

John Melligon '81

Outstanding Service Award



An investor and former corporate executive, John Melligon has been lending his expertise to Skidmore for years. He's a member of the College's Board of Trustees and has held leadership roles on several key committees. An active contributor to the most recent Creating Our Future Campaign Executive Committee, John also served as a member of the Parents Council and co-chaired the Senior Family Parent Project in 2018.

But the men's lacrosse alumnus considers his most significant contribution to be his role as co-founder of the Friends of Skidmore Athletics (FOSA). And when men's ice hockey was cut from the College's athletics budget in 2003, John was instrumental in rallying the entire athletics community to successfully advocate for its restoration.

John's Skidmore family includes wife **Kathy Melligon '81** and their son, **Chris '18**, who also played lacrosse for the Thoroughbreds.

A political science major who minored in business management, John launched his career at Chase Manhattan in the Corporate Lending Program, where he spent time working in its Public Utilities Division.

He joined L.F. Rothschild's High Yield Trading desk as a salesman in 1987 and three years later became a managing director. He transitioned to a similar role at Wasserstein Perella & Co. before opening a home office, Chatham Opportunities Inc., in 2002, where he focuses on real estate and personal investing.

As a Skidmore trustee, John serves as vice chair on the Budget, Finance and Infrastructure Committee and is a member of the Advancement and Audit committees. An invited panelist for a number of career counseling events, John has also been a judge for MB107.

"I chose Skidmore because I wanted a liberal arts education. I decided to follow my interest in political science because it was a solid preparation for law school, which was my original goal."

He considers constitutional law to be one of the most impactful courses he took in political science at Skidmore. "It gave me an understanding of America's democratic system and honed my reasoning and public speaking skills. I learned about the injustices this country has inflicted on its people, but also how we can work towards correcting those injustices within the framework of our legal system."

But John was also intrigued by business and finance, prompting him to build a foundation in investing. Ultimately, a career in business won out.

Other vivid memories center on playing men's lacrosse at Skidmore. "My experience was nothing like it is today; there were fewer men on campus back then, so fielding a team was problematic. Since I had not played during high school, I was a 'walk-on.' Learning the game from scratch was an accomplishment in itself," recalls John. "Being part of a team and developing team-building skills have been among the most lasting and influential of all my college experiences." The lifelong friendships forged with teammates, he reflects, are the source of some of his "fondest memories" and most enduring bonds.

It was precisely those individuals who John and other alumni athletes called upon to act in 2003 when men's ice hockey fell victim to budget cuts. Thoroughbreds across teams and class years quickly rallied to raise over \$1 million to restore the program. And that was just the beginning. Thanks to their thoughtful and dynamic leadership, President Philip A. Glotzbach recognized not only how passionately these alumni felt about the men's ice hockey team, but also the value of their partnership. Together they would work to elevate athletics writ large, to the benefit of the entire College community.

As a co-founder of the Friends of Skidmore Athletics, John, along with **Steven Cornell '81, Jim and Joyce Benedict Ricker '69 P'91, P'96 P'97** and others, helped to usher in a new appreciation of the student-athlete experience. Among the initiatives fueled by FOSA are the establishment of its Hall of Fame lobby in Williamson Sports and Recreation Center and an annual ceremony honoring inductees; the Thoroughbred Cup Golfing Event; myriad facilities enhancements; the addition of coaching and auxiliary staff positions; and an overall recognition of athletics by the College as a central pillar of its mission.

"As a volunteer, I am most proud of being a founding member of the Friends of Skidmore Athletics Committee. FOSA opened a whole new avenue of fundraising from the College's athletics community. It is the extracurricular activities at any college that many alumni remember most fondly; the games on a Friday night or the collective pride in having a winning team. This is the essence of FOSA. Today, the organization provides funding that improves the experience of every Skidmore athlete."

John has also been an influential voice on the Creating Our Future Campaign Executive Committee. A welcoming presence at countless campaign events, FOSA outings, president's receptions, celebration weekends and regional gatherings, he continues to be one of Skidmore's most stalwart and charismatic ambassadors.