

**Robert Goodman**  
**Epsilon Phi (Temple University), 1984**

*By Shane McGoey*

Have you ever wondered how one makes a career in sports management? Or better yet, how someone takes a degree in Radio, Television, and Film and becomes an Assistant General Manager/Director of Marketing for the newest NHL venue in the country. Before the 1990's, there weren't majors in sports management at colleges and universities throughout the country. And the field of sports management was only vaguely talked about. Graduate Brother Rob Goodman blazed his own career trail with a lot of sweat and a little luck.

"I always loved sports," Rob Goodman offers, "when I was in Graduate School at Temple University in 1985-86, I did my Masters thesis on Marketing and Promotions in Major League Baseball. I saw an emerging situation come about, and I thought this might be worth exploring as a career." While Rob was completing his Masters in Sports Administration at Temple University, he volunteered in the Athletic Department. Rob helped with ticket sales, game day marketing and promotions, and other areas related to Temple Owl Athletics. Soon thereafter, the Athletic Department offered him a Graduate Assistantship that paid for his graduate classes and provided a small stipend to live. When Rob completed his graduate courses, the Athletic Director helped Rob network with other colleges and professional teams to find a job. "I had interviews at Harvard, Rutgers, and Hartford, but those ended up not panning out," Rob provides.

Then one day in 1987, Rob was sitting in the Owl Alumni Club on Temple's campus and ran into a friend who just completed an internship with the Omaha Royals, the Triple-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals. "My friend offered to call the GM on my behalf and setup an interview for me. The next thing I knew, I was on a plane to Omaha, Nebraska. The GM gave me a job on the spot!" Rob's first job in sports management was in ticket sales, making \$12,000 per year and working 80-90 hour weeks. "I did that job for about 8 months when I got a call from the Athletic Director at Temple telling me about a job at George Washington University. The University was looking for a Sports Marketing Coordinator/Sports Information Director," Rob explains. Rob ended up getting the job and working there for 2 years acquiring skills and experience that would make him more marketable in the field of sports management.

In his second year at George Washington, Rob received a phone call from the GM of the Omaha Royals – the same GM that had hired him in 1987. "He wanted me to come back to Omaha and be the Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the minor league team. Sports teams were becoming more interested in marketing and ways to promote themselves. Nobody at the time knew marketing in the sports industry. My experience and skills were starting to pay off!" Under Rob's leadership, the Omaha Royals became more visible as a franchise and in their community.

Rob's abilities also became more visible. In 1995, Rob was asked to become the Vice-President and General Manager of the Omaha Racers of the Continental Basketball Association (CBA), the official developmental league of the NBA. "That was an interesting experience because I had never worked specifically with building a marketing program for pro basketball franchise," Rob offers.

However, new opportunities presented themselves to Rob in 1997 as the owner of the CBA franchise ceased operations of the franchise and partnered with Rob to create a entertainment and event marketing company in Omaha. Rob, then helped launch two radio stations in Omaha - ESPN and Radio Disney affiliates. Then in late 1999, Rob's first wife was offered a job in New Orleans. "It was a pretty good job that she could not pass up. So we packed the car and went to New Orleans. It took two months, but I was able to find an entry level job as a Premium Seating Coordinator for the Louisiana Superdome and New Orleans Arena." After a few months, Rob was promoted to Senior Marketing Manager. And then another turn of events occurred. Rob was offered the GM position at the Pontchartrain Center in New Orleans in the summer of 2004. The Center hosts conventions, trade shows and sporting events in the New Orleans suburbs. Rob's career was going well and then a catastrophe hit that no one would be ready for – Hurricane Katrina. The Hurricane caused the severe damage and death in the New Orleans area. And Rob and his family lost everything – their home and most of their possessions. Fortunately, Rob and his family were safe. Soon Rob and his ex-wife at the time decided that they wanted to move where it would be safer for them and their family, as well as provide for a better quality of life. As luck would have it, the management company that managed The Pontchartrain Center also managed Mellon Arena in Pittsburgh was looking for an Assistant General Manager/Director of Marketing. Rob got the job, his ex-wife is now a assistant professor of marketing at Chatham University, and his two children are doing very well. "It was important that we stay a family unit even though my wife and I were no longer together," offers Rob.

Since moving to Pittsburgh, Rob has been involved with the Pittsburgh Penguins transition from the Mellon Arena to the new CONSOL Energy Center, as well as remarrying, all of which happened in the same year. "My wife, Lisa, has two children from a previous marriage. We've been able to blend both families pretty well. She's a big baseball fan and is slowly beginning to understand hockey."

Rob believes that his experience in Alpha Chi Rho at Temple prepared him for all that has occurred in his life. "You know, before I joined Alpha Chi Rho, I was a commuter student at Temple. I wasn't really connected to anything nor anyone at Temple. Alpha Chi Rho changed that for me. The Brothers encouraged me to get involved on campus and in our community. They taught me never to forget my roots; you only gain from something what you put into it." Rob still stays in touch with Epsilon Phi Brothers. Even when he was in New Orleans dealing with the aftermath of Katrina, Brothers were checking in with him to see how he was doing. "That alone was very gratifying," Rob says, "Those phone calls and emails helped me a lot during those times."