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## **Giving Back: Helping the Next Generation of Tax Professionals Thrive in Chicago and Beyond: John Mann (MST '83, MBA '01)**

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# Helping the next generation of tax professionals thrive in Chicago and beyond

**WHEN JOHN MANN** (MST '83, MBA '01) was in high school, he accompanied his mother on an appointment to have her tax return prepared. The meeting would plant the seed for his successful career in the tax field. "For some reason, the experience left an impression on me," says Mann. "I was intrigued by the questions the tax advisor asked and the calculations that were made. It made me think about finance in a new way."

Most recently, Mann was vice president of global tax planning at Abbott Laboratories. He holds an MS in taxation and an MBA in finance from DePaul, which he says helped launch his career and connections in the field. "My professors had tremendous business and tax experience from accounting firms, corporations and the IRS," says Mann. "They brought their experiences into the classroom, giving us a practical and impactful education."

After completing his MS, Mann went on to lead the tax function at notable corporations, including Dean Foods, ServiceMaster and Walgreens. "A key mentor to me at the start of my career was Bill Zink (BUS '70, MST '77)," recalls Mann. "I later learned that Bill had started a scholarship fund at DePaul, so I began to contribute to it. It felt good to support a mentor who I admired and appreciated, while at the same time give back to a cause that I cared about."

Giving back has always been an important part of Mann's life, something his mother instilled in him. When he was a teenager, he volunteered with his church youth group to help families in need. "We would do simple things like



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plant flowers or put together a wagon full of toys for households that may have otherwise had a frugal Christmas."

As an adult, Mann has continued to give back. He serves on the advisory board and volunteers for the nonprofit organization Ladder Up, which provides free tax and financial assistance to low-income families in Chicago. He leads a prison Bible study group, stays involved with the American Diabetes Association Tour de Cure and donates to DePaul regularly.

"Giving back was modeled to me growing up, but it wasn't until my 30s that I began to recognize the impact it can make and why it's so important," he says.

In 2017, Mann generously established, with his wife, the John and Sharon Mann Scholarship fund in the MST program, to which they recently renewed their commitment with a second significant gift.

"I'm impressed by the MST program, especially under Ron Marcuson's leadership. The expanded online offerings and partnerships with MST programs across the country strengthen the program, which strengthens our tax community. I've seen firsthand many graduates go on to achieve major things," he says. "I wanted to do something that would help students who might not otherwise be able to afford it obtain the same valuable education and mentorship that I did, so they, too, can have fulfilling careers."