

is just the beginning.

“When people are in the mall, they’re in a mindset to be sold to. We’ve created an evolution of the mall as an advertising medium,” Bellej says. She’s referring to Simon Brand Ventures, which the company established as a business-to-consumer marketing operation. The idea is to think of the tens of millions of people who visit Simon malls more than 2 billion times a year as more than just shoppers—they’re an audience that other businesses would really love to reach. “National brands want to connect with our consumers.”

So, part of Bellej’s work is helping make the connection between Simon Brand Ventures’ clients and the shoppers who stroll through her 24 properties. Much of that happens through in-mall advertising, events and promotions. “It’s an exciting new medium. Simon Brand Ventures was created to meet consumer needs by enhancing the shopping experience.”

Simon Property Group’s expanded vision of the mall also involves education. Bellej helped launch the Simon Youth Foundation a dozen or so years ago to serve the needs of challenged youth in Simon mall communities, and its primary focus is facilitating learning through scholarships and onsite educational offerings. Believe it or not, kids are not just shopping at the mall—they’re going to school there also.

The 25 Educational Resource Centers that the foundation operates in 13 states are alternative schools that give at-risk kids a chance to earn their high school diploma through a career-focused curriculum. Partnerships are with local school districts and students at the centers must live in the participating districts, but they complete their studies at special mall-based sites rather than traditional

classrooms. The students come into the program identified as “at-risk,” and some have previously dropped out of school, but Bellej says “we have a 91 percent graduation rate at our Educational Resource Centers. I take great pride in the success of the Simon Youth Foundation.”

Bellej herself did not earn a diploma at the mall, but “I worked my way through college in retail,” she says. She studied advertising and public relations as a commuter student at Youngstown State University, where she credits her experience in Alpha Kappa Psi as being an important part of her professional development. Her retail work was much more than just a job to help pay her tuition. “I worked in a mall the entire time I was in college, and I was in fashion shows in college. I really became interested in the retail business.”

After graduation, she had the opportunity to continue in retail, landing a job with Simon at a mall in Toledo, then moving into the director of marketing position at the Greenwood Park Mall just south of Indianapolis. She worked her way into her executive job at headquarters. “I love the mall business,” she says. “It’s so fluid; it’s always changing.”

*Frank J. Brye*

## Building a life around Alpha Kappa Psi

Much of Frank Brye’s life has revolved around education in one way or another—and to think his educational story got its start in a one-room schoolhouse.

Brye, *Western Michigan ’60-Life*, an Alpha Kappa Psi member for half a century, served as the fraternity’s executive secretary and executive

### Alabama

**Ezell Cornelius** ’56-Life resides at Capstone Village, the University of Alabama’s on-campus retirement community. He retired from BellSouth in 1987.

### Auburn

**Sharon L. Oswald** ’89-Faculty will assume the role of dean of Mississippi State’s College of Business in July. She has been the management department head at Auburn University for 12 years, and has more than 20 years of experience as a teacher and administrator, with special focus on strategic planning and management.

### Ball State

**Christopher J. Clemens** ’03 was married in December in a small town north of London. He and his wife Amy reside in Santa Barbara, Calif.

### DePaul

**Nancy Nguyen** ’07-Life was crowned Ms. Corporate America 2011. She is responsible for conducting professional workshops, attending seminars and speaking to audiences about her platform of empowering entrepreneurial women throughout the world. She resides in Raleigh, N.C.

### Fordham

**Anthanette M. Fields** ’94-Life is engaged to Chad Wilson. They plan to be married this summer. Toni is currently the secretary for the Alpha Kappa Psi Fraternity Board of Directors.

### Marist College

**Anna M. Battiloro** ’97 is the senior brand manager for Malibu Rum USA. Prior to Malibu, she worked on ABSOLUT Vodka for four years where she launched the ABSOLUT “City Series,” including ABSOLUT BROOKLYN in which Anna worked collaboratively with filmmaker Spike Lee, and earned the honor of “Consumer Campaign of the Year” from *PR Week*.

**Joanna Battiloro** ’97 is as an assistant vice president of equity trading IT support at Credit Suisse where she was named one of the Credit Suisse Rising IT Stars of 2010. She resides in Brooklyn, N.Y.

### New York

**Harry Prassakos** ’95 and wife Sandy welcomed the birth of their daughter Angela on December 14. She is joined by big brother George, age 3.

### North Carolina State

**Ryan C. Foust** ’97 is engaged to Christine Cuevas. They plan to wed in August in Norfolk, Va.

### St. John’s

**Robert G. Volpe** ’58-Life completed his 12th year of retirement after a 43-year career on Wall Street, the last 25 years with Merrill Lynch where he retired as a vice president and marketing manager. He resides in West Windsor, N.J.

### Southern California

**Mark D. Warden** ’81-Life was elected to the New Hampshire state legislature last fall and is serving a two-year term. He resides in Manchester. Mark is a past vice chairman of the Alpha Kappa Psi Foundation Board of Directors.

### Southern Illinois

**David N. Bateman** ’65-Faculty was recognized by the Harvard Medical School for having lived on insulin for 50 years, a relatively rare occurrence. Following a 35-year SIU career, he was later named Lumpkin Distinguished Professor of Business at Eastern Illinois University.

### Stetson

**Nicole L. McGinnis** ’02 joined Davidson & Nick CPAs in Naples, Fla. As a senior accountant, she is responsible for tax planning, consulting and auditing for its clients.

### Syracuse

**James R. Wagner** ’62-Life turned 80 years old last year and celebrated the 45th anniversary of marriage to his wife Doris. They reside in Fayetteville, N.Y.

### Texas

**Marissa E. Barrera** ’01 and Jose Gutierrez were married in December. They reside in Houston.

### Texas – San Antonio

**Victoria C. De La Garza** ’09 joined 4WARD Financial Marketing in Houston. As a corporate event planner, she is in charge of 11 conferences per year ranging from 40-600 attendees.

director for years after signing on for what he thought might be a couple of years of service. Even after he retired from his day-to-day role at the fraternity, he stayed committed to supporting education, raising money for Alpha Kappa Psi and taking on a role in the student loan business.

“I was a farm boy from Michigan,” he says, but he knew from a young age that his future did not necessarily have to be in agriculture. In his family, “It was never ‘Are you going to college?’ It was ‘What college do you want to go to?’” Western Michigan University turned out to be the answer, studying personnel management.

His advisor wasn’t so sure that was a great career direction, and Brye ended up in general business with a number of minors, including personnel. What he didn’t know at the time was that his best career move was joining Alpha Kappa Psi.

“Our chapter was unusual in several ways,” he recalls. “We were one of the few that had a house. And all of the chapter members were in their middle to upper 20s, mostly Korea veterans coming back and getting their degree. They were older professionals and I liked that.



I thought that would be helpful for my education.”

He was active in the chapter and became its president. But upon graduation, he prepared to venture into the real world away from

education, taking a position with Ball Corp. in Muncie, Indiana, in the early 1960s. Not long thereafter, though, he attended an Alpha Kappa Psi conference and was persuaded to take a leave from Ball to work with the fraternity. “The irony is that when I came here in 1962, it was for a job of one or two years.”

His initial job with the fraternity was field secretary. “I went around to the chapters to make sure they were doing everything properly. I believe



ABOVE: Past Executive Director Frank Brye with current CEO Gary Epperson. Brye was recognized with a certificate honoring his 50 years of membership in Alpha Kappa Psi. He served as executive director from 1971-1991.

LEFT: Executive Director Frank Brye at the 1977 Convention in Atlanta. He is joined by Past Foundation Chairman Harold C. Carlstead and Past Fraternity President John C. Wilson.

I was the youngest field consultant to travel for the fraternity,” he says, noting that it was a more typical role for someone in his 50s. “When I would be visiting a chapter, they were surprised to see a 22- or 23-year-old representing Alpha Kappa Psi.”

Brye never went back to Ball Corp. He did take a leave to serve

his country, but returned to Alpha Kappa Psi and by 1969 was running the place. He served in his executive position until 1992 but stayed on for a time helping the fraternity’s foundation with fund-raising efforts. He remains a strong believer in the role of Alpha Kappa Psi as a bridge linking the academic world of

business school with the real world of business. “The most important purpose of the fraternity is to give students basic training in the business world,” he says. “We’re still doing a very good job preparing them for the world they’re going to be facing once they graduate.”

*Michael K. Mitchell*

## Career path drives toward Toyota

Careers can certainly be interesting journeys—for the most part, every stop along the way adds something to the big picture that may become useful further down the path. That has certainly been the case for Mike Mitchell, *Florida State ‘88*.

Having grown up in Florida, Mitchell picked FSU for his undergraduate finance studies (and he’s earning an MBA there now through distance learning). “Before I ever got to college, I knew I wanted to do something in business, and I was always mesmerized by the stock market,” he recalls. “I thought being a stockbroker would be glamorous. I enjoyed investment classes.”

He never became a stockbroker, but he did land in the financial-services industry. In fact, he spent a couple of decades in banking and consumer lending, working for Universal Card as well as Wachovia and National City banks. “I also did an entrepreneurial thing,” he continues.

During his professional career, Mike Mitchell has held progressive leadership positions, primarily with Fortune 500 firms, including Toyota, Wachovia and AT&T. Currently, Mitchell serves as chief financial officer of Toyota Financial Services Bank (TFSB) where he leads a team of professionals responsible for growing and managing an asset portfolio in excess of \$500 million.

