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Mid-management Virginia attorney played a vital role for the Spiders

By Tom Kirvan

Ranked among the top 25 liberal arts colleges by U.S. News & World Report, the University of Richmond is located on a 350-acre campus.



Brian B. Vieth
Principal
Goodman Allen Donnelly

Both Brian Vieth and his wife, Hannah, served in managerial capacities during their college days at the University of Richmond (U of R), where they met and then became close colleagues while juggling work and school responsibilities at the private university of 3,100 students.

Their work – as student managers of the U of R football team – was a four-year ride filled with highs and lows, ranging from the thrill of a national championship in their first season of service to the Spiders, to an interim coach-led squad mired with a 3-8 record during their final year on the sidelines.

“There are ups and downs with any job, of course, but the friendships we made and the experiences we had made it all worthwhile,” said Vieth, a medical malpractice attorney with Goodman Allen Donnelly in Glen Allen, Va.

The couple met on the day before pre-season practice began in 2008, a year that will live a long life in the U of R history books for the gridiron glory that ensued under the leadership of head coach Mike London.

“Little did we know that we were about to be part of a team that would win the first national title for the University of Richmond in any sport,” said Vieth. “That was not on our radar when we began practice that season. We were just trying to contribute to the success of the program, to be part of a team that had hopes of a winning season.”

Vieth sported a football background when he enrolled at U of R, playing all four years of high school as an offensive lineman. Hannah, now a senior project manager for Capital One Bank, was also an athlete in high school as a member of the soccer and volleyball teams.



“I played from middle school through high school, but I knew that playing at the college level was not in the cards for me even though I was part of a team that won the regional championship and made the state semis my junior year,” Vieth admitted. “I was too small and too slow to make it in college.”

But during his senior year of high school, Vieth received an unexpected email from the head equipment manager for the U of R football team, gauging his interest in being a student manager.

“I jumped at the chance, as it was my way to stay connected to football, a sport that I loved,” Vieth remarked. “I had also been going to their games since I was a kid and was well aware of their recent success.”

The Spiders began the season with a 4-3 mark, which included a last-second loss to rival James Madison University. The heart-breaking loss, ironically, set the stage for Richmond’s unprecedented run of nine consecutive wins en route to the Division

IAA title with a convincing victory over University of Montana, 24-7.

“We beat William & Mary to get into the playoffs, and then defeated App State, Northern Iowa, and Montana,” Vieth said of the magical run that coincided with the end of the semester and exam time.

“I think most of us were pulling all-nighters during those three weeks, as we bussed eight hours to play App State in North Carolina, then traveled to the semifinals in Cedar Falls, Iowa to play Northern Iowa, and finally flew to Chattanooga [Tennessee] for the championship game,” Vieth related. “It was a blur because there was so much going on. You never really had a chance to step back and say, ‘This is really cool.’ We stayed at the Chattanooga Choo Choo Hotel and there were all these fans coming out of the woodwork for the big game. It was definitely exciting to be a part of all that.”

Each member of the squad, including all the coaches and managers, also received championship rings that serve as treasured reminders of the success the team enjoyed during the 2008 season.

During their four seasons as managers, both Vieth and his wife received plenty of Nike gear that the sports apparel giant dished out to members of the Richmond athletic program. The gifts were part of the partnership agreement that the company had with the university to be the official athletic footwear, apparel, and accessory brand for the Spiders.

“I got a lot of Nike shorts, shoes, jackets, and pants during those four years,” Vieth recalled. “It wasn’t until about 2020 that I actually had to buy a new set of athletic pants because all of the elastic had finally worn out from the ones I had in college. I still have my letterman’s jacket that I wear occasionally to a football game.”

Vieth said the five-member student manager team played an integral role



Avid fans of the University of Richmond Spiders, the Vieths, pictured here in their college days, developed their bond while both serving as student managers for the U of R football team.

in supporting coaches and players with day-to-day operations, which included equipment management, practice setup, and assisting during various on-field drills.

“We would get there 45 minutes before practice and often would stay long after it ended, providing the behind-the-scenes support that the team needed,” he indicated. “The coaches and players, I think, appreciated all that we did, but they didn’t necessarily say so at the time. We also could be dressed down by a coach if we did something that didn’t meet with their satisfaction, but generally they appreciated that we were doing our best to make their job go smoother.”

Certain players, who came in via transfer from a bigger school in search of a starting position, could be demanding at times, according to Vieth.

“Some of them had this ‘kiss the ring mentality’ that we had to deal with,” Vieth recalled. “I made it clear to them that ‘you’re just another player to me’ and my job here is to make your life easier.

“But I also would tell them that ‘I have a lot of discretion in my job, and if you’re good to me, I will go out of my way to be good to you.’ Otherwise, they might find out the hard way that their clothes might not get cleaned,” Vieth said with a laugh.

Now, as a father of two young children – Weston, 4, and Emmie, 2 – Vieth has been forced to alter his football watching.

“I’ve had season tickets for years, but it’s a little harder to go to all the games now because the kickoff is during nap time for our kids,” Vieth said of the sacrifice he needs to periodically make in pursuit of effective parenting.

Vieth comes from a long line of lawyers, as his father, grandfathers, and an uncle all practiced law.

Vieth’s father, Peter, spent the bulk of his career as a medical malpractice attorney before becoming the editor of *Virginia Lawyers Weekly*, a BridgeTower Media publication.

“Like me, he also graduated from the University of Richmond Law School, and has been my legal role model,” said Vieth, whose mother, Gwen, primarily raised the couple’s four children. “I was born when he was in law school and some of the faculty and staff more than 20 years later remembered me as an infant and toddler from back then.” 



All smiles, the Vieth family posed for a photo with the U of R mascot, WebstUR, the spider-like figure that roams the sidelines at home football games.

