



## Alumnus pledges to give others a lasting gift

To Dr. Michael Linden '98, education is a lasting gift and a great investment. In fact, he grew up hearing his dad say, "An education is one of the few things in life that people can't take away from you." This is just one of the reasons Dr. Linden gives to the First Generation Initiative at Saint Mary's.

"Education can transform others," said Dr. Linden. "Both of my parents went to college, so I had a lot of social capital in terms of how to start and finish. However, you have to recognize that without programs like the First Generation Initiative, some students may not get the support they need."

As a hematopathologist at the University of Minnesota, Dr. Linden interprets highly complex laboratory tests to diagnose diseases including leukemia and lymphoma. He also teaches clinical skills to undergraduate and medical students, residents, and fellows. Many of the trainees Dr. Linden works with grew up in rural Minnesota and are the first in their families to attend college — let alone medical school and residency.

Dr. Linden no doubt has a passion for serving others. While at Saint Mary's, he participated in three S.O.U.L. mission trips, the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, and Thurley Homes outreach. He also lived with and became friends with many students from the De La Salle Language Institute.

"I'm very curious about meeting people who are different than I, whether they be from a different culture or urban environment, and helping them get connected," Dr. Linden said.

It was through close relationships he had with people like Brother

Larry Schatz — who served in Campus Ministry at Saint Mary's while Dr. Linden was a student — that Dr. Linden became involved in the opening of the San Miguel Middle School in Minneapolis in 2000. After the San Miguel Middle School closed in 2011, Dr. Linden wanted to think of a new way to give back. He read about the First Generation Initiative at Saint Mary's and was drawn to the program.

"I realize that there are a lot of high-potential students who benefit from formal structure and resources to enhance success," said Dr. Linden. "There are two important pieces to the First Generation Initiative program: the first is making sure students have a way to pay for school; and the second is that they have the necessary framework to foster college preparedness, including academic support, career networking and development, and having an overall sense of community."

Dr. Linden is grateful for the career and social opportunities he received through college and hopes to give others the same advantages.

"Giving someone the gift of education is a really remarkable opportunity to help them launch," Dr. Linden said. "Supporting them financially and through structure at the school helps them find a pathway to completion and gives them a lasting gift. It's a good investment."



**Dr. Michael Linden '98**

### ABOUT THE LEADER

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