's Avon Old Farms School and its athletic fields helped shape Conroy, who grew up in the shadows of the school.

"I was fortunate to go to a really supportive boys prep school," recalled Conroy, who would serve as the school warden – or student body president – as a senior. "I was never a great athlete but it was the kind of school that encouraged you to try, and to go out for

teams. It didn't matter whether you were varsity as long as you were participating. As long as you were grinding you were respected.

"I ended up starting my senior year in football and baseball, and being captain of each sport, never having started a game prior to that."

His career as a practice-field-grinder would continue at Dartmouth, which wasn't alone at the top of his list of college destinations as a young boy.

"Ironically, for most of my life my first choice was West Point," he admitted. "But I had pretty bad asthma as a kid and West Point wasn't going to work out. So I quickly switched to my '1B,' Dartmouth. It was the right place for me.

"The right school," he added, "finds the right people."

Conroy majored in religion at Dartmouth, walking on to both the Big Green football and baseball teams. In four years he would get into just two varsity football games on kickoffs, and collect just one hit on the diamond.

"My whole life I have been kind of a walk on," he said. "So when I got into Dartmouth my attitude was, if they are going to let me go out for the team and stick around, I was staying. Why? Because I love sports. I love being part of a team. I loved the energy around sports programs at Dartmouth at the time, especially football, the centerpiece of what was played on campus.

"I have always been an underdog. My attitude was, it was fun to do. You are surrounded by great people. And there was always the hope and chance that maybe I would get on the field. Maybe something would happen. I knew that if I wasn't there it would never happen. More importantly, what I learned is to be a good team member along the way."

Dig out the Dartmouth football media guide from Conroy's senior year and there are bios of the "Leading Contenders" for that year's Big Green team, players like linebacker Len Fontes, wide receiver Scott Truitt, offensive lineman Slade Schuster and placekicker Craig Saltzgeber, all on their way to first-team All-Ivy

League recognition. And there are bios of others who would barely see the field.

The only mentions of Conroy are in tiny print on the page with the previous year's junior varsity statistics – he had two punt returns for a total of five yards – and in the green roster pages in the centerfold of the booklet where he is listed as a 5-foot-9, 180-pound defensive back.

Now flip through the next year's media guide. Among the "Letterwinners Lost" is one Brian Conroy, listed this time not as defensive back but as a defensive lineman. That wasn't a typo.

As a senior on the junior varsity, it wasn't uncommon for Conroy to line up against players 100 pounds heavier and six or more inches taller. And he did it voluntarily.

"I played nose guard on the Scout Team because we ran out of them," he said almost matter-of-factly. "I didn't care. I just loved being on the team.

"That year the varsity line was all seniors. I would go up against Bob Saylor and Bob Rech. I would run around them to get to (quarterback Brian) Stretch. It would tick them off. We had some good fights in practice. I remember screaming at Bobby Rech saying, 'I don't get a chance to play Harvard on Saturday. All I can do is make you better.' It was awesome."

That love of the game and sense of loyalty had been firmly instilled by Cube, a regular presence filming games standing from the jayvee sidelines, always with an oversized videocamera on his shoulder.

"I knew someday it would end," Conroy said of sticking it out far from Saturday afternoon headlines. "I didn't care. My father told me a great story about how JFK, whether it was true or not, was captain of the Harvard JVs as a senior. I figured, 'Heck, if it's good enough for JFK, who am I to complain?'"

When Conroy separated his shoulder in a junior varsity game as a senior it did come to an end of sorts as his focus shifted from playing to coaching.

"My whole senior year I would go in to the football office in the morning to help the coaches break down film for the defense," he said. "When I got hurt I started to run the Scout Team just to free up one of the coaches to work with the varsity. That's when I got the coaching bug."

Unsure what he wanted to do after graduation, Conroy considered teaching but instead chose to give football another year at Princeton, where he served as the Ivy League's version of a graduate assistant coach. His life's journey would take a turn, however, when he met the person who would hire him at Goldman Sachs while visiting Dartmouth classmates in New York City.

"I ended up walking into the program there the way I walked onto the Dartmouth football team," he said. "I was fortunate enough to be hired without an MBA. They were looking to take a chance on a non-MBA in their training program back in 1987."

Conroy spent 12 years at Goldman, rising to the role of vice president before moving to JP Morgan as managing director. Then it was on to Head of Trading for SAC Capital Management before six years as Head of Global Equity Trading for Fidelity Investments. He served as President of Fidelity Capital Markets, the institutional trading arm of Fidelity Investments, for almost four years before assuming his current role in London in January, 2015.

It was in his early days at Goldman that Conroy's lifetime of

helping Dartmouth students began after he struck up a friendship with Tom Morrow '92. The former All-Ivy League linebacker had arrived in Hanover just a couple of years after Conroy graduated but they didn't meet until working together.

"He had been hired at Goldman and we decided one day to start recruiting for Goldman at Dartmouth," Conroy said. "That led to different things. I got to know (then head football coach) John Lyons when my dad passed away and I asked him, 'Where do you need help?' And he said, 'These kids aren't well-prepared.'"

And so Conroy did what Conroy does. He volunteered to help.

He talked with players in the weight room above Davis Varsity House about resumes, interviewing and careers. Wanting to do more, he developed a friendship with Monica Wilson, who oversees employer relations in Dartmouth's Center for Professional Development. She has welcomed him back to campus to meet with student groups many times since, and all these years later enthusiastically applauds his tireless efforts helping Dartmouth students and recent graduates explore and land internships and jobs.

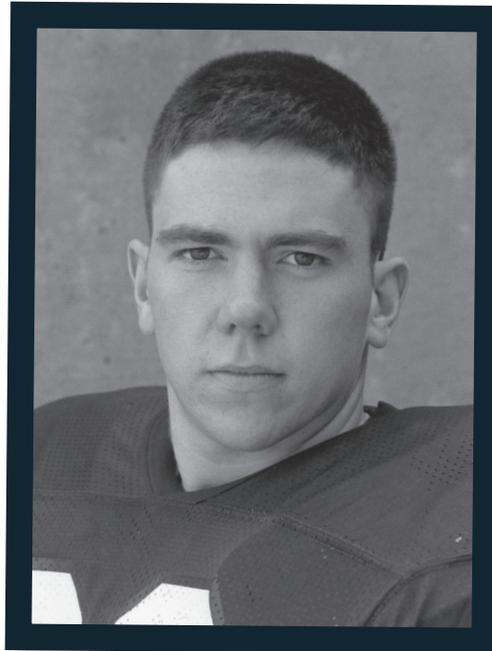
"Brian has been an amazing resource for our office and for many Dartmouth students over the years," Wilson offered. "He brings a wealth of insights, advice and genuine caring and support. His unbridled enthusiasm and his love for this institution is incredible."

While he's been generous with his time with any Dartmouth student who comes to him, Conroy has taken a special interest in helping student-athletes navigate the transition from college to the business world.

"Of course I have a special affinity for the athletes given the time constraints they face and the fact that they are not able to take advantage of the career services offerings to as full an extent as non-athletes," he said. "So I want to make sure I do as much as I can to support them."

And it is not just athletes with hard-core backgrounds in economics and finance that he mentors.

"As my career progressed, I was a true believer that there is a spot for liberal arts in investment banking or any profession, and



Brian Conroy played a versatile role on the Big Green football team and truly embraced a "whatever it takes" mentality in helping his teammates succeed.

I wanted to help build that bridge,” he explained. “At first it was with the college in general but the more I spoke to (Deputy Athletic Director) Bob Ceplikas ’78, Coach Lyons and eventually (Baseball coach Bob) Whalen, I saw a chance to help our players. . . . You see the advantage Harvard kids have being close to Boston, and Columbia and Princeton being striking distance from New York. I always just felt we needed to do what we could to help our players.”

One of the football players Conroy helped was quarterback Brian Mann ’02, who first met him after one of those talks in Davis Varsity House.

“I was drawn to him right away,” said Mann. “Anybody who hears him talk typically is. I introduced myself to him but didn’t see him again until Coach Lyons put me in touch with him after my junior year when I was trying to find a job.”

Mann landed a JP Morgan internship with help from Conroy.

“I had been benched and stripped of the thing that mattered the most to me during my junior fall,” the former quarterback said. “But Coach Lyons saw that I kept coming to practice every day with a good attitude, that I was working with the young QB’s, and playing scout team QB. Brian said that was all he needed to hear.

“For Brian it’s not about helping someone find a job. It’s about putting people in a position to succeed and to find their passions. So they get up every day and they are excited about what they are doing, they are learning and they are getting better and making the people around them better. He started as a mentor and I have been lucky enough over the years where I have gotten to know Brian and his family in a way that I consider him much more than that now. Whenever I have a big decision in my life, or am questioning something he is still someone I go to because of the way he looks at life.”

Ashley Hines ’09, a field hockey captain who walked onto the Dartmouth lacrosse team as a sophomore eventually to be selected a co-captain of that sport as well, worked under Conroy at Fidelity. Like Mann, she considers him an invaluable asset for the college and its student-athletes as well as a role model.

“He’s a powerful leader but you would never know it because he is so humble,” she said. “He’s the kind of leader that I would want to be. He never judges me for any of the decisions I have made. He has supported me and all the decisions I have made.”

That includes the decision to leave Fidelity in favor of business school at Columbia. Fully aware the move would cost him a valuable employee, Conroy gladly wrote Hines’ business school recommendation.

Like Mann, she continues to use him as a sounding board, even sending a “Save the Date” note to London in advance of her upcoming wedding.

“Any time I am making a big life decision, a work decision, I am reaching out to him,” she said. “I tell people he supports me just about as much as my parents, and my parents are very supportive. I think it is telling that he helps everyone out, not just important people.

“You know the kind of schedule he is on and the traveling he does and yet he always makes time for me. It might be, ‘Hey, Ashley, it can’t be right now,’ but if I said, ‘Brian, I really need to talk to you,’ he would make the time.’ I just can’t speak highly enough of him.”

Nor can head football coach Buddy Teevens ’79, Conroy’s football camp quarterback coach as a junior high schooler up from Connecticut for the Joe Yukica camp in the late ’70s.

“For Brian it’s not about helping someone find a job. It’s about putting people in a position to succeed and to find their passions.”

“He has not forgotten where he came from,” said Teevens. “It’s wonderful to see the success he has achieved in the business world as one of our own football and baseball guys. But he is just a down-to-earth, approachable person who has been very helpful making recommendations for players regarding job opportunities or interview opportunities.

“Whenever he has a chance to come back on campus he will meet with individuals, small groups, or large collections of people to talk about the road he took. He’s just an all-around good person. Thoughtful. Considerate. Supportive. Encouraging. Optimistic. Upbeat. You choose the adjective, that is Brian Conroy. Everyone you speak to who is in contact with him will say the same thing.”

For Conroy, whatever he can do to help those who came after him to the Hanover Plain is a labor of love because his “1B” college choice and those who followed him there will always be in his soul.

“We have a special place,” he said. “It forms your heart and your mind as you go through the four years. We all have a responsibility that it stays vibrant and alive and true to this balance.

“I remember when I was applying to Dartmouth. My best friend went to Harvard to play football. The way he said it was, everyone he met at Dartmouth was well-rounded. Pretty smart. Good athletically. Different interests. All that kind of stuff. At Harvard he found that the class was well-rounded, but not necessarily each of the individuals.

“That’s a special part of Dartmouth that I think lives on today, and it is up to all of us to help foster and contribute back so it continues.”

That’s why when Dartmouth calls, Brian Conroy answers.

“The take away is we, the passionate alumni of Dartmouth, have a variety of ways to continue to foster the camaraderie that we have on the athletic fields in today’s world,” he said. “There are a legion of Dartmouth athletes and students that benefit from our collective involvement but in the end you get back far more than you give.” **DP**