After Damianos Hadjikokkinos received an MBA in the 1970s from the UA College of Business Administration, now the Walton College, he went on to head several of Greece’s largest companies. He is now general manager of one of Greece’s top publishing companies, Lambrakis Press S.A., which publishes a number of newspapers and magazines.

In the 1970s, the Walton College offered a master’s program in Greece. Initially established for Americans stationed at an Air Force base there, the program attracted the Greek community. Some of the graduates now play a vital role in the Greek economy, including Hadjikokkinos.

“Years in college were exciting,” he said. “It was a time of self-evaluation, focusing in new directions and better understanding the global business arena. As a student who came from another culture, I had to face new ways, linguistic problems and exacting educational standards. As a student I faced the demanding times of studying, working and co-operating with my professors, always listening to their advice of going for top quality.

“I felt extremely satisfied and proud after having successfully passed an exam, but mostly after graduation. I have strong memories of the time, my professors and my student-mates.”

One of the first Walton College faculty members in the program, Phil Taylor, now University Professor Emeritus, said, “Our master’s program fit into the Greek economy, which was transitioning from small family-owned businesses to more corporate firms. Our program was in great demand.” Taylor worked with a University of Athens professor, coordinating the program through the U.S. State Department.

“My master’s degree has helped me become successful not only to the Greek environment, but to the multinational as well,” Hadjikokkinos said. “During an era most when people were thinking local, I started to see that all business is global. That was 30 years ago. I believe my MBA at the University of Arkansas was one of the major stepping stones in my professional growth.” He holds a bachelor’s degree from the Economic University of Athens and the University of Maryland.

In the beginning, Hadjikokkinos worked for multinational companies, but he was drawn to a couple of major Greek corporations. He served as CEO of Palace Holdings S.A., owner of the largest food companies. He was deputy managing director of Hellenic Steel, the largest steel company, before joining Lambrakis Press.

Hadjikokkinos and fellow alumni have continued to connect with and support the Walton College. “He has hosted many of our undergraduates in Greece for the study abroad program,” Taylor said. “In fact, he has bent over backwards to see that they got tours of Greek plants. He arranged for them to tour the facility of George Mavridaras, an alumnus of the MBA program, whose plant prints money and stamps.”

Last summer, Walton College Information Systems Professor David Douglas and another alumnus of the Greek master’s program, John Thanopoulos, team-taught global IT and e-commerce courses in Greece in the College study abroad program. Thanopoulos also holds a PhD in marketing from the College.

“Damianos’ career path is a source of inspiration to many,” Thanopoulos said. “For the last 30 years, he offered prudence, knowledge, support and growth potential to the companies he served in accounting and financial positions, including ESSO, KNORR and Toyota. In fact, many of the Walton College graduates of that era in Greece hold very important jobs and continue to support our efforts there.”
In 2001, Rosemary “Rosie” Fairhead was nominated as one of the most influential business women in St. Louis. At the time, she was the only woman in that city who had significant experience managing the wealth of individuals with high net worth.

In the male-dominated world of private banking, she has used her high energy, skill, talent and humor to add value to her work with private clients. “I feel being a woman is a plus because sometimes we can be more compassionate,” Fairhead said. “To do the work I do, it takes the ability to listen and provide outstanding service.”

In 1999, she co-founded Scudder Private Investment Counsel’s St. Louis office where she grew the company’s Midwest portfolio to more than $1 billion in assets under management.

Her enthusiastic, loyal and committed approach to work has paid off for her clients, some of which have been with her for 25-30 years. She said, “I love people and families. I understand the dynamics of accommodating the needs of multiple generations within a family. I have to know the idiosyncrasies and individual preferences.”

Fairhead holds a bachelor’s degree in public administration from the College of Business Administration — now the Walton College — and completed requirements for another degree in banking and finance. She received an MBA from St. Louis University. She also has the Certified Financial Planner and Certified Trust and Financial Advisor designations. Fairhead is a frequent lecturer for the American Institute of Banking and other financial services symposiums.

Reflecting on her experience at the University of Arkansas, Fairhead said, “Dr. Dominick taught me banking and investments and that helped me land my first job as a research analyst for municipal bonds with Mercantile Trust Co. (now U.S. Bancorp) in St. Louis,” she said. “I remember they asked me (in the interview) if I knew what a basis point was, and of course, I knew since Dr. Dominick had educated me.”

“I have always been able to hold my own with my education from the University of Arkansas, even being up against people who hold degrees from larger, more prestigious schools,” she added.

Fairhead worked at Mercantile Trust for 19 years where she became vice president and senior portfolio manager, managing private account portfolios. Then she founded the Scudder office in St. Louis, which was eventually purchased by Deutsche Bank. She moved to Chicago with Deutsche Bank for two and a half years. This past June, she returned to U.S. Bancorp.

A native of Jonesboro, Ark., Fairhead hasn’t forgotten her Arkansas connections. Along with numerous charitable and professional activities, she is an A+ Life member of the Arkansas Alumni Association, serving on the board of directors and as past president of the St. Louis chapter. “The Alumni Association has been a thread through which I have been tethered to the University,” she said. “In each of my moves, the first thing I did was call the Alumni Association and connect with a lot of nice people. My work with the Association has been very rewarding.” Fairhead was recently appointed to the Walton College Dean’s Executive Advisory Board.

Her identical twin sister, Mary Lee “Mimi” Fairhead Shipp, BSH ‘76, of St. Louis, serves on the advisory board of the interior design department in the UA School of Human Environmental Sciences.

While in St. Louis, Fairhead generously gave of her time and talent to improve people’s lives. She served on the St. Louis University School of Business Alumni Board, the Greater St. Louis United Cerebral Palsy Board, the Planned Giving Advisory Council of St. Louis Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, the St. Louis Archdiocesan Charitable Bequest Council, the St. Louis University Bequest and Gift Council, and the Cardinal Carberry Senior Living Center Board.

The former dean of Saint Louis University business school, Neil Seitz, summed her up this way, “Ms. Fairhead represents the ideal of a… business education, a person who succeeds in their career and uses that success to make a difference in the world.”
In 1975, Arkansas native Ed Wilson graduated from Rison High School. Today he is a star executive in the entertainment business. Last May, he was named president of Fox Television Network where he oversees advertising sales, broadcast standards, integrated marketing operations, legal operations, and affiliate relations with the 186 Fox affiliate stations.

From his office in Los Angeles, Wilson reflected on his time spent at the UA College of Business Administration — now the Walton College. “On the first day of class, an older professor literally stood on his head and said, ‘I just want you guys to know anything is possible if you set your mind to it.’ I never missed that class,” Wilson said. “The professor was entertaining and taught us things we needed to know as we entered the work force.” Wilson’s career path illustrates how true the professor’s comments were.

Before joining Fox, Wilson was president of NBC Enterprises and Syndication. Here he launched first-run series such as “Access Hollywood,” “The Jane Pauley Show,” and “The Chris Matthews Show,” as well as managed the off-network sales of “Fear Factor,” “Providence,” “Crossing Jordan” and “Boomtown.”

But Wilson didn’t start at the top. He began his career as a sales trainee for Viacom in New York City for three months, moved to sales in Dallas for two years, and ended up managing Viacom’s Chicago office. He returned to Arkansas to be sales manager of KATV, the ABC affiliate, in Little Rock. He had been introduced to the KATV general manager Dale Nicholson while at the University of Arkansas and the two still maintain a close relationship today.

In 1984, he managed the southern region for Paramount in Dallas and then went to the New York office to manage the eastern region, where he sold into syndication such programs as “Cheers,” “Entertainment Tonight,” “The Arsenio Hall Show” and “Star Trek.”

Wilson moved to Los Angeles in 1990 to become senior vice president of Sony Pictures Television. In 1994, he founded MaXaM Entertainment, a distribution company, which was purchased by CBS. From there, he was named president of CBS Enterprises and its new domestic company, EYEMARK Entertainment. In 2000, Ed was recruited to be the president of NBC Enterprises and take NBC into the syndication business.

“So many people don’t understand that the television business is just like any other business,” he said. “I approach decision-making using the principles I learned at the business college.”

Wilson spoke to the Walton College Dean’s Executive Advisory Board in 2003 about his experiences in the entertainment industry. “I get my best ideas for new TV shows from people I sit next to on airplanes or even in small, out-of-the-way restaurants,” he said. “I want to know what the TV viewer thinks about television — not just what the executive in L.A. thinks. What do people all over the country like about television?”

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“I’m very, very proud of the fact that I grew up in Arkansas and learned most of the values that I have today there,” Wilson said, according to the May 11, 2004, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Wilson said his values include honesty, being nice and respectful of each and every person he meets, and knowing there are other points of view. He credits his mother for part of that teaching.

Still a Razorback fan, Wilson holds season tickets to sporting events. He has other ties to Arkansas through the three businesses he has invested in with his sister and brother-in-law.

“The college years were a very special time; often times when we are there, we don’t appreciate and understand what we are getting until we look back,” he added.