

The Good Steward

Brad Scribner, a successful businessman and devout Catholic, teams up with the Marianist Mission when he wants friends to know he cares.

BY JOHN SCHROEDER

Brad Scribner has a knack for business. Today, he's using the talent that led to his career success to give back to others through the Marianist Mission and other organizations that have touched his life.

His business acumen appeared early when he turned a part-time position at a truck rental firm into a career path that eventually led to the executive suite at a billion-dollar corporation. In his late 40s, he switched gears and successfully turned around several mid-sized manufacturing firms on behalf of their commercial lenders.

"In 1986, I decided it was time to turn one around for myself," he recalls. "So I sunk every penny I had into buying a small company — a wholesale specialty hardware distributor. I knew that if I could make it grow, I would prosper. If not, I'd be down the drain."

Like the biblical steward who invested five talents, Scribner parlayed his calculated risk into a notable success. The company experienced a tenfold increase in annual revenues over a 15-year period.

But things hadn't always gone so smoothly. Times were tough in Vermont, where Brad grew up as the oldest of five children in a devout Catholic family. "There was usually enough food to keep from going hungry, but we were poor," he says.

He left small town life behind and joined the Marines after high school, then moved to San Francisco following his tour of duty. There he found the first of many doors opening in his career.

Time for giving back

When the timing was right, Brad sold his distributorship so that he and his wife could focus on philanthropic endeavors. Community colleges are one of their passions. So are abused and underprivileged children, particularly in and around Naples, Fla., where the Scribners spend each winter.

For more than 20 years, Scribner also has relied on the Marianist Mission as part of his efforts to give back. "I have a wide network of

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Brad Scribner

friends," he says. "When I hear of something affecting their lives, whether it's cancer or the death of a loved one, I try to reach out to them."

Scribner does so by enrolling friends in the Marianist Spiritual Alliance — a card and prayer ministry that touches peoples' hearts in a profound way, especially knowing the Marianists are praying on their behalf. The Marianist Mission staff handles the details for him flawlessly. "I've never visited them in Dayton, but they all know me when I call," he says.

Thanks, also, to a recent donor event in Naples, Scribner is looking forward to deepening his connection with the Marianists. "Now I know about what they're doing in Africa to educate children who have nothing," he says. "It's amazing." (See story on page 4 about a Marianist school in the slums of Nairobi.) ■

John Schroeder is a freelance writer from St. Louis.

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