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Across generations: Mike and Ramond

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Quad 136



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Most Johnnies naturally have their closest relationships with classmates and those within a couple years either side of their graduation year. Yet it is also true that many Johnnies have found that the Saint John's experience is powerfully transferable across time. Whether they meet a current student or an older alum, the typical Johnnie finds an almost immediate connection with current students or other alumni because of the shared connection to Collegeville and the educational experience here. It can be knowledge of the same professors, the shared Benedictine values, a connection to a favorite monk, love of Johnnie athletics, a shared love of the natural beauty of the campus or any one of a dozen other things that make the Johnnie experience unique.

I was reminded of this powerful intergenerational connection between Johnnies as I observed the relationship between an alumnus coming up on his 50th Reunion and a 2017 graduate. Mike Scherer will celebrate Reunion with his 1967 classmates this June 23-25, and Ramond Mitchell received his Bachelor's Degree in Theology a few weeks ago.

They met initially when Ramond served as the student representative on the Building and Grounds Committee of the Board of Trustees. Mike was Chair of that committee, and he took Ramond under his wing, orienting him regarding B&G Committee issues and serving as a mentor. Coincidentally, around the time they met, Ramond served as a student host when Mike's grandson, Sam, visited campus. (Ramond must have done a good job, as Sam is now a junior at SJU.)

But the relationship grew deeper as these two men came to enjoy time together beyond

committee meetings. Ramond is from the Bahamas and was not always able to travel home on breaks. Mike and his wife, Sue, invited Ramond to spend time with them at their home in Wayzata. Coincidentally, Sue had connections to the Bahamas from her time serving as a volunteer nurse, so she and Ramond had a shared love of the islands and their culture. This year during the annual CSB and SJU alumni visit to the Bahamas, Mike and Sue went along, and Ramond arranged for them to meet and spend time with his mother and sister.

Earlier this spring Mike and Sue ensured that Ramond's mom was in Collegeville for Mom Prom. When Commencement Week rolled around, Mike and Sue hosted Ramond's mom, sister, grandmother and a close family friend for a week—introducing them to the delights of Minnesota, like the Twin Cities and the Mall of America, and providing transportation to Collegeville where they all witnessed Ramond's graduation together.



Though Mike and Ramond's friendship may be slightly atypical given their ages and places of origin, it is but one example of the relationships that have grown out of a shared Johnnie experience. If you have other stories of the power of Saint John's and Saint Ben's to build unique friendships, I'd enjoy hearing about them.

Mike Scherer will receive the [2017 Walter Reger Distinguished Alumnus Award](#) at Reunion this summer, June 23-25.

Ramond Mitchell gave the 2017 Saint John's University [Student Commencement address](#).

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).