



2025
NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

JOE CHRISTIAN '84



Joe Christian '84 doesn't know who the person was at NMSU who, as Joe says, "saved my life."

In 1984, Joe went to work for a construction company in San Antonio, TX, putting in 12-hour days and living in an apartment with strangers. He had a brand-new MBA from NMSU — and no interviews: "It was not what I envisioned."

"You are going to fail, and that's part of learning. Anyone who has achieved greatness has failed a lot. Be resilient and overcome your challenges."

—Joe Christian '84

When he left NMSU and disconnected his phone service, he left his mother's number as the forwarding number. He was already gone when Westinghouse reached out to NMSU career placement looking for a new MBA for a planning and scheduling engineer position at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, NM. "Someone at the placement office called my old number, got my mom's number, tracked her down, and then

nagged her to get in touch with me. I got the job — and that job led me to Nusenda."

Joe retired in February 2025 from his position as president/CEO of Nusenda Credit Union after 39 years with the company. "I literally had five different careers there. My coworkers and I pushed and inspired one another to grow and develop. I'm proud of that history and my part putting Nusenda in the great place it is today."

Under Joe's leadership, Nusenda became the largest credit union in New Mexico, with almost \$5 billion in assets. Among its many accolades, Nusenda earned Energage's Top Workplace USA Award for four consecutive years, most recently 2025. And, based on Nusenda employee surveys, Joe twice received the Top Workplace Special Leadership Award from the Albuquerque Journal.

For Joe, working for Nusenda was "coming full circle." He says that growing up, his family was poor, often relying on community-based organizations for assistance: "Then, years later, I worked for an organization that supports the same community organizations that helped my family. As part of Nusenda, I made a difference, just like a difference was made for me."

Joe is also adamant about the difference that NMSU makes in students' lives. "The NMSU of today is still like the NMSU that saved my life. The passion I saw in my professors about giving students the tools and knowledge they need is still there. It's inspirational, and I think it's rare." Joe calls Professors John Loveland and James Peach "foundational" to his education. Now, Joe serves on the College of Business Advisory Council providing guidance to students, faculty, and administrators.

Since he's retired, he has a bit more time to read (fiction at night and nonfiction during the day). He's "revisiting the classics from college," and on his nightstand you will find Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War.

Joe has plenty of advice for today's students. "Create a personal development plan and stick with it. If you're not careful, distractions will prevent you from being where you want to be 10 years from now." He adds, "You are going to fail, and that's part of learning. Anyone who has achieved greatness has failed a lot. Be resilient and overcome your challenges. Practice discipline." ▲