

## **Thomas E. Heslin \***

*Clinical Professor of Business Administration*

Everybody who comes in touch with Tom Heslin knows he does every task before him with great passion and total dedication. Such a commitment to his work easily explains what would equate to two full careers for the average person. Forty-four years of corporate experience, ranging from area manager to director, three years of running his own business, followed by 18 years of teaching in a world-class university, are remarkable accomplishments that anyone would be proud of. Tom takes all of his accomplishments in stride. He has always carried out his teaching and mentoring with the same zeal he demonstrated in his earlier years.

Tom began his career in 1944 with AT&T/Western Electric, where he served in a variety of management and directorship roles until 1986. During that time he attended New York University on a full-tuition scholarship and received his B.A. in economics in 1961. In 1967 he completed the AT&T/ Western Electric Executive Training Program. In 1973 Tom had his first teaching experience as executive in residence at Santa Clara University. Tom retired from Bell Systems after 43 years of service. From 1986 through 1989 Tom began his own company and served as chief executive officer of Supra Liminal Creations, Inc., in Chester, New Jersey. In 1990 Tom was invited to join the Indiana University School of Business to set up a program for Introduction to Business. He worked all that summer writing the syllabus and lectures. A class that began with 100 students now attracts over 1,000 students. In 1999 he earned the title of clinical professor of business administration.

Since Tom Heslin began teaching, he has often been touted as a favorite instructor. His remarkable teaching accomplishments have resulted in numerous teaching awards and honors, including the William G. Panschar Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award in 1992–1993; the Student Choice Award for Outstanding Faculty in 1994, 2002, and 2004; the All University Teaching Award in 1994; the IU Teaching Excellence Committee Recognition Award for Teaching Excellence in 1996; the Alpha Lambda Delta Favorite Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching in 1999, 2000, and 2001; the Alpha Kappa Psi Overall Outstanding Teacher in 2000 and 2002; the Alpha Kappa Psi Teacher's Excellence Award for "Cares Most About His Students" in 2001; the Delta Sigma Pi Schuyler F. Otteson Teaching Award in 2002; the Student Choice Award Winner of the IU Student Alumni Association in 2003; and the Student Choice Award for Outstanding Faculty in 2004.

Tom has made significant contributions in service as well, working as a faculty advisor and authoring an introduction to business book titled *A Roadmap*. Some of the student organizations he has advised include Sigma Iota Epsilon, DECA–IU Kelley School of Business Marketing Department, the IU football team, and a cultural diversity student group. Tom performed his role as advisor with great enthusiasm and planted ideas when

he identified needs that had been unmet for his students. Teaching a large introductory business course brought together young men and women from diverse backgrounds. When Tom realized that cultural sensitivity and an appreciation of diversity were needed among his students, he gladly volunteered to be an advisor for such a group. Several of his students upon graduation have remarked that they were greatly influenced by his teaching as well as his book.

Tom has positively influenced over 25,000 students from various walks of life. Many of his students continue to stay in touch with him thanks to his impact not only on their careers but also in their lives. He rewarded his stellar students by hiring them as his teaching assistants to manage a large and complex freshman course. Over the years these teaching assistants have returned to Bloomington to meet with him on an annual basis before the winter holiday break. They have put together a book featuring their memories of him. With his age and natural white beard, they have remarked that Tom is beginning to resemble Santa Claus. They also believe his jovial nature and his lavish praise of his high-performing students make that identification very appropriate. When Tom was asked how he felt about his teaching assistants, he commented that he has had incredibly good luck in selecting them. He has had a firsthand glimpse of students following their career paths and has had the pleasure of seeing these students grow academically. Tom feels that IU should be very proud for having attracted these students.

In addition to his success within the classroom, he and wife, Carole, have been happily married for 45 years. He is the proud father of two daughters, Maria and Leah, both of Bloomington.

When asked what he would like to be remembered for, Tom replied that he hopes he lives up to the many, many letters from students thanking him for what they think he has done for them. As Tom put it, "I will miss the life but I have the joy of remembering these things that have given me so much pleasure."

Tom will be leaving behind a great legacy in the generations of students he has influenced. Tom's contributions as an outstanding teacher will leave their mark on the teaching field in the business area.

*~M. A. Venkataramanan*

\* We note in deep condolence with his family, colleagues, and friends that Professor Heslin passed away shortly after this sketch was written.