



WAYNE DEBOER '15

Stepping into Olivet Nazarene University's 100-plus years of history was an unexpected blessing for Wayne DeBoer. "I had attended concerts and special events on ONU's campus for decades," he says.

"When God opened the door for me to join the Development team in 2010, I welcomed this opportunity to serve."

Today, as Director of Development Operations, Wayne describes his role as "the in-office guy who helps to manage day-to-day team activity." He establishes systems while keeping the priorities of the University and his team in focus. These necessary elements for his team's success are firmly grounded in what he learned while earning his Master of Organizational Leadership degree at ONU.

"I appreciate the way ONU values academic excellence while keeping the mission solid," Wayne says. "We work hard to accelerate academic rigor while avoiding missional drift. And all the while

striving to be relevant for today's culture. That is becoming rare in the world of higher education." When alumni and friends of the University join in that effort, Wayne receives rewards he never imagined. "At the 2022 President's Gathering, I heard many testimonies about what ONU means in individuals' lives," he says. "Even if their stories are from 50 years ago, the impact is still fresh and vital."

Fifty years ago, Wayne never would have imagined that he'd be where he is right now. As a child and teen, he dealt with low self-esteem and had low expectations for himself. While he was wondering what to do with his life, one of his high school teachers, Miss Kuiper, challenged him to pursue his talents for writing, his skills in attention to details and his interest in world cultures. She gave him the redirection he needed. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in English.

Following college graduation, Wayne realized that God could use him to promote something that has eternal value. In his career, Wayne has contributed his communication and organizational gifts and skills to the work of faith-based organizations.

He began his career with a Christian radio and television ministry, including serving overseas in the West Indies with his wife, Pam, for four years. “That experience taught me so much about what it means to be a world Christian,” he says.

“God confirmed for me that He was using my love for world cultures and geography to build his Kingdom.”

Later, as director of the editorial team for a global ministry organization, Wayne helped keep constituents connected with the mission field in six world regions. “I especially enjoyed the opportunities I had to visit the mission field,” he says. “Then I translated those experiences in ways that kept our donors engaged and our mission alive.”

Wayne has traveled to more than 50 countries, including North Korea, Ethiopia and spiritually-bound parts of India. “Our world in

2022 needs Jesus more than ever before,” he says. “We’re addressing that at ONU by preparing more young lives to be ambassadors for Him. Our constituents are helping us do that every day.”

One of Wayne’s greatest joys is connecting constituents’ generous hearts and stewardship mindset with real needs. He and his team help them confirm their passions, share their resources and then see the real impact of their giving. His priority is to focus on what’s most important for the greater good, not just the tyranny of the urgent.

“Making a way for students to attend and graduate from ONU is what our team does,” Wayne adds. “We serve our students with compassion, especially those who have financial challenges. We find every bit of financial assistance we can find to help them. While they’re here, we care for them. We do our best for Christ and His Kingdom.”

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