

A portrait of Bob Kozminski, a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a brown tweed jacket over a light-colored polo shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a car show, with various cars and bright lights.

BOB

KOZMINSKI

CAMPAIGN KEYSTONE

*IN CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE, A KEYSTONE IS THE CENTRAL STONE
IN AN ARCH THAT HELPS THE OTHERS HOLD THEIR POSITIONS—
PROVIDING BALANCE, SUPPORT, AND STABILITY.*

TEXT: Annette Elvers (BA Hons. '93) PHOTO: grajewski.fotograph



As The University and its Foundation work towards the upcoming capital campaign, a strong campaign cabinet is being carefully assembled. And like the keystone for which his company is named—Keystone Ford—**R.M. (Bob) Kozminski** (BA '67) is playing a central role.

"It is important to me to give back to the University that has been so good to me," says Kozminski, recently named Campaign Chair and Chair of the Foundation's Fund Development Committee.

As a student at The University of Winnipeg, then United College, Kozminski never would have imagined he'd be heading up a multi-million dollar campaign for his alma mater. In fact, when he started his studies he really wasn't sure where he was headed. "I was majoring in Party 101," jokes Kozminski. "I played football, handball, and hockey, and then I learned how to play pool and bridge. I hardly had time for my studies."

Professor **Bob Judy** noticed Kozminski was struggling, and knew he was capable of so much more. Judy took him under his wing and set him straight. "He told me, 'You're going to continue to flounder unless you get some direction in your life,'" Kozminski recounts. Judy arranged for an aptitude test. "I found out I was most likely to become a professional hockey player or a lawyer."

Kozminski realized it was time to hang up his skates and start shooting for a new goal—law. Finally engaged in his studies, Kozminski discovered a passion for economics and politics, debating every side of an issue with classmates like **Tom Axworthy** (BA Hons. '68, Distinguished Alumnus '03). Kozminski graduated with a degree in Economics and Politics in 1967. He took on law school next, and graduated in 1970 in the top 10 per cent of his class. Kozminski was on his way. He went on to build an active law practice, took part in the management of his family's business Budget Rent a Car/Truck, and in 1986, took on the business full-time and became President and CEO of Keystone Ford Sales.

Visit the Keystone showroom and you'll see the latest in Ford styles and colours—sleek Mustangs, rugged Explorers, and elegant new Ford 500s. It's a competitive business that's all about matching drivers with the vehicles that suit them best, but for Kozminski, his business is about more than cars and trucks. It's also about community.

"It's part of our vision statement that each of us at Keystone Ford gets involved in the community, whether it's working for the United Way or coaching a hockey team," says Kozminski. That commitment starts at the top—Kozminski dedicates one hour in each of his busy workdays for what he calls "non-material activities." Kozminski has worked with CancerCare Manitoba on an initiative to bring women to breast-screening clinics, and with Ronald McDonald House on a project that provided transportation to parents and their sick kids. From 1994 - 2003 Kozminski participated in fundraising efforts for the University of Manitoba, including a position on the campaign cabinet from 1998 - 2003 during its highly successful capital campaign. Post-secondary education remains a cause close to his heart, evidenced by the leadership role he assumed at the start of The University of Winnipeg's fundraising efforts.

"The University of Winnipeg had a huge impact on my life," says Kozminski. "I believe every young person should be able to get a university education." From personal and intellectual development to the societal benefits of a healthier and more vibrant economy, Kozminski is a strong believer that postsecondary education can change lives. "That's why a major focus of the upcoming capital campaign will be scholarships and bursaries. Access is incredibly important."

Kozminski, a longtime Conservative, says some were surprised when they learned he would be taking on the post of Campaign Chair, partnering with well-known Liberal, University President **Dr. Lloyd Axworthy** (BA '61, LLD '98). "For more than 25 years, Lloyd and I have been on opposite sides of the political spectrum," Kozminski reveals. "But a commitment to education and a love of this University has now put us on the same team—and the synergy is strong." 