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# Still a Star

Giving back through education is the name of the game for NFL legend and former Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page. **BY BOBBY HART**

**GIVING** back to the community has never been a luxury, hobby or PR stunt for Minnesota Vikings Hall-of-Famer and recently retired Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page. He views it as a responsibility. Even after retiring from professional football and the state supreme court, he remains dedicated to The Page Education Foundation, a nonprofit Alan and Diane Page created in 1988 to “encourage Minnesota students of color to pursue post-secondary education.”

The Page Education Foundation, which raised more than \$500,000 at its All Star Gala at U.S. Bank Stadium Sept. 10, 2016—marking the first community fundraising event at the new stadium—has provided more than 6,500 Page Grants of \$12 million in financial support in 28 years. But the responsibility shines in the fact that those grant recipients, known as Page Scholars, have given back over 420,000 hours serving communities, primarily mentoring elementary and middle-school children. “I’ve had the good fortune to have had a lot of good things happen to me,” Alan says. “I think it would be irresponsible not to try to help other people get into the same position.”

For the 2015-2016 academic year, 536 Page Scholars were awarded \$900,000 in grants and racked up 20,623 volunteer hours while serving 13,138 children.

**Q: What drove you and your wife to launch this foundation back in 1988?**

**A:** From our experience, we know that education was a tool that we had used to achieve some degree of success and that it’s a tool that anybody can use to overcome the disadvantages of being a person of color: It can be used to overcome discrimination, it can be used to overcome poverty, it can be used as a tool that really helps everyone achieve whatever their hopes and dreams are. And we had the sense that if we could motivate and encourage young men and women of color to pursue education beyond high school, there would be a benefit not only to them but to society at large and the community at large.

**Q: What role did your job in the justice system play in your foundation?**

**A:** For a while when I was on the court, it was a mixed blessing because I’m sure it brought some attention. People would hear about me and hear about the foundation and make the connection, but at the same time because I was on the court, I wasn’t in the position to be involved in the fundraising for the foundation. Diane took that over and she has done just an incredible job on an annual basis of fundraising. Our budget is roughly \$1.3 million a year—we have to raise that every year—and she has done just an incredible job in doing that with the support and help of a lot of people, obviously. It is not an easy task.

**Q: What are your thoughts on U.S. Bank Stadium?**

**A:** It’s spectacular in its presence. It has a very intimate feeling. Everything is very compact and close together. Just that closeness of the fans to the field creates an energy that for those players that need that, it’s built in. Just the physical layout should contribute to a sense of energy and urgency that you don’t necessarily get when everybody is far away.

**Q: After such an impressive career, a lot of people might ride off into the sunset and live the word “retired” to the fullest. Yet I get the sense that you feel like you still have work to do. Why?**

**A:** My view of the world is I’ve always been riding into the sunset, wanting to get as much done as possible until the sun goes down. The fact that I don’t have a job per se doesn’t change my view of the world. There’s so much that each of us as human beings can do. With the opportunities I’ve had, it’s hard not to want to keep trying to make the world we live in a little bit better.

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