

## **Tom Shannon, 1966 Alum, Wins Horatio Alger Award**

Gainesville, Fla. – Thomas Shannon (BSBA `66) was presented with the 2009 Horatio Alger Award on April 2. Shannon, a successful collegiate athlete and businessman, was inducted as a lifetime member of the Horatio Alger Association, and stated, "every award is an honor, but this is extremely humbling because it honors extraordinary Americans. These are amazing people and I am humbled to be put in their company." Fellow inductees this year included Pepsi CEO Indra Nooyi, Las Vegas developer and gaming magnate Steve Wynn, and Oscar winner Denzel Washington, among others.

Shannon came to UF on scholarship (for football and baseball), where he played quarterback and was voted Most Valuable Player of the 1962 Gator Bowl. He was inducted into the UF Hall of Fame for both football and baseball.

After a knee injury in the Canadian Football League ended his career, he began working in real estate development. He formed his own company in 1976, Village Development Company, and it was then that he formed T-Bird Restaurant Group, Inc., which developed Outback Steakhouse restaurants in California. With 63 restaurants and 5,000 employees, Shannon was recognized as Restaurateur of the Year in 2002. He is also a seven-time recipient of the National Franchisee of the Year Award. Fellow athletes have also paid their respects, with the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame having presented Shannon with the Distinguished Citizen Award.

Shannon and his wife, Kathy, earned degrees from UF, as did two of their three children, their son-in-law, Shannon's sister and two of her children. Given the depth of their UF roots, as well as Tom's business beginnings, it's only fitting that the Shannons claimed their own piece of real estate on campus. They made a gift of \$1 million toward the construction of William R. Hough Hall and, in recognition, the building's third floor will be named The Tom and Kathy Shannon Family Leadership Gallery.

"It means a lot to our family to maintain a closeness with the growth of the university; our tradition is to be involved," said Shannon.

Tom Shannon is the second UF business alum to earn the prestigious Horatio Alger Award. John H. Dasburg (BSIE `66; MBA `70; JD `73), Chairman and CEO of Astar Air Cargo, Inc., was inducted in the class of 2001.

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