



LANCE DELBRIDGE '91

Love for ONU began early in life for Lance Delbridge. “Both of my parents attended Olivet,” he says. “And they always encouraged me to consider attending Olivet.” Lance recalls ministry teams and other ONU representatives coming to his Nazarene church in Michigan while he was growing up.

Lance entered ONU as a freshman accounting/business major and later changed his major to secondary education. A member of both the golf team and the baseball team, he continues to treasure the memories and friendships he made with his teammates.

One of Lance’s favorite ONU memories was playing intramural sports for four years with a group of football, basketball and baseball players named the “Squids.” Another memorable time was during a service at College Church of the Nazarene on campus. “One of my professors, Dr. Ellwanger, came down and prayed with me,” he recalls.

“It felt great to know that my professor cared about me and what I was going through at that moment.”

When Lance began dating Tina Rist, also an ONU education major, he knew God was orchestrating the beginnings of a wonderful partnership. As the parents of three adult children, they continue to see the impact of ONU in their family. Their two oldest children are graduates of ONU, and their youngest is currently a student.

As Lance began to consider potential ways he could serve others while moving closer to retirement from his position as a high school principal, he began to engage in conversations about potential work at ONU. “Several people from the University contacted me and shared that they thought I would be a great ambassador for the University in the area of Development,” he says.

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“About a year later, I was contacted to see if I might be the right fit at the right time. God has now opened this door for me to engage again in the great things that are happening at ONU.”

Beginning in July 2024, Lance will work remotely for the University as a major gift officer. He and his wife will continue to live in Michigan. “I appreciate ONU’s focus on developing students spiritually, as well as on helping them succeed academically,” Lance says. “I see this with my own kids. The ONU faculty and staff get to know the students, make personal connections with them and invest in them. Many colleges and universities have abandoned their Christian heritage and roots. ONU stands firm and continues to let people know, ‘This is who we are.’”

In this new position with the University, Lance sees how his career experience and calling from God are intertwined. He is looking forward to the amazing people he will be meeting and the resources they want to invest in developing the potential in others. “My passion is people,” he says. “God has called me to take care of people and to be a good steward. I’m excited about the opportunities I will have to encourage others and build relationships with them.”

Two of the most influential people in Lance’s life were his grandfather and his father. “They are the two most positive people I’ve ever known,” he says. “My grandfather was focused on positive thinking and my father was focused on being prepared and seeing the best in others.”

Lance recalls their advice well. “My grandfather would always remind me to keep looking up and reminded me that no matter how bad things

might seem, millions of people wish they could be in your shoes,” he says. “My father reminded me that if you are the smartest person in the room, you might want to find a new room. He also encouraged me to see people for who they could become rather than seeing them as who they are.”

Throughout his life, Lance has also used his gifts of teaching and administration to serve the Lord. In his community, he has served on several community and educational boards. In his local church, he is a member of the board, sings on the praise team, and helps with sound and lighting during worship services. He was a member of the advisory board for the Michigan District Church of the Nazarene. For 12 years, he served on ONU’s board of trustees. He was a member of the executive team during the year of the search for ONU’s next president following the retirement of Dr. John C. Bowling.

“God’s Spirit is so evident on the ONU campus,” Lance says. “People are actively sharing triumphs and struggles together. What a great place for me to do new work for the Lord and explore new connections with new people! I already see how God is planting seeds for me to help grow.”

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