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## Dr. Irvin E. Rhodes: Creating Community Buying Power

Dr. Irv Rhodes came to UMass Amherst after hearing about the School of Education's innovative programs. At the time, he was teaching at Fairleigh-Dickinson University in Rutherford, NJ in the Department of Human Development, and was in a tenure track position -- but needed to be in a doctoral program in order to be considered for tenure. He said, "The School of Education's organizational development program and the counseling psychology program were the major draws for me; it was what I wanted to study." He added, "It had a national reputation with some incredible faculty members."

After Dr. Rhodes received his EdD, he worked in the field of education as assistant superintendent for children's services in Springfield and as a consultant. He later went into business, where he has remained to this day. His current position is CEO of Community Funding Partners, Inc. in Amherst, where he and his wife also live. "We stayed in Amherst, as it's a great place to raise a family and work," he says.

Community Funding Partners, Inc. is a for-profit company that focuses the buying power of an entire community for the benefit of local merchants, nonprofits, governments and consumers. "We do this through an affinity card that uses already-existing merchant terminals," he says. "Whenever a consumer who possesses the card shops at a participating merchant, the merchant swipes the card and a percentage of the sale goes to a non-profit that has been pre-selected by the consumer."

Aside from his work, Dr. Rhodes is very active in the community, participating as a board member of the Rotary Club of Amherst, a board member of A Better Chance (ABC), an elected member of the Amherst School Committee, and an elected Town Meeting member. "I meet a lot of UMass Amherst graduates living in the Pioneer Valley through my job and community contacts," he says.

Dr. Rhodes has great and fond memories of faculty members who influenced him during his years on campus. His affinity for the university stems from those relationships. He says, "I received a first-rate education. It was an education that thoroughly prepared me for taking over a major organization at a time of great challenge, and continues to serve me well in my present position." His relationship with the campus has continued since he received his degree, maintaining an active relationship with various faculty and members of the UMass Amherst administration.

He adds, "I was recently at an event at the Marriott Center at the top of the Campus Center building, and as I looked out over the campus below and the mountains in the distance, I was reminded of why I came to this area in the first place, and how grateful I am to be in Amherst."

*Prepared by the UMass Amherst Alumni Association. For more information go to [UMassAlumni.com](http://UMassAlumni.com).*