Gene McMenamin, ‘75, raves about his position as general manager of the 392-room Omni Austin Hotel Downtown in Texas because his days are spent moving through the hotel and constantly interacting with everyone—from customers to sales and marketing staff. But when recounting his career in tourism and hospitality, it’s another type of movement he most enjoys: the opportunities to move around the country.

McMenamin was born and raised in Philadelphia, attended Temple and landed his first job in the industry at the Hyatt in Cherry Hill, NJ. Shortly after working with Hyatt in Richmond, Va., he started with Omni Hotels. With Omni, he moved to Cincinnati, then to Atlanta, spent time after working with Hyatt in Richmond, Va., attended Temple and landed his first job in the industry at the Hyatt in Cherry Hill, NJ. Shortly after working with Hyatt in Richmond, Va., he started with Omni Hotels. With Omni, he moved to Cincinnati, then to Atlanta, spent time in Indianapolis and finally landed at his current location, Austin. Throughout it all, McMenamin welcomed every opportunity to explore new areas of the country.

“The mobility when working in the hospitality industry allows you to see many places and get a great picture of what our country is all about,” he said.

McMenamin’s professional accomplishments were recognized Oct. 5, 2012, when he was inducted as the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management’s representative in Temple’s 2012–13 Gallery of Success. McMenamin said of Temple, “It’s a place anyone would want to be.”

Alumnus Robbie Artz develops a home with the Tampa Bay Rays

A Central Pennsylvania native, Robbie Artz, ’06, came to Temple for the Philadelphia experience. The urban environment and his long-running appreciation for city sports drew him to the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Today, Artz is an integral part of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team. He got his start with the Rays while at Temple. As a sport and recreation management major, Artz spent his last semester working for the Rays’ Corporate Partnerships department and, in 2006, was hired full time for a new department dedicated to the fan experience.

Artz worked as a coordinator of fan experience for nearly two years and was involved in projects such as stadium renovations and post-game concert planning.

Currently, Artz is a senior coordinator of development in the team’s Development and Business Affairs department, working on plans for the newly built spring training stadium as well as many other long-term business initiatives.

“It’s a lot of fun to be a part of the team,” he said. “When I joined the team, we had the worst record for years, and in three of the last four years we went to the playoffs and we won the American League pennant in 2012.”

Outside of work, Artz coaches a youth basketball team. He also earned a law degree and spent many nights studying for the bar exam. In the long term, he hopes to use his degree in a legal role with the Rays.

“I feel very fortunate that I wound up in a great organization with exciting projects,” he said. “Even more importantly, I’ve gotten to work with some really amazing and intelligent people, as well as just really good people who I’ve learned a lot from.”

—Michele Avey

Alumna Jacqie Carpenter is CIAA’s first African American female commissioner

Jacqueline Carpenter, ’93, is recognized as the first appointed African American female commissioner of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), but she only recognizes the accomplishment as landing her dream job.

“I wanted to be in a leadership role and never really focused on the fact that I was an African American female going for this job,” she said. Her husband and daughter were the first to hear the news that she was appointed commissioner, and it was special to her because her family knew this was her dream.

Carpenter admits to being a true competitor but credits her time as a student-athlete for teaching her to take challenges and turn them into opportunities. The resilient mindset she developed as an athlete has followed her throughout her career.

Carpenter finished her undergraduate degree at Hampton University and completed the graduate Sport and Recreation Administration Program at Temple. She then held a variety of roles at the NCAA including being on the leadership team of the Division I Men’s Basketball Championship.

Along with recent career accomplishments, Carpenter is pursuing her doctorate. She said School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Professor Michael Jackson, who was her advisor at Temple, has given her advice for pursuing her PhD and “is still a mentor and a confidante.”

When speaking about leading the CIAA, which recently celebrated its 100th year, Carpenter said the path that led to her position would help her as commissioner.

“I was a student-athlete, coach and administrator,” she said. “I can relate to all constituents in the organization.”

—Kyrza Mazurek

From the Owls to the Bobcats: A STHM grad’s journey to the pros

On the first day of one of Charlotte Bobcats Assistant Coach Dan Leibovitz’s classes in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Professor Michael Jackson introduced himself and then promptly exited the room. Upon returning, he posed a question: What have you learned about the person to your left? To your right?

Few students answered—which Dr. Jackson noted could cost them a great career opportunity. “He reminded us that any of the people in this room could one day be deciding whether to hire us,” Leibovitz said.

Networking was among the most important of the many lessons Leibovitz learned while studying for his master’s in Sport and Recreation Administration. He wouldn’t be coaching today without it.

“I was hired by Bobcats Head Coach Mike Dunlap entirely because of the relationship that we had developed and that I had worked diligently to maintain,” Leibovitz said.

Granted, Leibovitz’s nearly lifelong status as a stellar coach didn’t hurt either. Leibovitz started high school as head coach of the Bryn Mawr, Pa., Episcopal Academy’s eighth-grade basketball team and continued coaching high school as an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania. But his most transformative coaching experience took place during the 10 years he spent at Temple working under the Owls’ Hall of Fame Head Coach John Chaney.

“The foundation of everything I know starts with him,” Leibovitz said. “He’s a master. He devoted a great deal of time to training me, grooming me, counseling me and testing me, and he gave me the foundation that I use to teach people today.”

It was during practices with Chaney that Dunlap, then coaching an Australian team, would stop by to observe practice and chat with Leibovitz. Six years after Leibovitz coached at the University of Hartford and at Penn, Dunlap ushered Leibovitz into the pros. —Carl O’Donnell