

KELLEY
PRAYER
CHAPEL



BRIAN ALLEN '82

“I am so thankful God’s call on my life included Olivet,” says Brian Allen, vice president for institutional advancement and chief development officer.

In the spring of 1980, Brian was walking across Olivet’s campus. Kelley Prayer Chapel’s dedication was taking place that day, and his dad was there as a member of the Board of Trustees. “I’d been trying to talk God into giving me a call to pastoral ministry,” Brian says. “But that was the day I knew God was calling me to ministry on the campus of Olivet.”

Brian soon became an ONU employee as a part-time resident director. In 1982, he joined the Admissions staff in a full-time position. For the past 24 years, he has served as a vice president and a member of the leadership team.

Olivet is in Brian’s DNA. His ONU connection actually began before he was born. His dad enrolled as a freshman in the late 1940s, walked up the steps of Chapman Hall, and began preparing for his call to pastoral ministry.

Thirty years later, Brian walked up those same steps to begin his Olivet adventure. Now, he takes every opportunity to say that their family is “all in for Olivet.”

His mom completed her high school education and received her diploma at Olivet Academy. His wife, Lynda (Bradford), graduated from ONU and now teaches undergraduate and graduate classes in the McGraw School of Business. Her grandmother also graduated from Olivet Academy. Many family members, including Brian and Lynda’s three children, earned degrees from ONU.

When he worked as an admissions counselor, Brian often met students (and their parents) who expressed their desire to attend ONU and also their doubt that they could actually enroll due to the lack of finances. One of Brian’s greatest joys was seeing many of them not only enroll, but also go on to graduate.

“When I knew their stories and saw them walk across the platform, shake the University president’s hand, and get their diploma, I knew they were going to make an impact for

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Christ in the world,” he says. “Seeing them conquer all that uncertainty and thrive in college is so inspiring. Even more inspiring are the opportunities I have to see how their lives have developed and the influence they are having now.”

Brian continues to appreciate the Olivet culture that forms the foundation for students’ personal growth. “At ONU, students can thrive spiritually, emotionally and professionally,” he says. “We are committed to educating and developing the whole person as we prepare students well for their careers. Their calling and purpose merge with the specifics of their career preparation. We are sending points of light into the world.”

Seeing students’ spiritual growth continues to be the spark of many ONU memories for Brian. Around the altar in chapel or at College Church, especially during revival services, he sees the University’s higher purpose. “Setting aside time

to meet with God gives students the opening they need to seek the Lord,” he says. “They often settle some of their big life decisions and experience life transformation here.”

One of Brian’s favorite poems is “I Dwell in Possibility” by Emily Dickinson (which he can recite from memory) and the way it dovetails with Ephesians 3. As a man of optimism and a follower of Christ, he continues to seek God’s wisdom to do more than just the good thing, but to do the best thing.

“I know I’m a part of something bigger than me and something that will long outlive me,” he says. “At ONU, I have a front row seat on the future. I am convinced that Olivet is holy ground.”

Brian Allen

Vice President,

Institutional Advancement

(815) 928-5743

ballen@olivet.edu