

Profile in Leadership



With an inventive mind and a generous heart,
Angelo M. Fatta '66, PhD, enriches the Buffalo community.

For most people, retirement marks a time to slow down and indulge in new leisure pursuits. Not so for **Angelo M. Fatta '66, PhD**. In 1998, this entrepreneur sold Advanced Chemical Testing Services (ACTS), the global consumer products quality assurance company he co-founded in the early 70s, and tackled a second career in the not-for-profit sector. The Buffalo Niagara region has reaped the rewards ever since.

"Ange is a Renaissance man," states Andrew J. Rudnick, president and CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership. "He had a very successful career at ACTS, which generated enough wealth so that he didn't have to work, but Ange wants to contribute to the community in which he lives and he has done so with incredible selflessness."

Until recently, Fatta was the full-time, pro-bono president of BuffLink Inc. Co-founded in 2001 by Fatta and other regional leaders, the private-sector initiative sought to promote the creation of a regional life sciences economy in Western New York. But it achieved much more. Fatta led BuffLink in the successful creation of new enterprises, growth companies and ultimately a critical mass of life science activities that now position Buffalo Niagara as a global competitor for innovation.

"When Ange Fatta makes up his mind to do something, he does it," states Rudnick. "Because of his leadership, his involvement, his management experience and his positive relationships with people, Buffalo Niagara's economy is stronger."

So too are its cultural organizations. When insolvency jeopardized the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), the institution needed someone to put it back in sync. Ange Fatta was inclined to help. He recalls, "My wife, Carol, who was already on the board, said to me, 'They really need someone like you.'"

The seed was planted and Fatta joined the BPO Board of Directors in January 2004. In May of that same year, he was appointed chairman of the board. Quickly, Fatta worked to secure the orchestra's financial future and to preserve its rich tradition in Buffalo. He identified new revenue sources, increased endowment and built collaborative relationships with fellow cultural organizations.

Under Fatta's leadership, the BPO closed its 2006-2007 fiscal year with its third consecutive balanced budget. In the past two years, the orchestra secured



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\$12 million in cash and pledges toward a \$30 million endowment goal. An additional \$13 million in contributions is pending. The BPO recently signed Music Director **JoAnn Falletta HON ’00** to a four-year contract extension. With still one year to go under her current contract, Falletta will direct the artistic future of the BPO through its 2012-2013 season.

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Well-known among the region’s leaders, Fatta’s ascent began in 1973 when the chemistry major co-founded ACTS. The company conducted independent forensic testing for insurance agencies and attorneys. It was initially housed in a Canisius science lab, which Fatta rented with the support of **Frank J. Dinan, PhD**, professor of chemistry/biochemistry, who served as department chair at the time. But ACTS soon outgrew its Canisius headquarters, as the business began to test, inspect and conduct quality consultation on any number of consumer products, including toys, apparel, health and beauty aids, and electronics. It serviced such industry leaders as Toys R Us, The Walt Disney Corporation, Fisher Price, Kellogg’s and McDonald’s. By the 1980s, ACTS was considered the premier toy testing laboratory in the world. It attracted the attention of a Paris-based quality services organization, which purchased ACTS in 1998.

Fatta’s professional credentials and civic achievements

are a testament to his keen intellect and strong work ethic.

“Canisius gave me a well-balanced liberal arts education, which prepared me for graduate school and beyond,” says Fatta, who holds a PhD in inorganic chemistry from Wayne State University and was a postdoctoral fellow at Pennsylvania State University Center for Air Environment Studies. “Underneath the ‘facts’ of the various subjects, there was something more subtle going on, something that would last a lifetime.”

He notes that Canisius exposed him to literature, drama, poetry, theology, philosophy and music. “The inquisitiveness that was awakened during those years has stayed with me always.” He laughs, “I am still trying to figure out for myself the meaning of life.” Fatta adds that his parents and his Canisius education helped him fashion a value system of fairness, honesty and care for others.

That value system is exemplified in Fatta’s various leadership positions. He is a trustee for the University at Buffalo Foundation Inc., and serves on several boards of directors including the Burchfield-Penney Art Center, the Ronald McDonald Children’s Charities and the Buffalo Transportation/Pierce Arrow Museum. Perhaps closest to his heart is The Fatta Foundation, which Carol and he established after the sale of ACTS. The charitable family foundation supports the welfare and development of children in Western New York.

“Carol and I are very fortunate to be where we are in life and we feel it is our responsibility to give back,” he says. “Really, it goes back to what I learned at Canisius: *caritas* or care for others.” 

