Board of Visitors. “She never forced situations. She heard your suggestions and if you had a good idea, it was incorporated. She was collaborative. She was part of a community, and that’s hard to fill.

“She built the structure. It wasn’t a copy of anyone else’s. She did it that way not just to be the best in Philadelphia and the U.S., but to also compete globally. And she created an environment in which people felt comfortable. It’s unique. It’s real.”

“Everything was methodical,” Barber said. “There was always a plan. Nothing was haphazard. It was, ‘In Year 1, we’ll do this. And in Year 2, we’re doing this,’ and so on. The university has been tremendous in its support, and they’ve watched us grow and have given us the support we’ve needed in order to grow.”

Internally, the growth to which Barber referred has revolved around the quality of students — academically skilled and professionally motivated young men and women who envision bright futures in the sport, recreation, tourism, or hospitality management industries.

And Barber was committed to stellar academic success for all students — from undergraduate to the PhD level.

“She cut me no breaks,” said Mike Diorka, PhD ’98, for whom Barber acted as PhD advisor. For Diorka, who now serves the University of Pennsylvania’s associate athletic director of facility management, he remembers a feeling of defeat in those days. “I would walk with two shopping bags, one in each hand, on my way to the train. Those bags had my dissertation, with red ink all over them. Dr. Barber said to me, ‘This is all part of the process. You’ll be better off for it.’ At the time, I didn’t agree, but boy, was she right.”

Barber’s impact traveled beyond the classroom, too.

STHM announced via email a Summer Olympics-related study project, and Patrick Brogan, BS ’04, pounced. Brogan had to negotiate with Barber in order to represent STHM in Athens, interviewing International Olympic Committee employees and working with U.S. Olympic Committee representatives.

“I had graduated a day before that email came, so technically (Barber) didn’t owe me anything,” said Brogan, now senior vice president of programming with ArtsQuest. “And I’m so thankful she gave me a chance, because that experience was one of the signature moments of my life.”

“She has the biggest heart,” said Kate Isbel, BS ’12, the marketing and communications coordinator for Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB). “You know how special Dr. Barber is? My parents went out of their way to thank her on my graduation day. I feel privileged to have shared so much time with her as a student.”

The stories are endless.

Barber helped establish STHM’s Center for Student Professional Development. Before that, dating to the HPERD days, “her library for employment was anything that could fit on a corkboard,” said Christine Cleaver, BS ’96. Today an adjunct faculty member, Cleaver remembers the pre-STHM days in what was then Vivacqua Hall, where Barber juggled teaching and advising duties in a tiny corner office. “They had 150 students interning in a semester and, out of that, she saw the future. I’d use the word ‘visionary’ to describe Betsy Barber.”

Jack Ferguson would use “inventive.” In 2012, Ferguson called Barber when PHLCVB hosted a number of executives from Active America who were conducting studies into where middle-class Chinese tourists were most likely to visit. Barber, who sits on PHLCVB’s Board of Directors, identified STHM’s top Chinese students who could act as 1-on-1 interpreters.

“Only six years ago, China was not among Philadelphia’s top 10 countries for international tourism. Today, China is second only to the United Kingdom,” said Ferguson, PHLCVB’s recently retired president. “Is that because of Betsy Barber? Well, she deserves some of the credit, because of her role all those years ago. … Overall, what she’s accomplished at Temple, it’s monumental.”

Humbly, Barber shrugs off any public acknowledgement of or credit for STHM’s progress and continued momentum. She points to the collective work by her and her peers for the