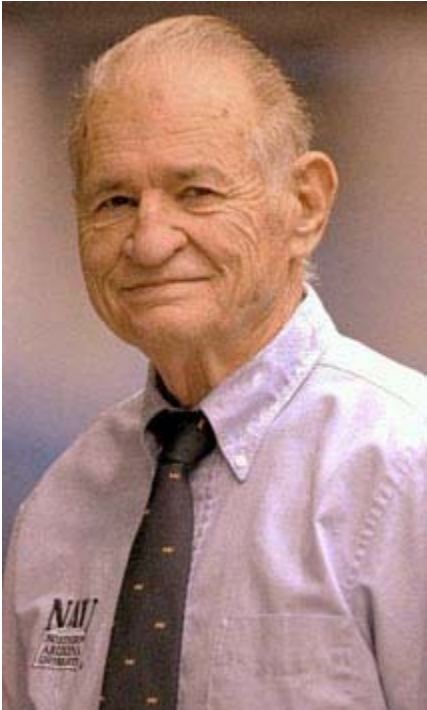


No One's Gonna Love You Like I Do, NAU



Sam Borozan, NAU's beloved teacher, staff member, donor, and triple alumnus. Every penny Sam has earned as a youth, high school, and college referee for the last 51 years has gone to benefit NAU students.

It's very hard to interview Sam. People going by in the hall catch a glimpse of him and stick their heads in the door to say hello. After our interview, Sam took me on a historical walking tour of North Campus, and, I kid you not, a driver beeped and pulled over to ask how he was doing.

Within our small office at the Graduate College, Sam knew Karen's grandfather, Dana's college roommate, and had refereed soccer games for Maria's children.

Everybody knows Sam. If you don't, you're missing out.

It was our student-athletes who first began to call him "Mr. NAU." Sam Borozan seems to know everything about this institution, which has been the great love of his life. Sam is a triple alumnus with a bachelor's degree in elementary education ('57) and master's degrees in educational administration ('61) and counseling ('67). He slipped away to coach and teach elementary school through junior college in Arizona and California, then homed for NAU in 1979 and never left.

He's been education faculty, the university scholarship coordinator, and assistant to the alumni relations and athletic directors. He officially retired to Tucson in 1992, but teaches two courses on refereeing here every fall anyway.

Sam is 82. And oh, the stories he can tell....

Once Upon a Time at NAU

Once upon a time, Sam Borozan of Bisbee arrived at Arizona State College (now Northern Arizona University) to become a freshman. It was 1953, and he had already spent six years in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, so he was 22 when he got here. Perhaps this explains why he truly valued what he found at NAU and why he threw himself with such gusto into the many light-hearted pranks and traditions of a 1950s Lumberjack.



Sam in front of Taylor Hall as a freshman and dressed for "Exchange Day" during Hell Week, 1953.

In the "happy days" of the mid '50s, Sam explains, the student body numbered 600 to 1,000. Tuition was \$10 dollars per semester, and \$500 would pay for a year of school with spending

money left over. Students generally took classes in the morning so that they could have jobs in the afternoon earning 15 to 25 cents an hour. There was 100 percent participation in student elections, and being elected to a student body office or the student council was considered the highest of honors. Women students bargained fiercely over who got the best first-floor dorm room in Morton Hall for successfully sneaking out after the female-only 10 p.m. curfew.

In those days, the university was not a “suitcase college,” where students left on weekends to go home or to Phoenix for entertainment. There were sock hops every Friday night, and most students showed up at athletic games to cheer on the Lumberjacks. There were concerts and plays, sororities and fraternities, glee clubs and talent shows. At Christmas, the women of Cardinal Key organized carolling and the burning of the Yule Log in the huge fireplace at the North Student Union. There was an Ice Carnival in winter and a Sweetheart’s Ball at Valentine’s. Sam himself established Mom and Dad’s Day (now Family Day) in 1955.

Homecoming (and the accompanying Hell Week for freshmen) meant hectic activity. The men of Blue Key were in charge of the parade. The Chain Gang, a group of 13 male seniors, hauled the freshman off to the stadium to teach them the songs, chants, and traditions of the university. Freshmen looked a little strange over the three-day weekend: the first day they wore their clothes inside-out, the second day they exchanged clothes with the opposite sex, and the final day they dressed to the hilt. There was a huge bonfire the night before the game, then the marching band, the coaches, the athletes, town people and gown people—almost everyone was there for the biggest game of the year.

It was all great fun. “Students in earlier years were *invested* in the university,” Sam says. “We cleaned our own dorms, we planted trees and improved the campus, we organized the major university events. We were involved! It gave us a strong sense of belonging. And the faculty taught us life skills and values as they taught the discipline.”

Sam mourns the loss of so many traditions over the years. “It’s no one’s fault,” he says. “We just got too big. I had so many wonderful things to remember. Today, students remember parking tickets and the lines at Financial Aid.”

A Born Teacher

After his medical discharge from the Marine Corps, Sam came to the university intending to study something involving money. Having lost six years of salary through military service, he rather liked the thought of banking as a career. However, one of his many odd jobs as a student was assisting with chores at the training school for children in Blome Hall. The teacher he worked with would say, “Sam, you’re a born teacher,” and he would erupt in protests. But she was right.

The turning point came when he complained that some of the children were dirty and smelly. In response, he was given an assignment to go see the neighborhood where they lived. He found a

virtual shanty town with wooden shacks covered in tar paper, outhouses, and a single outdoor water faucet for everyone, wrapped in burlap so it wouldn't freeze. Sam was appalled.

So he marched into the office of the person in charge and said very calmly, "You're going to go to hell for what you're doing to these people." He was almost expelled. But the experience taught Sam something valuable that he has carried with him ever since.

"You can't be critical of kids. When students walk into your classroom, they bring in varied experiences and family life backgrounds. You accept them as they are and go on to teach them."

Paying It Forward

It was Sam's mother, Florence Vuksanovich Borozan, who taught him to "pay it forward." Originally from Yugoslavia, she was left a widow supporting four children at the age of 24 when Sam's father Stevan died of silicosis, a direct result of many years of work in an underground mine. Her own father, Eli Vuksanovich, had died years before in an accident in Bisbee's Copper Queen mine. It was 1934, and she only had a sixth-grade education.

"It was very difficult to raise kids during the Great Depression," Sam says. "My mother worked ten hours per day at ten cents per hour in a laundry, but she was always generous. She instilled in us that no matter what your station in life, you can always help someone in need. She was sort of a beacon to me: somebody helps me now, I help somebody else."

In 1960, Sam began to set aside his proceeds from officiating to finance the Borozan Memorial Scholarship for modern language students in honor of his mother, who spoke four languages. He also created the Coach Max Spilsbury Scholarship (1986) for Arizona high school football recruits and the S. S. Borozan Scholarship (1999) for varsity women soccer players.

Sam teaches his scholarship students to pay it forward in their turn. He also tells them about his mother earning her college degree in Russian Art, Literature, and Language *magna cum laude* at the age of 72. "I want to inspire them that it's never too late to start something," he says.

But he doesn't stop there. Sam buys extra gear for the women athletes—backpacks, uniforms, and jackets that the department can't afford. Over the years he donated scoreboards to Lumberjack Stadium, Rolle Activity Center, and Wall Aquatic Center.

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Sam officiated high school football for this father in 1988 and for his son in 2010. He has been recognized by the Arizona Interscholastic Association and the Arizona Softball Hall of Fame for his 55 years as a coach and referee for youth, high school, and college sports.

Teaching by Example

Sam's contributions go far beyond dollars and even beyond the classroom. His greatest contribution is simply who he is. Senior soccer player Kristi Andreassen was selected as the Academic All-American of the Year in the university division for the 2010-11 *ESPN* Academic All-America® Soccer Teams. She is a two-time recipient of the S. S. Borozan Soccer Scholarship.

“Sam is the most generous, caring person that you will ever meet,” Andreassen says. “He dedicates all of his time to teaching and refereeing. Everything he does is for others and never for himself. His passion is taking pictures, especially at sports events. He makes CDs full of pictures and makes copies for everyone on the team. Everyone knows who he is because he supports all of the athletes and loves to chat with everyone.

“Sam’s other passion is teaching. Nothing gives him more pleasure than to pass on his knowledge to others. He loves teaching so much that he even teaches for free!

“I hope I can be as generous as Sam some day,” Andreassen continues. “He has truly inspired me and made me a better person, and I **feel blessed to have him in my life.**”



Sam has volunteered regularly as an elementary school teacher throughout his retirement. And he helps NAU students in many quiet ways. "I walk the campus every day," he says. "If someone looks sad or upset, I ask, 'How are things going? Do you need any help?' Most of the students say, 'No, I'm fine,' but every once in a while you'll meet someone who needs something you can give."

A case in point was a young woman he found sitting in the Skydome in tears. She had signed up for a summer class, hadn't taken it, but was being charged for it anyway. She couldn't pay the bill and couldn't register for classes again if she didn't. Sam took her to the president's office, and the matter was cleared up in 15 minutes. She had been trying to straighten things out for three months.

She told Sam he must have been sent by God. "No, not really," he said. "I do this all the time."

Thanks for the Memories

Someone at this university needs to do oral history with Sam to capture his knowledge and stories of NAU for all time. He is the epitome of what one alum can accomplish in giving back to his alma mater because he does it on every conceivable level.

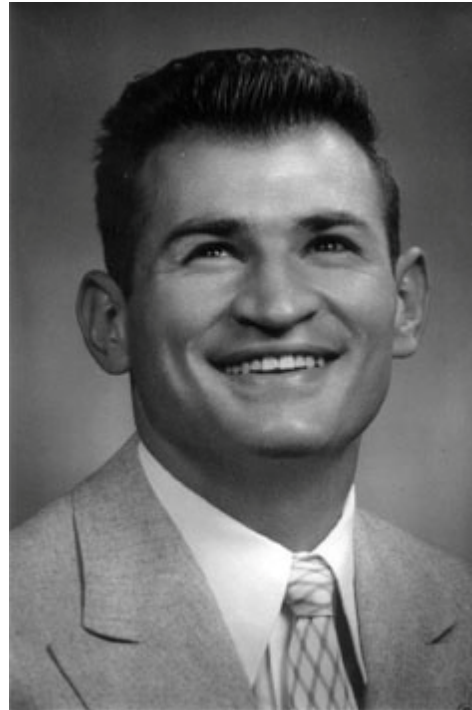
We think a lot of Sam here. The students honored him as a Homecoming Parade Marshall and Dedicattee and gave him an ASNAU Outstanding Faculty/Staff Award.

Alumni Relations gifted him with Alumni Service and Alumnus of the Year awards.

NAU Athletics reserved a spot for him in the Athletics Hall of Fame.

And he already had his Gold Axe from 1957.

His memories would fill a book, and I know what I'd call it. "A Valentine for NAU" might do. Or maybe just "Love, Sam."



Sam as an ASC sophomore. (Photos courtesy of S. Borozan)

—*Melissa Hatfield Riggs, Graduate College*

AFTERWORD: As it happens, Cline Library's Special Collections unit recently completed a video oral history project with Sam that is [now available](#). The transcript is forthcoming.