Terry Donovan ('65 & '67) By: Josiah Buss, BA ’15

Terry Donovan is a 1967 graduate of Concordia, a “six-year man” who completed four years at Concordia High School and two years at Concordia College at the former Milwaukee campus. “The campus was completely different than Concordia today,” Terry stated, “but still a great education.” He remembers how small the campus was, the limited courses that were offered, and the emphasis on preparation for churchwork. What hasn’t changed, however, is “the chance to have a really good education at Concordia and Concordia’s mission.”

His class of 1967 celebrated their 50th anniversary during the May 2017 commencement weekend with several events; including recognition at the Baccalaureate service and a tour of the old Concordia campus. Donovan was also selected to receive this year’s Distinguished Alumni Award, an honor given to an alumnus to honor his or her service to Christ, the Church, and the world.

Donovan’s life reflects many years of service and hard work. He spent 35 years working with the United Parcel Service (UPS), beginning in college loading and unloading packages. After graduating he became a full-time supervisor in Wisconsin managing UPS hubs and establishing new facilities. He worked his way up to their International Marketing and Business Development teams as well as to the Human Resources. Donovan eventually retired as the UPS E-ventures Vice President of Human Resources.
Since retiring, his focus has been on his family and travels as well as continuing to serve the Church. Donovan and his wife, Sandee, have traveled extensively in the past several years around the US as well as to Asia and Europe. He has also held multiple leadership roles at his church, Rivercliff Lutheran, in Atlanta, GA. Currently President of the church council, he has brought experience in leadership and change management to the congregation through several campaigns and decision-making processes.

Donovan has continued to invest his time and knowledge at Concordia as well, and “it’s been a lot of fun,” he said. In 1998 he was asked by Rev. Patrick Ferry, Ph.D. Concordia’s new president at the time, to become involved beginning decades of service and leadership at Concordia. He has used his extensive experience in business and strategic planning to help guide Concordia through several transitions, including re-establishing the CUW Foundation and the merge with Concordia University Ann Arbor. Donovan served as the first chair of the Foundation Board and recently became chairman of the Board of Regents. “I really like doing it,” he said. “We have an outstanding team.”

He’s also excited about the future of Concordia, citing the Luther Promise program, strength in the Distance Learning programs Concordia’s emphasis on being innovative, and the ways Concordia University is continuing to be a leader in education. Donovan sees the value in the liberal arts education Concordia provides, preparing students to be able to think critically in a variety of careers/vocations rather than simply learning the fundamentals of a specific job. To him it is also about the mission, the vision, and continuing to innovate while remaining “the Church’s university.”

Ever the advisor, he encourages the Concordia community to continue to learn. “Never stop learning,” he said, “and spend time with people who also want to keep learning.” To Donovan it’s also about putting in the work. “There is no substitution for hard work for anyone.” He also recognizes the importance of staying true to one’s faith. “The most important thing you can do,” he said, “is to stay in the Word every day.”