

William A. Donan '68

Somewhere deep in the archives of Pattee Library is a picture from *The Daily Collegian* of Bill Donan trying to climb one of the flagpoles on Old Main lawn. "I was going for the American flag," Donan says. "I and another student were trying to lower it to half staff following the assassination of Martin Luther King." Donan describes that spring of 1968 as a time when the campus was awakening to the issues of the day—namely the war in Vietnam and the Civil Rights movement. "I was lucky I didn't get in trouble for that picture, given that I was in the Army ROTC," Donan adds.



Donan had arrived on campus after two years at the Ogontz campus—now Penn State Abington—north of his native Philadelphia. "I wanted to fly from an early age," Donan explains, "and I received an appointment to the Air Force Academy." When that didn't work out, he says Penn State was the most affordable option. "As I recall, it was \$370 per term back then," he laughs.

Though it meant a long commute from his West Philadelphia home every day, Donan found Ogontz a comfortable fit. "At that time it wasn't much bigger than my high school so it made for a smooth transition to college," he says. After two years, though, Donan says he was ready to be away from home and welcomed the move to University Park.

Following graduation, Donan had his chance to fly, serving as a fixed-wing aviator in the U.S. Army for five years and achieving the rank of captain. Though he had orders for Vietnam he never went there—instead his hardship tour was in Saudi Arabia. Upon discharge in 1973, he accepted an entry-level sales position with American Hospital Supply Corporation in Southern California. Donan advanced quickly with American, rising to vice president and general manager in five years. Further promotions followed. Four years after American merged with Baxter International, Donan became president of their Pharmaseal Division. Before retiring in 2001, Donan served as the southeast region president for Allegiance Healthcare Corporation, which had spun off from Baxter in 1996. In that position, he managed a regional operation with a staff of more than 1,000 in 40 locations and \$1 billion in sales.

In 2002 he founded Executive Management Consulting, LLC, a senior management consulting firm. Donan, who serves on several boards for both profit and nonprofit companies, also devotes considerable time and money to support initiatives within the Smeal College of Business. From guest lecturer in the classroom to mentor to undergraduate and MBA students to commencement speaker, Donan has shared his expertise with future business leaders. Additionally, he served on Smeal's Alumni Society Board, is a member of the Hammond Society, and currently serves on Smeal's Board of Visitors. Since 1997, Donan has established an undergraduate scholarship, MBA fellowship, and an endowed professorship within the Smeal College of Business—all with the goal of promoting diversity within the student body and faculty.

Penn State previously honored Donan as an Alumni Fellow in 1994. He is a life member of the Penn State Alumni Association and lives with his wife, Pamela, near Atlanta.

