When Jay Harris ’90 applied for admission to Davidson College, he wrote that his greatest contribution to the college would likely come from his leadership. His application highlighted “the high standards” he placed on himself along with his “moral character” that he hoped would allow him to serve as a role model.

Not only did Jay live up to his hopes expressed in his application, but he continues to do so today as a businessman, community member and a volunteer.

At Davidson, Jay was a history major, men’s varsity baseball player, member of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity and a Hall Counselor. In his 5th year Reunion survey, when asked his favorite place to study, Jay wrote, “Study?” By his 10th Reunion survey, Jay listed Dr. Partin as his favorite professor, Kamikaze as his favorite court party, and the M&M or Bacon and Eggs as his favorite restaurants.

In 1992, Jay and Meredith Gabel Harris ’91 were married and lived in Davidson until 1996. They moved to Chicago for two years while Jay completed an MBA at the University of Chicago. After graduating, he worked at J.P. Morgan in New York City. In 1999, Jay and Meredith moved back to Davidson where Jay began work at First Union which led to his current role as Managing Director of Mergers and Acquisitions at Wells Fargo Securities. Jay and Meredith have two children, Charlie and Sara Kate.

Throughout his career, Jay has served alma mater in multiple roles. He helped to plan the 15th Reunion for the Class of 1990. He was an Annual Fund Class agent in early 90s and again in recent years. Jay and Meredith honored Dr. Partin and Will Terry by supporting scholarships in their names. Jay served as an Economics Comparative Advantage Advisor for students with interest in Economics. And, he served as a mentor in Leadership Davidson for students. In the past two years, he co-led sessions on Investment banking for Davidson students. In addition, Jay has been instrumental with the hires of several Davidson graduates to Wells Fargo Securities, serving as a resource at every stage of the application process for many candidates as they began careers in banking.

Jay and Meredith have opened their home to host Davidson in Davidson events for all graduates who live in and around town. Their warm hospitality has made the connection stronger for so many in the area.

One of the areas in which Jay has had the most impact is through his leadership in the Fund for Davidson. Director, Katharine Atkins describes his service, “Over his many years of service to the college, Jay has been such an advocate for his class, The Fund for Davidson, and Davidson as a whole. His natural leadership and true commitment to the college inspires all with whom he comes into contact, and he genuinely cares deeply about the future of the college. He has many demands on his time, yet, he always makes Davidson a priority. He and Meredith both have stood out as dedicated and passionate leaders—not only within their respective classes, but within the alumni body as a whole.”

Their service includes serving as Fund For Davidson Ne Ultra Co-Chairs in 2014 and stepping into roles as Fund for Davidson National Chairs this year. At the same time, Jay accepted a leadership role on the Game Changers Campaign Committee.

Jay, for your deep commitment to community and family and for your leadership and loyalty in supporting alma mater with your time, talent and resources, the Alumni Association honors you, James E. Harris, Jr., with the Alumni Service Award, on the occasion of the 25th Reunion of the Class of 1990, this 6th day of June, 2015.