be. The way I’ve always seen it, they can ‘just be’ for two years. In that third year, they better make that transition. And in the fourth year, they’ve got to be a nearly finished product.”

Montague’s genesis with STHM was set in motion when Barber began laying the foundation for what would become STHM. Montague had served as an academic advisor within HPERD, and his background was in therapeutic recreation, a program that was shifting toward what was then Temple’s College of Health Professions.

“I think he liked the newness and the trajectory of where we were headed, and I think it’s because we share a strong belief in nurturing students, and not coddling them.”

For as much as Montague is perceived as a gruff, candid presence around students while they are enrolled at STHM, he has embodied a friendly, mentorship role once they have attained their degrees. Sometimes, a student doesn’t even have to wait that long.

While interning at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., Troy Snead, BS ‘13, and a handful of fellow seniors received an email from Montague that he was arranging a visit. Less than a week later, Montague had boarded a flight and was sharing lunch with Snead and his classmates.

“That says a lot about the man, doesn’t it?” said Snead, an account executive with the Philadelphia 76ers. “Montague is irreplaceable. In his words, ‘There’s Cher. There’s Madonna. And there’s Montague.’”

Zack James, BS ‘08, was working in STHM’s administrative office as a senior when his father passed away. In the days and weeks that followed, James came to lean upon Montague.

“My father was clinging to life, to see me graduate,” said James, the president and lead consultant of Rebel Hill Consulting. “And Montague, he knew I was distraught. He pulled me aside and gave me words on how to press on. He understands the element of human capital. He’s unique — a brother, a father-figure, and a mentor all in one.”

In impacting the lives of STHM students, Montague even ended up in the bridal party of one graduate. (Though reluctant, Montague eventually obliged.) His in-house legacy is evident in the line that often formed outside his office door, from the students who wished to pick his brain, to those who sought clemency, needing an administrative bailout from their various academic predicaments.

Then there were students like Danny Alotta, BS ’98, who beat cancer as an undergraduate at STHM. More than once, Montague traveled to New York to visit regularly with Alotta. And Alotta, who returned to Temple’s campus last year to perform his one-man show at Mitten Hall, has never forgotten Montague’s loyalty.

“I just think he has it,” Alotta said. “People are blessed with different gifts. I can’t describe it. Whatever it is, Montague has it, and that’s what makes him so dynamic, so special.”

Montague helped Colleen Connor, BS ‘99, make the evolution from athletics to academics. Connor arrived at STHM in 1995, but her main focus was on playing lacrosse for Temple’s women’s team. Test prep and homework were secondary, she said. Living away from home, and balancing the demands of being a student-athlete, Connor turned to Montague for guidance. He coached her through turning wrong decisions in life into lessons, pointed her toward professional excellence, and got her to reach beyond lacrosse.

Montague “to this day is still one of the people I call when I get a new job or when something big happens in my life,” said Connor, associate vice president of events and sponsorship activation for Fast Forward Event Productions.

“That’s why, to date, I know his office extension is 6297,” said Anda Phan, BS ’11, logistics management specialist for NAVSUP Weapon Systems Support. “And when he’s not picking up, I call his cell phone number. That’s the type of relationship he cultivates with his students.”

“At every level,” said Alotta, “there’s so much appreciation for what Betsy and Jeffrey have accomplished. Ask around. What they’ve done is nothing short of remarkable.”