

## **Athletic Interests**

Jim and Ann Wheeler had watched their son, Timmy, excel at football at Duluth East. So it was no surprise when college scouts began calling. Timmy was soon offered a six-figure, full-ride scholarship to an Illinois university, and the family took a site visit.

“Driving home I asked Timmy, if you were injured and couldn’t play football would you still go there,” Jim recalls. “He turned to me and said, ‘No, Dad.’”

Instead of guessing what they should do next for their eldest, the Wheelers turned to College Connectors. They had started working with Valerie Broughton the summer before Timmy’s junior year, and appreciated her ability to take away the unknowns and to keep Timmy on task during the application process.

“When he should apply, where he should apply, should he take the ACT or the SAT, and financing; we were naïve in that area,” Jim admits.

### **Stress Relief**

Valerie took a wide view of Timmy’s potential and encouraged him to apply to an Ivy League school, emphasizing that it would require focus and commitment, but that he was more than capable.

“Not a lot of kids from Duluth East attend Ivy League schools,” Ann says. “Valerie helped Timmy have more confidence in himself, and that is one of the great things she did.”

Another benefit was Valerie’s support during Timmy’s senior year. Instead of arguing and nagging Timmy, the Wheelers were able to enjoy their time with him and support his decisions because Valerie kept him motivated and on task with the college application process.

“For Ann and me, that was worth Valerie’s entire fee,” Jim says, laughing.

### **Happy Endings**

The first year after an eldest child leaves home is like losing an arm, Ann says, but she and Jim are pleased with how much their son has flourished at college. In his second year at Dartmouth, playing football and getting As, Timmy’s happiness is evident in his voice when he calls home. This winter, he will study abroad in New Zealand, and has an interest in history that may lead to a law or business degree.

“Some people are astonished that we passed up the full ride,” Jim says. “But in our minds, it was no contest.”