

THE INAUGURATION OF Jonathan R. Alger **PC8**

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iRideHome.com founders say JMU teaches students to solve societal issues

BY KELSEY DILL ('13)

One of the first life milestones most look forward to in their youth is getting behind the wheel and claiming the independence that comes with a driver's license. Most share memories of cruising the streets and a favorite song blaring through the speakers.

For these reasons, among others, 87 percent of those eligible do, in fact, hold a driver's license. Although many of us take the homily of making smart, safe decisions behind the wheel to heart, even disregarding it one time can be costly. In 2010, there were 112 million instances when adult drivers got behind the wheel while intoxicated, with personal, social and life-threatening consequences at risk. A shocking number indeed but, nonetheless, the United States has seen a 20 percent decrease in alcohol-related fatalities since 2006.

Two people working hard to fight alcohol-impaired vehicle fatalities are brothers **Seth ('95)** and **Aaron Lawlor ('99)**. The JMU alums teamed up with their three other brothers to create iRideHome, a smart phone application and mobile web service dedicated to getting individuals home safely after a night out. The service aggregates sober and safe driver information from around the country and, using GPS technology, provides users with services in their current area.

The Lawlor brothers also own StPatricksDay.com. While working with local pubs and venues for this site they began noticing a dangerous trend. "People never really thought about how to get home after a night of parties. We thought, 'Why don't we come up with a solution?'" says Seth. "And www.iRideHome.com was born."

Seth graduated from the College of Business with a degree in finance, and eventually started his own consulting firm, Indigo Applications Inc., which focuses on the hand-held applications marketplace. He says working at UREC was one of the best experiences he

had at JMU. "My experience as a UREC supervisor helped me learn how to build relationships with individuals of various backgrounds and interests. It helped me develop the ability to converse. Now I can better express myself and the products our company offers."

Influenced by Seth and their older sister **Jackie ('91)**, Aaron decided to apply to JMU. When debating between JMU and another Virginia school, Aaron says he received an unexpected phone call from a professor in the College of Integrated Science and Technology. After an hour-long, enthusiastic pitch, Aaron chose the Purple and Gold spirit. "It's amazing that an administrator would take that kind of time and effort to recruit one potential student for ISAT," he says. "That type of dedication to students seems to be hard-wired into the DNA of JMU's faculty and administration."

Aaron also graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law. He co-founded Aphelion Legal Solutions, a company that provides legal process and e-discovery consulting, document review, contracts management and legal staffing services. His company has offices in Washing-

ton, D.C., Houston, and Chennai, India. Aaron attributes his success to his ISAT experience. "I left JMU recognizing that I was capable of identifying needs in society and, more importantly, developing solutions to address them."

The Lawlor brothers visited campus last fall to speak at the national 2012 Safe Ride Programs United Conference, hosted by JMU Saferides Program and attended by universities from across the country. The brothers consider it an honor to promote safe, sober driving.

The duo also consider it an honor to promote JMU. With Seth's wife, **Dana Nasdeo ('95)**, and sister, **Ruth Lawlor ('03)**, there are five JMU graduates in the Lawlor clan. ❧

* Learn more at www.iRideHome.com.



Seth ('95) and Aaron Lawlor ('99) and their three brothers created iRideHome.com, a smart phone application and mobile web service. "JMU teaches students to identify needs in society and to develop solutions to address them," says Aaron.