

# TRINITY COLLEGE

# 2009

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR



**PETER ETIENNE**

(BA'85)

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τὸ εὐαγγέλιον  
I THESS. 2:4





## **PETER SINCERELY LOVES WHERE GOD HAS TAKEN HIM—**

**NOT THROUGH GIVING HIM A MAP,  
FOR HE WOULD NEVER HAVE GUESSED HIS  
DESTINATION WHEN HE GRADUATED FROM  
TRINITY IN 1985, BUT BY GUIDING PETER  
EACH STEP OF THE WAY.**

*Peter and his wife, Marci, met through an InterVarsity Bible Study at the University of Illinois while he was studying law and she was getting a PhD in Psychology. They have three children: Kaitlyn, 15, Brian, 12, and Hannah, 5. The Etiennes have attended Harvest Bible Chapel in Lake Zurich for the past fifteen years, where Peter volunteers in the video recording of the worship service. Alongside Peter's involvement at Trinity, Marci has taught counseling classes at TEDS and recently became the director of the Counseling Center on campus.*

# PETER ETIENNE

(BA '85)

## GOD DOES NOT GIVE US A MAP; HE IS OUR GUIDE.

So says Peter Etienne when he explains how he came to work for Baxter International Inc. as senior counsel, focusing on environmental, health, and safety matters, as well as ethics and compliance. It is a role Peter enjoys, one that fits well with his faith. Not only does Baxter develop and manufacture life sustaining products—focusing on hemophilia, immune disorders, infectious diseases, kidney disease, and trauma—but the company also seeks to behave in an ethical and responsible manner. Within Baxter, Peter helps to drive both the theoretical and practical sides of this commitment to corporate responsibility, and considers himself blessed to be working to instill godly principles that are also sound business methods.

### TRINITY COLLEGE

During his time at Trinity, Peter never thought one day he would work fifteen minutes from campus for one of the largest corporations in the area. Born and raised in Dominica, an island in the Caribbean Sea, Peter's family moved to the U.S. Virgin Islands when he was eighteen. He attended the College of the Virgin Islands before transferring to Trinity in 1983.

While here, Peter studied English/Communication, was the editor for *Trinity Digest*, and was accomplished on the debate team. Over all, it is the people that he remembers the most. One friend, Ed McCoy, helped him buy a winter coat because Peter had no experience with cold weather. Later, when Peter needed a job, a friend gave him his. "These guys really took me in and were great friends, and really exemplified Christ. So when I think of Trinity, I think of all of these guys in the dorm." Fellow students remain some of Peter's closest friends, and he still stops in to greet faculty members. "Dr. Graddy has been a mentor to me—one of the most respected persons I know. People like Dr. Graddy, Cliff Williams, and Doris Roethlisberger... these people influenced me significantly."

### STEP BY STEP

Education both expands the mind and provides an occupation for people. As a liberal arts major, Peter will say that he tended to focus on the first rather than the second. So, during his senior year, he began to consider what he would do. As the first to go to college in his immediate family, he had never considered graduate school, but a friend assured him he could get in. "For younger people who do not have parents with graduate degrees or live in areas where it is expected... it is a ceiling-breaking moment when you really think 'oh, yeah, I could do that.'"

Peter enjoyed debate; Dr. Graddy kept saying that he had a good mind and crafted his arguments well. So he considered law schools, though he had never even spoken to a lawyer, as far as he could recall. In 1986 Peter began a law degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

After earning his degree in 1989, Peter specialized in real estate law at Sidley Austin LLP in Chicago. But about that time the real estate market tanked, and the firm suggested environmental law, a rather hot field at the time. Baxter was a client of the firm, and after a time Peter was invited to become an in-house lawyer at this large, multinational, medical products company.

Peter Etienne has now been at Baxter for sixteen years, and has worked primarily in ethics and compliance; environmental, health, and safety (EHS); and export control and trade compliance. He is now senior counsel within the company—akin to being a partner in a law firm—and is a member of the EHS Leadership Team which sets policies and guidelines for the

company. Peter sincerely loves where God has taken him—not through giving him a map, for Peter would never have guessed his destination when he graduated from Trinity, but by guiding Peter each step of the way.

### SUSTAINABLE & ETHICAL

If there is one area that Peter champions at Baxter, it is sustainability. He believes corporations have a responsibility to those they interact with: the people they employ, the communities within which they operate, and the material resources they use. Sustainability is making sure that the use of resources does not damage the ability of future generations to use those resources or benefit from them. There are three primary branches: environmental, economic, and societal. Sustainability is the corporate version of being a good steward and includes an element of corporate philanthropy. "I focus on making sure that the corporation has a very strong environmental management program that really becomes an extension of being a good steward. We care about the safety of our employees. If you are outside of the big corporation you may be a little cynical about it. But inside, there is no doubt in my mind that what we're doing is really beneficial."

Peter instructs and counsels people on doing the right thing, both because it is of good business value and because people want to work in such a place. And such work is consistent with his faith. "Ethics and compliance is just a remarkable place. I start out in new employee orientation and tell people the difference between what's legal and what's ethical. I could give you all the examples of people

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EDUCATION WITH A PURPOSE, TRANSFORMING PEOPLE FOR LIFE. TRINITY PROVIDES THAT IN A  
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who missed that point and who paid sadly for it.” Peter has also traveled extensively to develop this ethical and compliance-minded understanding at branches of Baxter in other countries, places where workers are afforded few protections under the law, or certain unethical behaviors, such as bribery, are the norm.

The work that Peter and others have done has been noticed. Baxter was recently recognized among the World’s Most Ethical Companies by the Ethisphere Institute, as well as one of the 100 Best Corporate Citizens by Corporate Responsibility Officer magazine, ranking particularly high in climate change, employee relations, and environmental issues.

Along with his responsibilities at Baxter, Peter is currently the chair of the EHS Legal Council of the Conference Board, and has served as vice chair during the last two years for the American Bar Association Section of Energy, Environment, and Resources.

## TRINITY

Peter has been actively involved at Trinity during the last fifteen years, including ten years on the board during the integration of the schools into Trinity International University. He also has been on the advisory board for the Center for Bioethics & Human Dignity (CBHD) for a number of years, helping to see the center through a number of changes, including the integration into the university. “CBHD really is a gem. It’s about the definition of a human being, impacting court cases, impacting thought leaders, providing tools and resources to doctors, nurses, and other medical practitioners. And they do it with a very small handful of people. It’s remarkable.”

Why remain involved in Trinity all these years? “I am really passionate about this notion of Christian education—education with a purpose, transforming people for life. Trinity provides that in a really powerful way at the undergraduate level. The education you get there really impacts you for life. I will do everything I can to help Trinity pursue and fulfill its mission. It’s the *idea*... the idea is an enduring one. And I think more so in the world that we live in. As we send people out in the secular world, as well as into fulltime ministry, that foundation is critical.”

*It is with great honor and pleasure that  
the Trinity Alumni Association awards the 2009  
Trinity College Alumnus of the Year Award to*  
————— **Mr. Peter Etienne (BA ’85).** —————

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