



Bart and Lynn Holaday

A Lifetime of Commitment: A Graduate Gives Back

By Ann Tillery

Every winter, the United States Air Force Academy is remade through a glacial alchemy of moisture and gravity. Snowflakes arrive, diffusing the glare of high-altitude sunlight and softening the firm precision of the school's architecture. Then as spring commences, it brings with it warmer temperatures, melting snows and the gradual transformation of the campus as thoughts of graduation enliven the spirits of the Cadet Wing.

This spring, however, the Academy will begin another kind of transformation: ground will be broken for a new 92,000 square-foot indoor athletic training facility, the largest privately funded capital project in Academy history.

The transformation has been made possible by Bart Holaday, Class of '65, and his wife, Lynn, who in early February donated the \$5 million leadership gift toward the facility. When completed, the facility will be one of the premier athletic practice venues in the nation. The Holadays' contribution, the culmination of a lifetime of service to the Academy, is also distinguished as the largest private gift from a graduate in school history.

The indoor training facility was born from a number of unique internal and external needs at the Academy. For starters, athletic participation is mandatory, making every cadet a student-athlete. Cadets must take three physical education courses a year, in

addition to participating in either intercollegiate or intramural sports for the duration of their education. The Academy considers student athletic participation crucial to the development of sound character and strong leadership skills.

Over 4,400 cadets currently participate in an intensive, year-round athletic training and competition schedule, which encompasses 27 intercollegiate sports, 14 intramural sports and a multitude of physical education classes. The demands of modern athletics at the Academy have far exceeded the capacity of the Cadet Field House, the indoor training facility built in 1968. Athletic teams compete for practice time in that same indoor space, which often means many cadets lose valuable practice time or play outdoors in harsh weather extremes, exposed to freezing temperatures, high winds, and potential threats of lightning. The addition of the facility will increase the practice times available, allow for greater flexibility in game preparation, reduce injuries, improve safety, and decrease weather delays—leading to improved athletic performance for all cadets.

Currently, the Academy is the only service academy and one of three institutions in the Mountain West Conference without a dedicated indoor training facility. West Point and Annapolis have both added indoor training facilities to their campuses in the last five years. And since attracting outstanding candidates is a critical function of the Academy's vital recruiting efforts, the existence of

campus facilities on par with, or exceeding, those of competing colleges is a key component of supporting the Academy's mission of developing leaders of character.

For a time, the construction of the facility seemed like a distant objective. The USAFA Endowment, a charitable foundation dedicated to raising private funds in support of the Academy, had undertaken the project in April of 2008 and had made steady and incremental progress. However, the needs of the Academy and its cadets demanded an accelerated timeline, which is where Bart and Lynn Holaday, and their unprecedented gift, enter the picture.

Bart Holaday grew up in North Dakota, playing sports year-round and balancing schoolwork with a variety of part-time jobs. He maintained a newspaper route while in elementary and junior high school and worked summers as a lifeguard and pool engineer at the local swimming pool. These experiences formed the strategy he would apply to all future challenges. "Somewhere early in my life," Bart says, "I concluded that I might not be the smartest person or have the greatest athletic ability, but that if I worked really hard, I could succeed." His high school football coach suggested that Bart look into attending the Air Force Academy. Bart went to the New Mexico Military Institute on a Falcon Foundation Scholarship after high school, playing football with Heisman Trophy winner Roger Staubach. Staubach went on to the Naval Academy, and Bart received his appointment to the Air Force Academy in 1961.

Bart thrived in the Air Force Academy's disciplined environment. He threw himself into his studies, athletics and extracurricular activities. "I wanted to be of service to my country," he says. "I loved flying and airplanes. I loved the philosophy of the Academy that focused on leadership and character, academic excellence and physical development. The Academy challenged me in every way." He majored in economics and played football, earning varsity letters his last two years. He also participated in debate, the ski club, choir and the Academy Assembly, and served as Cadet Wing Commander and Class President.

While a secondclassman, Bart met a young representative from the University of New Mexico at a student conference. It was Lynn's first visit to the Air Force Academy. They met again in 1965 at the annual Ring Dance, a moment that made a lasting impression on Lynn. "Bart was highly visible as Wing Commander and I could scarcely overlook how elegant he looked in his dress uniform with all those bars on his shoulders," she says. "There was much talk at that time about the likelihood he would be named a Rhodes Scholar." When he was selected several months later, Lynn sent him a note of congratulations. Bart telephoned her in response and they began corresponding through let-

ters, discussing everything from favorite ice cream flavors to the Cold War and Vietnam. "From the outset, we communicated as though we'd been close friends for years," says Lynn.



Over the years, Lynn became an award-winning, globetrotting writer, editor and community leader, visiting more than 90 countries and all seven continents. Meanwhile, Bart went to work at the Pentagon and other federal agencies, and later enjoyed employment in private sector finance and oil industries. Predictably, Bart advanced as a leader in his chosen fields, serving as a senior manager in the Department of Defense and the Federal Energy Administration, and as top management at venture capital and investment firms. Bart also became an active philanthropist over the course of his professional career. In 1997, he established the Dakota Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization that fosters social entrepreneurship in the states of North Dakota and New Mexico through program-related investments. Then, in the late 1990s, Bart and Lynn reconnected and eventually married. "The close and easy relationship we'd known before simply re-emerged, stronger than ever," Lynn says. Lynn now serves as the Dakota Foundation's executive director.

Through all of this, the Academy was never far from Bart's thoughts, given its role in many of the pivotal experiences in his life: his education, his values, leadership roles, and his marriage to Lynn. He has been unwavering in his support of the institution that has provided him so much; for example, he has served as a trustee on the Falcon Foundation board (the same organization that provided his prep school scholarship) for more than 25 years. He also serves as Chairman of the USAFA Endowment and is a Sabre Society member.

In 2002, the Holadays established a \$1 million scholarship to benefit the Academy, named in honor of his mother. Every year, the scholarship sends a top Academy Rhodes Scholar applicant for two years of graduate study at Exeter College, in Oxford. Additionally, Bart was recently selected as the winner of the 2009 Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes his outstanding service and personal dedication to the Academy. He is the first Academy graduate to receive the award.

With their combined passion for community leadership and philanthropy, the Holadays redoubled their efforts in support of the Academy. "To know Bart is to recognize his affection for the Academy, the friends and faculty he bonded with there and the formative impact the Academy education had on him," says Lynn. "It would be impossible for me to care deeply for Bart and share his life without also embracing the Air Force Academy as a key part of my life."

Bart and Lynn Holaday see their recent \$5 million gift to the Academy as the culmination of their steadfast dedication; the indoor training facility is a project that is close to both of their hearts. Lynn explains the reasons behind their donation: "In marrying Bart, I instantly connected with the football program at the Academy. We've scarcely missed a Falcon football game in the last 10 years; supporting the team is one of the things we love doing together and with our friends. However, more than viewing this indoor facility as just a boost to Falcon football, I see it as adding to the excellence that characterizes every other part of the Academy." Bart adds, "It is the greatest joy of my life to work hand in hand with Lynn on projects that we both love, such as the athletic center. I strongly believe that some of the best lessons in life and some of the best opportunities for character develop-

ment occur on athletic fields. This facility will greatly enhance all physical education and athletic programs at the Academy, which in turn will enhance the overall quality of graduate leaders."

Their gift jumpstarted progress on the athletic facility, but more help is needed to bring it to completion. "I hope that the successful completion of this facility will rekindle private donations to the Academy which are so necessary for the Academy to continue as an institution of excellence," says Bart. "I hope that this athletic facility, with the new Center for Character and Leadership Development, will help the Academy achieve recognition as the premier institution in the country for character and leadership development."

The indoor training facility will house a regulation-sized field to accommodate football, soccer and lacrosse practices, in addition to many other athletic activities. Cadets will have full view of the Rocky Mountains through the building's floor-to-ceiling windows. It is slated for completion by early 2011. Additional private support is still necessary, with many recognition opportunities available for contributors. For more information or to make a gift, please contact Jimmy Martello, '00 at (719) 472-0300, ext. 200 or at jimmy.martello@usafaendowment.org. ✓



Once Upon a Time ...

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