

## NICE GUYS FINISH FIRST

**Michelle Marrone**  
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Earning his MBA changed Michael Croatti's life and the lives of many others



**Alumni PROFILE**

**Michael A. Croatti, Class of 2009**  
**Master of Business Administration**  
*Senior Vice President of Service and Operations, UniFirst Corporation*

*UniFirst is an industry-leading uniform service and supply company. The company's 11,000 Team Partner employees and 225 facilities serve more than 250,000 customers throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe (as Unitech). UniFirst recently celebrated its 20th anniversary on the NY Stock Exchange.*

Already an established business professional, Michael Croatti didn't intend to earn his MBA at Rivier University. He intended to take one finance course and apply that knowledge to UniFirst's business operations, which provide uniform and facility products services to more than 250,000 companies throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

A positive experience in his first class led him to pursue his MBA degree and become a permanent member of the Rivier community. "I chose Rivier based on its quality reputation, its emphasis on values,

and its close proximity to several of UniFirst’s operations. I completed the initial course, and I was so pleased with the experience that I decided to pursue a full MBA at Rivier.”

Immediately Croatti put his coursework learning into action at UniFirst, as well as in his corporate dealings on Wall Street and with investor relations. He believes “Rivier offers an MBA curriculum that is valuable in its real-world applications—a comprehensive business education that can be applied to any industry.”

Rivier’s MBA classes not only contributed to Croatti’s executive development, but also improved other aspects of his life. While many people may believe the value of an MBA lies in the potential for career advancement, Croatti describes his Rivier experience as life changing.

“I’m proud of the hard work I put in at Rivier, and it has certainly been paying off for me. Rivier opened my mind and senses to becoming a better person. Not only have I been able to improve my work life and capabilities, but the education also helped my personal life and my family, and is now making a difference in my community.”

### **Volunteering in the Rivier community**

With a desire to give back, Croatti decided to lend a hand. “I first decided to attend an alumni event—a business roundtable featuring the Mayor of Nashua. I quickly found the staff in the Office of University Advancement and Alumni Relations and Rivier’s President Sister Paula Marie Buley to be so welcoming that I was hooked.”

He joined the Rivier University Alumni Council and is eager to help build career-focused programs that connect current students with alumni. In addition, as the newest member of the President's Circle Leadership Committee, he will work with other business leaders to develop events and programs to connect the University with the business community in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

### **Taking lessons learned to heart and to the world**

In 2012, Croatti started the “Thanks from Home” program at UniFirst Corporation, after a discussion of soldiers’ leadership and operational skills with management trainees.



*Recipients of UniFirst “Thanks From Home” care packages*

The program recognizes the sacrifices made by U.S. overseas troops and shows them a measure of gratitude. This nationwide program involves Team Partners at more than 200 UniFirst locations, vendors, and community members. Through generous donations, UniFirst arranges to send care packages filled with snack foods, personal care products, clothing, games, and other much-missed items from home. The strong outpouring of support was immediate and has grown each year.

*“Rivier opened my mind and senses to becoming a better person.”*

**Finishing first when we give of ourselves to others**

Beyond the accounting practice and management skills acquired during his MBA program, Croatti credits the importance of giving back as one of the most valuable lessons.

“There are so many ways that Rivier has made a difference in my life. Not only did I gain an invaluable education, I also learned a lot about giving back to my community. I now know that I can make a real difference in the lives of others ... whether it is through recruiting, volunteering, or donating.” ■