The arrival this past summer of Mark A. Heckler as Valparaiso University’s 18th president provided yet another piece to what has been a historic year on several fronts for the campus and alumni community.

As Valpo celebrates 150 years and marches forward with the $200 million “Our Valpo, Our Time, 150th Anniversary Initiative,” it welcomes Heckler into the university family and looks to his leadership as the campaign enters the home stretch.

“There aren’t a lot of universities that get to celebrate 150 years,” Heckler says. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to look back over all of that time and to tell all of the stories and to bring all of the family together so we can really have a good time in celebrating our accomplishment.”

Heckler succeeds Alan F. Harre, who led three successful campaigns and built the university’s endowment to about $200 million in 20 years at the Valpo helm. Heckler plans to “carry the torch” Harre so humbly yet effectively held.

“Heckler Settles in at Valpo

Before coming to VU, Heckler served the University of Colorado Denver for 13 years, first as director of the School of Arts, later as founding dean of the College of Arts and Media and, most recently, as provost and vice chancellor for academic and student affairs.

Heckler and wife Veronica both hail from western Pennsylvania and have four children, including a daughter enrolled in Valparaiso’s graduate studies program.

“When Mark comes home, he always has a smile on his face,” Veronica Heckler says. “We’re very happy to be part of the VU community.”
LaRosa Thankful for College of Engineering

Kelly LaRosa ’95 wants more. Not for herself, but for Valparaiso University.

LaRosa has spent the last four years working as the traffic engineer for the city of Avondale, Ariz. She handles all things traffic-related — signage, streetlights, signals and planning.

Having graduated with a degree in civil engineering, LaRosa credits Valpo for her career advancement. But she said her education provided more than “book smarts.” VU gave her the tools to work not only within her industry but also outside it.

“There are people skills, management skills and leadership skills, and Valpo gave me the base for all that, and I don’t think any other school could have provided that,” says LaRosa, who, while attending VU, spent a semester in China as part of the Hangzhou Study Program. “Valpo definitely set me up to succeed. I never could have been as successful as I am without the education and experiences and background I got at Valpo.”

Though she enjoyed her Valpo experience, LaRosa wants others to get even more out of their experience. That’s why she supports the latest College of Engineering venture, as part of the “Our Valpo, Our Time, 150th Anniversary Initiative,” to build an addition to Gellersen Center. The College of Engineering is in the midst of raising between $8 million and $10 million for the project, which will provide additional space for the growing number of design projects being undertaken at Gellersen (see alumni profile on Kelly LaRosa ’95).

“I don’t think I could give back enough to Valparaiso to thank them and to help prepare future generations,” LaRosa says. “Improving [Gellersen Center] now will make it more attractive for future growth and will attract more students.”

Fundraising continues for an addition to Gellersen Center, home of the College of Engineering. This important project will provide additional space for the growing number of design projects being undertaken at Gellersen (see alumni profile on Kelly LaRosa ’95).

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Fundraising is complete for the athletics portion of the “Our Valpo” initiative. An all-purpose synthetic turf was installed this past summer at Brown Field, and a new scoreboard adorns the facility. View photos of the improvements to Brown Field at valpo.edu/givetovu.

‘Our Valpo’ (continued)

Don Fites ’56 and Connie (Busse ’56) Ashline, co-chairs of the “Our Valpo, Our Time, 150th Anniversary Initiative”

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“The generosity of our many donors makes all of this possible,” “Our Valpo” co-chair Don Fites ’56 says. “It’s about sharing responsibilities and creating opportunities, and we’re doing that at Valpo.”

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Proposed addition to Gellersen Center

View additional images of the proposed Gellersen Center addition at valpo.edu/givetovu.

VALPOfund Ensures the Future

One of the cornerstones of the “Our Valpo, Our time, 150th Anniversary Initiative” is the VALPOfund, the university’s annual fund. Gifts to the VALPOfund are unrestricted, allowing Valpo to invest in those areas on campus where funding is most essential.

For more information or to give to the VALPOfund, visit valpo.edu/givetovu.

VALPOfund

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