



Local business endows scholarship to honor Rider alumnus

Hough Petroleum has established the George E. Abel '78 Memorial Scholarship Fund

By Diane Cornell | 07/23/2019

Hough Petroleum has endowed a scholarship for student-athletes by pledging \$25,000 to the existing George E. Abel '78 Memorial Scholarship Fund. As a result, future generations of student-athletes will receive help in funding a Rider education.

Abel, a long-time employee of the family-owned, Ewing-based, energy, petroleum, and automotive products distributor, graduated from Rider with a bachelor's in history. He was a third-generation owner of E.J. Koenig, Inc., of Bordentown before that company was absorbed

by Hough Petroleum in 2000. He then worked as an account representative for Hough until his death in 2017 at age 62.

“George’s passing was very devastating for our whole company,” says Greg Hough, the company’s vice president of business strategy and general counsel. “He exemplified our core values better than anybody. He had a lot of integrity, he worked as a team player, he was compassionate, and he was willing to do whatever he had to do to get the job done.

“When I started, George really took me under his wing,” Hough says. “He showed me the ropes and anytime I had questions I was able to go to George — both personally and professionally. That’s the kind of guy he was.”

“When he passed away, I started thinking how we can memorialize him. Both he, his daughter Adrienne LaBella '05, and our company’s president, my father, Gary Hough '81, went to Rider, so it seemed like a good fit.”

Hough Petroleum first established the scholarship last year before deciding to pursue its endowment.

An endowed scholarship of \$25,000 or more ensures that funds are available in perpetuity to ensure the promise of a Rider education to students for years to come. Each year, a portion of the accrued interest funds a scholarship award while the remainder is returned to the endowment so that it will grow with every passing year.

The Abel scholarship is for student-athletes with demonstrated financial need in good academic standing, with preference given to students on the University’s soccer team.

Partial proceeds from Hough Petroleum’s second annual charity golf outing on Sept. 25, 2019, at the Mountain View Golf Course in Ewing will go toward funding the scholarship. Prizes include tickets to Philadelphia Eagles and Philadelphia 76ers games and signed memorabilia from Philadelphia-area athletes.

The event is a fitting tribute to the athletic and sports-loving Abel, who was a golfer in addition to being a longtime soccer and lacrosse referee.

“George was a huge supporter of youth programs and athletics,” says Elizabeth Abel, his wife. “He spent most of his adult life either coaching, running clinics or officiating games all over New Jersey, in addition to dedicating time to Special Olympics and other charitable games. Our family is very honored and touched that Hough Petroleum chose to recognize George’s passion for both sports and education with a scholarship that assists student-athletes in achieving their educational aspirations.”

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