Alex Downing leaving WKU

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The end of the year means the end of an era at the College Heights Foundation.

Long-time president Alex Downing is leaving to become Vice President and CFO at Franklin Bank and Trust.

Amy Bingham talks with Downing about his tenure at WKU in this week’s View from the Hill.

“Western is in my DNA”.

That is certainly true for Alex Downing who was just a toddler when his father Dero became Western’s fourth president.

 “Not only did I get to benefit from his wisdom at WKU and vision for College Heights Foundation but certainly his advice as a father.”

An ’88 graduate of WKU, Alex pursued a career in accounting, but found himself back at his alma mater in 1996.

 “It was not something that was a specific goal but when the opportunity came up at the College Heights Foundation, I certainly wanted to pursue it.”

For the past seventeen years, Alex Downing has worked tirelessly to fund scholarships and help people realize their full potential.

 “Just to be involved with so many of those stories and to have so many people selflessly give of not just their resources but their time and energy to establish school funds to honor so many people.”

He was also able to work with his father who remained a presence at the College Heights Foundation until his death in 2011.

 “It’s an experience most people don’t have to work alongside their role model, mentor and best friend. To have that opportunity for 15 years is something I will always cherish.”

Downing had his father’s blessing to pursue other opportunities.

 “He often told me that as much as I love this place and as much as I love what I do, I have an obligation as a father, husband and to myself not to be blind to opportunities.”

Now that day has come as Alex says prepares to take on a new role as CFO of Franklin Bank & Trust.

 “I’m excited about the new opportunity, excited about new role but certainly going to miss all the wonderful people associated with the university.”

And he hopes to continue working with WKU as much as possible.

3:52 “Franklin Bank and Trust is a great partner with the University and that will be important to me as I move forward.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Downing will begin his position at Franklin Bank & Trust on January first. A familiar face will be taking over the College Heights Foundation. Donald Smith, the executive director of Alumni Relations will assume his new duties at the foundation at the first of the year.

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