

Legendary sports agent David Falk '72 (above) is often found courtside at NBA games. In April, the David B. Falk Center for Sport Management brought together a distinguished panel (above left) at Madison Square Garden to discuss sports in America. The discussion was moderated by sportscaster Mike Tirico '88 (right).



WINNING STRATEGY

By Amy Speech

**When David Falk talks sports, he means business—
a business SU students will learn through the newly endowed
Falk Center for Sport Management**

YOU MAY NOT RECOGNIZE HIS FACE, OR even his name, but if you're a sports fan, you're bound to be familiar with the work of legendary sports agent David Falk '72—and the powerful impact he's made in the world of athletics, marketing, and entertainment. Long acknowledged as one of the sports industry's leading figures and most talented innovators, Falk has represented some of the top players in NBA history and has held sway as one of the most influential people in sports. Equally talented at creating superstars off the court, he engineered Michael Jordan's groundbreaking deal with Nike, one of the most successful endorsement relationships in history, coining the name "Air Jordan" in the process. He successfully crossed over into the entertainment industry in the mid-1990s as executive producer for several critically acclaimed sports-themed films, including *Space Jam*, which teams Jordan with Looney Tunes characters in an intergalactic basketball showdown.

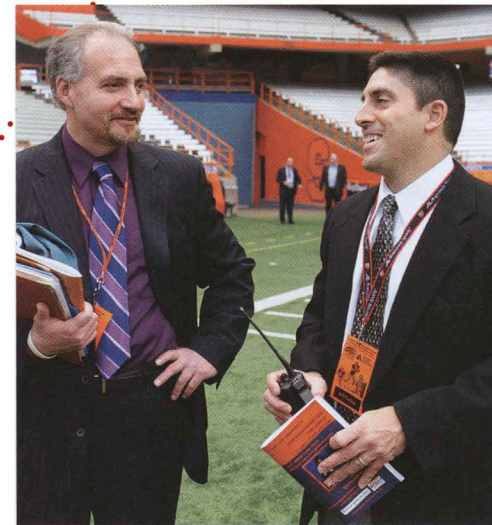
Now Falk is bringing his extraordinary talents, experience, and resources to a new enterprise that is dear to his heart and will enhance the education of generations of Syracuse University students. With his wife Rhonda '74, Falk has pledged a transformative gift of \$5 million to the University to establish the David B. Falk Center for Sport Management—a collaborative, interdisciplinary think-tank that will bring together the field's premier faculty, researchers, and practitioners. "Sports has been my life,



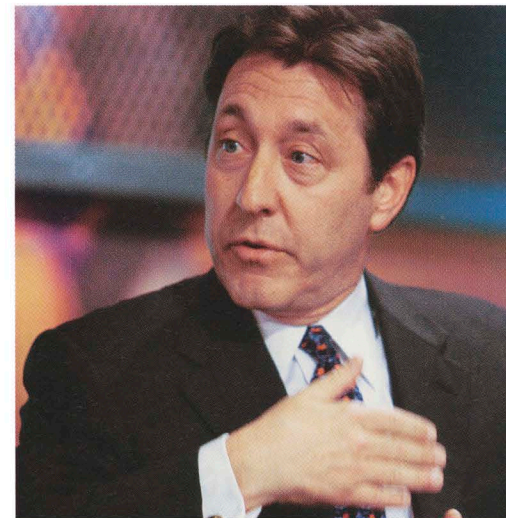
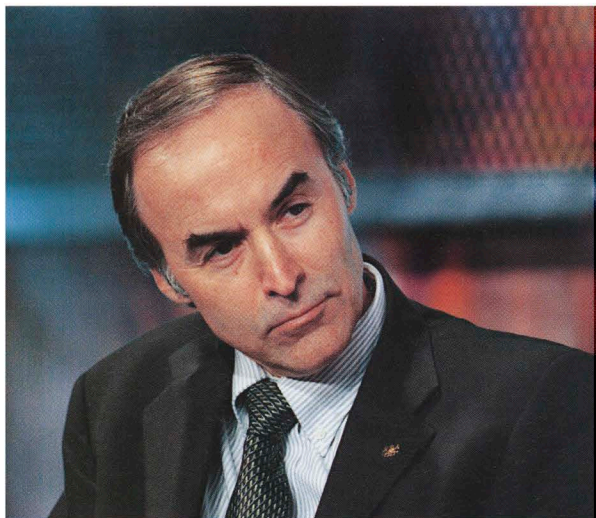
Department of Sport Management photos by Steve Sartori

David Falk photo by Doug Pensinger /Allsport

Madison Square Garden event photos by Eric Weiss Photography



Sport management professors Michael Veley (left), department chair, and Jeff Pauline visit in the Carrier Dome.



The interdisciplinary David B. Falk Center for Sport Management, which was established by a gift from David '72 and Rhonda Falk '74, held its inaugural event in April at Madison Square Garden. The event featured a panel discussion titled "Sports in America: Is Winning the Only Thing?" and attracted a standing room-only audience. Participants included (from left) Rick Burton '79, G'80, chief marketing officer of the U.S. Olympic Committee; Kay Koplovitz, chair and CEO of Koplovitz & Co. and founder of the Madison Square Garden Sports Network; George Bodenheimer, president of ESPN and ABC Sports and co-chair of Disney Media Networks; David Falk, founder and CEO of FAME; and Mike Tirico '88, sportscaster for ESPN and ABC Sports.

so this is very important to me," says Falk, who earned a bachelor's degree with honors in economics at SU and a J.D. degree with honors from George Washington University. "At this point in my career, after 34 years of being in this business and having the chance to work with some of the most high-profile, successful athletes and coaches, I want to share what I know with young people who are eager to learn."

NBA legend Jordan, the most widely recognized of Falk's superstar clients, was among the first to benefit from his talents and dedication. "David taught me so much about being a professional athlete and the whole business that surrounds it. He put me into a lot of situations that aided my personality, aided my position, in terms of where I saw myself within the business of basketball, and he cultivated it. He helped it grow," Jordan says. "I think giving back is important to David and Rhonda because they care about the University. He loves Syracuse. Every time we talk, we talk about Syracuse and North Carolina. I think they're very caring people. And what they're trying to do is set a good foundation and a basis for other people to follow."

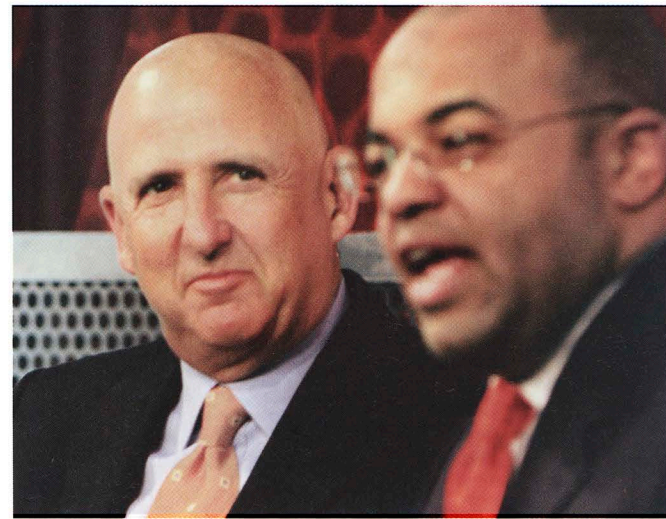
Reflecting Falk's lifelong commitment to excellence and integrity, the center will prepare multitalented sport management leaders to enter the professional world with a rich understanding of sports, business, and the important ways in which they interact. "I'm excited," Falk says, "and I feel blessed to be in a position to help create and endow

this program, and maintain a lifeline with Syracuse, which has been an important part of my life."

Based in the College of Human Ecology, the Falk Center will offer an academically rigorous sport management curriculum that combines and builds on the expertise and leadership of faculty from the college's sport management and hospitality management departments, the School of Information Studies, the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, and the Whitman School of Management. "We are incredibly thankful for the generosity of David and Rhonda Falk," says Professor Michael Veley, chair of the Department of Sport Management and the program's founding director. "Certainly, his namesake and his legacy of getting behind education will be instrumental in recruiting top faculty and outstanding students, and allowing us to build a one-of-a-kind program." Faculty from the four participating colleges will collaborate to create innovative interdisciplinary courses, projects, and research, placing strong emphasis on experiential learning opportunities outside of the classroom. The center's interdisciplinary structure will capitalize on the strengths of top-ranked SU schools and programs, Falk says, "giving us an opportunity to provide a program that is unsurpassed in gearing people up to train them for jobs in the industry."

The curriculum will cover a broad range of areas in the sports professions, including business and finance, communications and marketing, corporate hospitality and





event planning, technology, philanthropy and social justice, and law. Graduates will be prepared to work in such settings as professional sports organizations, colleges and universities, marketing agencies, and communications firms, or to pursue graduate study in such areas as law, marketing, journalism, or finance. "The intent of the center is not necessarily to train people to be agents like I am. It is to get them an education in the various and multifaceted aspects of the sports business," says Falk, who lives in Rockville, Maryland, with his wife and their two daughters: Daina and Jocelyn, a rising junior at the Newhouse School. "Students will have the opportunity to get very specialized training that prepares them to be successful executives in the sports industry."

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

Never one to settle for second place, Falk envisions the center achieving elite status among the more than 300 sport management programs in the United States—a dream shared by Veley. "When I took this job three years ago, I said to myself, 'We're not going to play follow the leader,'" says Veley, who doubles as the "Voice of the Carrier Dome" for SU Athletics. "We're going to have our own identity. We have unique resources and attributes as an institution of higher learning, and we will harness them." One of Veley's initial acts when starting the program was to assemble an advisory board of experts in the sport management field and invite Falk to lead it. "David was the first person to come to mind," Veley says. "He has presence and charisma. He's an entrepreneur and a leader, an alumnus who has made great accomplishments in his life-

time, and he and I share similar philosophies regarding the program's direction. He's passionate about sports, truly committed to education and to society, and has demonstrated his leadership abilities and philanthropic support of our program from the get-go."

A big fan of Falk's ability to think in unconventional ways and develop creative, often surprising partnerships, Veley believes such skills will prove invaluable for SU sport management students entering a highly competitive job market. "He's been involved in the movie business, the restaurant and hospitality business, and a lot of different entrepreneurial ventures," Veley says. "That's very much the way the sports world operates. You have to be ahead of the curve. You have to be visionary. That's why having him as a vital cog in our program is going to take us to new heights."

The center's goals include developing the strengths of the young sport management department, which graduates its first class of majors in May 2009, by recruiting additional standout faculty, expanding opportunities for internships and other hands-on learning opportunities, and keeping the program small and selective—especially in light of its burgeoning popularity—to assure the high academic standards of its graduates. A sport management minor will be introduced this fall. Future plans include creation of a graduate degree program and exploration of collaborations with the College of Law and the Maxwell School. "We are just three years old, but this program has exploded," Veley says. "I think it has surpassed everyone's expectations in terms of interest level. I'm proud to say that the composite GPA of our freshman class last year was 3.49. We are recruiting some of the best students in



Sport management students, such as Steve Shur '08 (left), Joshua Lewis '10, Nicole Imbrogno '08, Andrew Park '10, and Daniel Lehane '09 (facing page), have the opportunity to participate in numerous sports-related activities, including the Sport Management Club's annual charity auction, and serving as general manager for an SU team.

the United States to come to this program, and we have met with families from Switzerland, Korea, and China. We want to develop the program on an international level. Sports is such a global enterprise that it is important for cultural diversity to be part of what we do."

Working in partnership with the Department of Athletics, the Falk Center will seek to enhance supportive services for student-athletes. Falk wants SU to raise the bar on such services, which he believes should be more vigorously addressed at U.S. colleges and universities. Possibilities under consideration include degree completion programs for former student-athletes, training in diversity management and gender violence prevention, coursework in ethical principles in sport, and life-skills training. "A lot of very talented people come into college and play sports, and a lot of them have an unrealistic expectation that they will carry it to the professional level," Falk says. "The fact is, 98 percent of players aren't going to play professional sports, so it is important to give them some training based on that probability. I think we have an obligation to provide coursework that is germane to players' athletic interests and teaches them skills like managing money, self-marketing, learning about disability insurance and recovering from injuries—all sorts of business-related topics they are going to have to deal with at some point, whether they play professionally or not."

College of Human Ecology Dean Diane Lyden Murphy '67, G'76, G'78, G'83 admires Falk's commitment to such efforts, believing they align with the college's mission of social responsibility. "What he brings to us from his world as a lawyer and a sports agent is an awareness we would

never have been cognizant of," Murphy says. "He's seen, for example, the disastrous side of what happens to athletes who don't have enough information or education regarding personal financing and skillful negotiating, and he wants to make this right. There are things we can do a better job of in serving gifted young student-athletes while they are here. David Falk brought that home to us."

Former Duke University All-American Elton Brand of the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers also appreciates Falk's dedication to life-skills training. "I think the single greatest lesson I've learned from David is communication. I think the ability to just be able to communicate, business-wise, has helped me grow," Brand says. "As a former student-athlete, I can see why it's important for the Falk Center to include curriculum to prepare students for the real world. That's what David preaches. Once you hit the real world, there are a lot of forces pulling at you, a lot of mistakes you can make. So to have that preparation in college is important."

CARRIER DOME CONNECTION

A crucial part of Falk's vision for the center is to create a physical presence on campus—an annex to the Carrier Dome that will house the sport management department and serve as a point of convergence for SU Athletics, the Falk Center's academic partners, and the sports business. Proposed features of the new building, which is expected to be completed by December 2011, include an SU sports hall of fame, an experiential learning center, a state-of-the-art box office call center, a sports library and bookstore, a visitors' center, and broadcast and video editing facilities.





STUDENTS OF THE GAME

SPORTS IS BIG BUSINESS—in fact, by some estimates, it's the fifth biggest in the United States, generating an estimated \$350 billion in annual revenue. "Today more than ever, sport is woven into the social, cultural, and economic fabric of society," says Professor Michael Veley, chair of the Department of Sport Management in the College of Human Ecology. "It's an integral part of Americana. Sport is business. Sport is entertainment. And sport has endless educational and career opportunities waiting for those who have passion for the industry."

To prepare young professionals to enter the thriving industry, Syracuse's Department of Sport Management offers a 124-credit

bachelor's degree program that emphasizes hands-on learning opportunities, including a 12-credit senior-year capstone that allows students to gain experience in the professional world. Students have completed semester-long internships with the New York Yankees, U.S. Olympic Committee, National Baseball Hall of Fame, PGA Golf Tour, and the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles, Indianapolis Colts, and Tampa Bay Buccaneers. "Our students gain a tremendous amount of out-of-classroom experience that allows them to apply the principles and theory they learn in their courses to real-world situations, positioning them to land very significant jobs in the industry," Veley says.

The following is an overview of the department's experiential learning opportunities:

SPORT MANAGEMENT CLUB

Since its founding in 2005, this high-energy student organization has grown to more than 100 members and raised more than \$50,000 for local charities. The club takes educational field trips to major sporting events, venues, and museums; hosts guest speakers from throughout the industry; provides professional networking opportunities; and manages and sponsors sport fund-raising opportunities, including the Charity Sports Auction held each spring at the Carrier Dome. This year's event featured the presentation of the club's Perseverance in Sport Award to 5-year-old cancer survivor and golf prodigy Kyle Lograsso. The Jreck Subs Distinguished Lecture was delivered by SU Trustee Donovan McNabb '99, quarterback of the Philadelphia Eagles and member of the Syracuse All-Century Football Team.

SYNERCUSE

A collaborative partnership of the College of Human Ecology, the Department of Athletics, and the Carrier Dome, this initiative allows sport management students to become general managers of several SU sports teams, providing them with practical managerial experience and opportunities to conduct research. Last semester, 47 students participated in the program, working to enhance attendance at team sporting events, writing and presenting corporate sponsorship proposals, and developing community service components associated with their teams. For example, as general manager for SU track and field, Daniel Lehane '09 developed "Getting on Track," a reading program for local elementary and middle school kids that rewards high achievers with SU memorabilia and visits to track and field events to meet student-athletes.

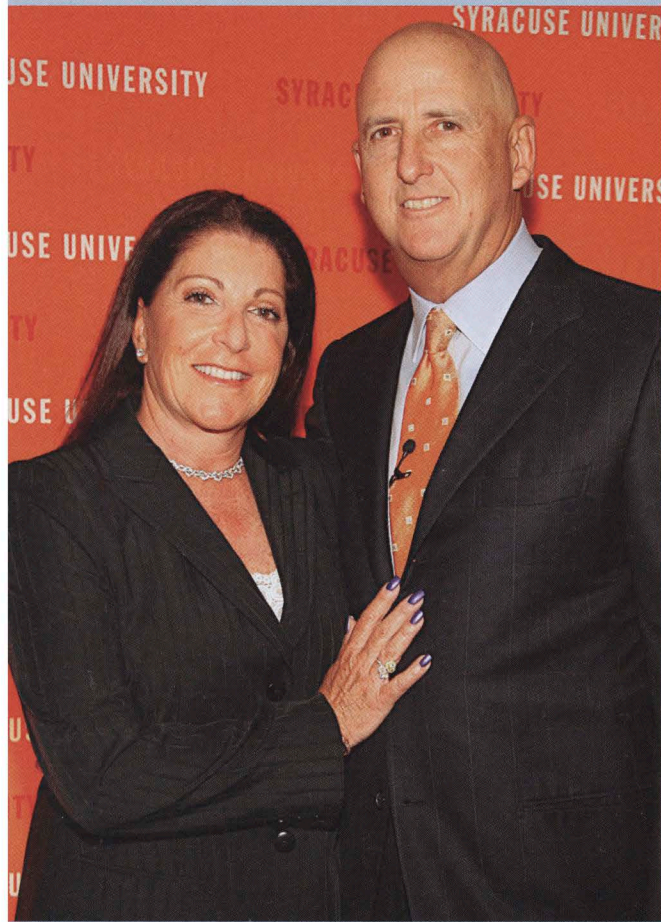
SYRACUSE-STEINER COLLECTIBLES

This innovative partnership links Steiner Sports Marketing and the Department of Athletics to provide sport management students with hands-on training and experience in market research, business plan and product development, and retail sales. Under the direction of Steiner CEO Brandon Steiner '81 and Veley, the student-run company obtains, markets, and sells one-of-a-kind SU athletic memorabilia and autographed collectibles.

44 REWARDS

Through participation in this three-year partnership with KeyBank, students help measure the effectiveness of advertising and marketing messages on various types of college sports fans. The program provides student internships and scholarships, includes prize giveaways for SU fans, and has a charitable giving component, all building on the legendary significance of the number 44 in SU Athletics.

SUPERSTAR DEALMAKER



RHONDA '74 AND DAVID FALK '72

AS AN SU FRESHMAN IN 1968, David Falk already possessed a “deep-seated ambition” to succeed in the sports industry. Forty years later, still driven by that original passion, the famed sports agent is grateful for a career that continues to challenge and fulfill him, long after surpassing his early aspirations. “Very few people go to work every day and do something they truly enjoy, and that’s something you can’t pay for,” says Falk, widely considered one of the most powerful people in American professional sports. Founder and CEO of Falk Associates Management Enterprises (FAME), he is famous for negotiating record-breaking contracts for his clients. “There is great personal satisfaction in doing work I love, and at the level I’ve done it. I pinch myself sometimes to think how lucky I’ve been,” he says.

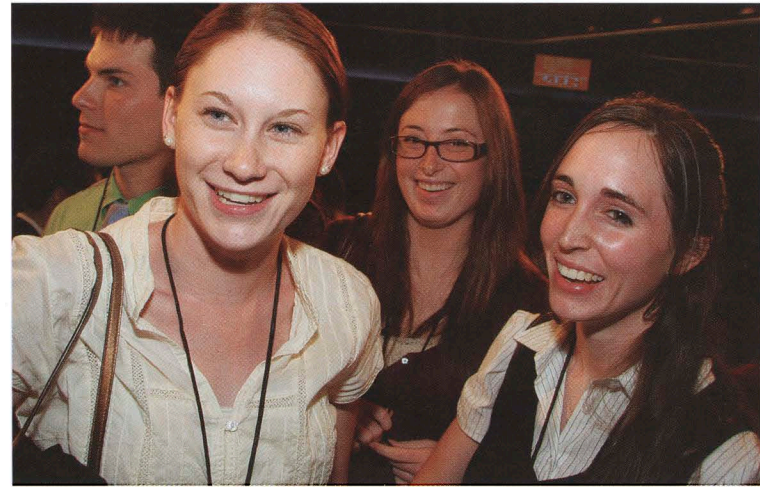
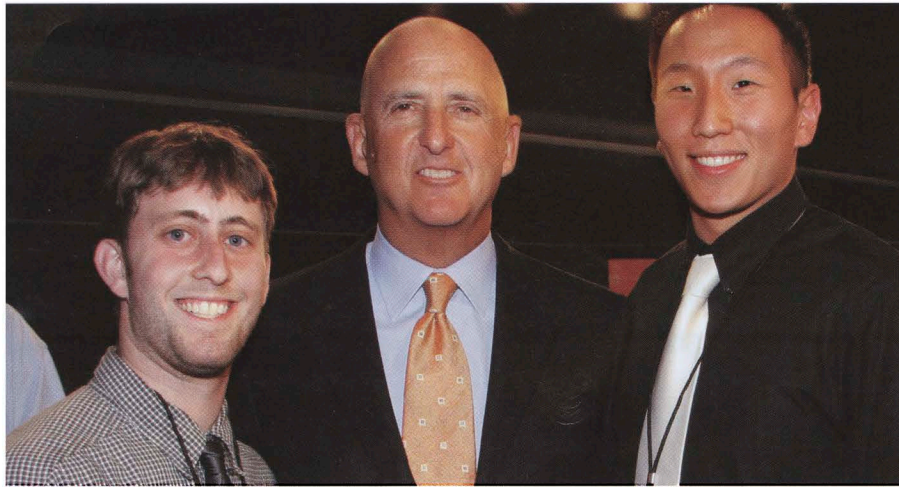
Falk began his career representing professional athletes with ProServ in 1974, rising to vice chair of the company. He left in 1992 to form FAME, providing specialized representation to the company’s elite clientele of NBA superstars, and later served as chair and CEO of SFX Sports Group. During his career, Falk has counted among his clients more NBA lottery picks, first-round draft selections, rookies of the year, and all-stars than anyone else in his line of work. Known as an aggressive negotiator, he has also demonstrated mastery at transforming athletes into icons through innovative, customized marketing partnerships and entertainment deals. “I’ve had the chance to work with—literally and figuratively—giants in the field,” says Falk, who once ranked second only to NBA commissioner David Stern in a *Basketball Digest* survey of the game’s most influential

people and has been listed among the nation’s 100 best marketers by *Advertising Age*.

Patrick Ewing, former New York Knicks and Georgetown star, is one of those “giants” whose career Falk helped shape. “David is the best in his knowledge of the sports business,” Ewing says. “He’s a remarkable individual and a good friend. He has given me a lot of good advice.”

Beyond the sports industry, Falk’s business ventures range from a private aviation company to a digital advertising firm. He is a frequent guest lecturer at universities across the country, including Harvard, Yale, and Duke, and serves on the George Washington University National Law Center’s advisory board. “My mother was a teacher, and I think that’s one reason that, amidst my deal-making skills, I have a very strong pedagogical bent,” he says. “I really enjoy teaching, and believe it is one of the most important professions in our society.”

Fully enjoying a life that epitomizes success, Falk values the opportunity to support SU through the establishment of the David B. Falk Center for Sport Management. “It is very rewarding to be able to give back to the place that gave me my foundation in my professional career,” he says. “It is also the place where I met some lifelong friends, not the least important of whom is my wife, Rhonda. She’s been a wonderful partner who supported me through the formative years of my career, when I was working 100 hours a week and barely able to pay our mortgage. To have our name on the center is something that links us both back to the University, and something we’re very proud of.”



David Falk meets with Brad Kallet '10 (left) and Andrew Park '10 at the Madison Square Garden event. Fifty sport management majors attended the event, including (in upper right photo, from left) Steve Guzinski '10, Chrissy Cronin '10, Alyson Miksitz '10, and Lena Dubensky '10.

An open-air atrium will exhibit mementos of Falk's career, as well as other sports memorabilia. Proposals for a sports restaurant, student lounge, and retail outlet store are also being explored. "Every program has to have a home, and what better home could there be for sport management than the principal locus of sports activity at Syracuse?" Falk says. "We are now in the process of evaluating space requirements and identifying architects, and it's exciting trying to come up with plans for a building that has its own unique character."

According to advisory board member Brandon Steiner '81, founder and chairman of Steiner Sports Marketing, that level of excitement reflects the dynamic leadership and passion Falk brings to the program. "His name is second to none when you talk about sports business and entrepreneurship," says Steiner, who partnered with sport management and the Department of Athletics to create the student-run Syracuse-Steiner Collectibles business. "He's extremely influential and has done incredible things in the sports business. To have this center named after him and to have his name associated so closely with our program is an extraordinary opportunity."

Falk is also involved on a more personal level, often making himself available to the SU community. In 2006, he delivered the Jreck Subs Distinguished Lecture at the first Sport Management Club Charity Sports Auction—an annual event that has raised thousands of dollars for local charities—and he regularly visits campus to teach and talk with sport management and law students. Jina Song '09, a sport management major with a minor in social welfare, is grateful for Falk's contributions and excited about the

program's future. "Whenever Mr. Falk comes to campus, I'm impressed with what a professional businessman he is," she says. "It has been great to hear him speak about all the things he has done, especially with Michael Jordan and Nike. Having the Falk Center will be wonderful for the department and will provide even more opportunities for students. It's a huge step for us!" College of Law graduate Jonathan Stein L'08 met David and Rhonda Falk through involvement in the Sport Management Club, which is open to all SU students interested in the sports industry. "It didn't surprise me to learn the Falks made a gift of this magnitude, because their generosity was evident right from the start," he says. "I'd like to personally thank them for that—for coming to SU so often, and for giving students like me the opportunity to hear stories about the sports industry and learn about the sports world."

For Falk, connecting with students and making a difference in their educations is what it's all about. "The level of enthusiasm from the students is so rewarding, I sometimes wish I could do this full time," Falk says. "It is one thing to give money; you write a check and you're done. That has some impact, but to maintain a participatory involvement—that's what I enjoy the most. It educates me as well. And I hope that by endowing the center with my name—the name of a person who has lived his life in the field and now wants to give something back to it—I am doing more than trying to cement my name on the corner of a building. I hope my involvement at Syracuse will be a kind of living legacy that allows the center to stand alone as one of the top programs in the country, and also supports the overall reputation of the University."