

Commencement Speaker 2023



DEAN P. ROHAN '84

Dean P. Rohan '84 is the co-founder and co-owner of Tree House Brewing Company, a wildly successful regional brewery that was founded in 2011.

The accomplished entrepreneur was born in small-town USA (Ware, Massachusetts) and grew up in a wonderful family with two sisters and parents who worked tirelessly to bring the world to their three children. A happy childhood that nurtured love of family, humanity and hardwork was the foundation of Mr. Rohan's life journey.

Mr. Rohan graduated from Wilbraham & Monson Academy through much sacrifice from his parents. He reflects on his time at WMA as an experience that helped build his social skills and confidence and created lifelong friendships. Roger Lincoln, Hugh Harrell, Fred Watts, Joe Mazeika, Jane Kelly, Gary Cook and Mr. Reese were only a few of the Academy educators who influenced the kind of person that Mr. Rohan aspired to be.

After graduating from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and working in the family plumbing business, Mr. Rohan traveled to Los Angeles to pursue the dream of an acting and singing career. He later returned home to further his academic career, becoming a physical therapist for six years before rejoining the family plumbing business.

Mr. Rohan also became one of the region's most sought after DJ's and was a bassist and lead vocalist in a three-piece blues band. This would be the catalyst for the journey that brings Mr. Rohan to the present: a friend of his had a craft beer party at his home that would result in the creation of Tree House Brewing Company.

Four friends, each contributing \$2,500 for upgraded home brew equipment, started an LLC in a barn in Brimfield, Massachusetts. While working full time in plumbing, every night and weekend was dedicated to brewing, fermenting and packaging small batches of craft beer. The beer would sell out within hours to

customers and fans who drove hours to stand in line for hours more just to purchase one or two bottles of the liquid gold.

As the face of the growing company, Mr. Rohan attended countless events to bring Tree House Brewing Company into the public eye. Those duties, as well as being the only certified mechanic at the brewery, made Mr. Rohan in high demand. Not long after opening, the brewery became one of the most sought-after craft beers in the world. The next few years flew by with the same hard work bringing critical success to the beers and the brewery that continues to this day.

From humble beginnings to a business model of on-site only sales, Tree House has become a mecca to the craft brew enthusiast. It includes a 100-plus acre craft beer destination in Charlton, Massachusetts, a sprawling facility with a premium concert venue in Deerfield, Massachusetts, a 100-acre farm in Woodstock, Connecticut, a beachfront tap room in Sandwich, Cape Cod, and a taproom golf course in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. Though he works full time at Tree House, Mr. Rohan's entrepreneurial spirit still burns as he pursues several other ventures that he hopes will be as successful.

Ultimately, Mr. Rohan attributes success to hard work and a strong family. He has often said "without my wife, Bridget, holding down the important things at home, and practically raising our daughter Jamison and my son Alex, I could not have become 'Tree House Dean.'"