At the beginning of his senior year at the University of Hartford, Edward Peltier ’68 was a business administration major who traveled back and forth from campus to classes at the business school that was on Hudson Street in downtown Hartford at the time. He was cocaptain of the baseball team, a player on the basketball team, and a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity.

Peltier felt he should begin searching for a job for after graduation, but he was unsure about what he wanted to do. Upon discovering that the University had a cooperative student work program with the American School for the Deaf (ASD) in West Hartford, Conn., Peltier applied for a position. He was hired to coach basketball for hearing-impaired students at the junior high school level. He attended classes to learn sign language and how to teach and communicate effectively with deaf students.


Peltier wasn’t able to take a direct career path, however. After graduating in 1968, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. During the Vietnam War era, he spent one year in the United States and one year in Vietnam.

When he completed his military service, Peltier returned to West Hartford and was hired again by the American School for the Deaf, this time as a substitute teacher. Soon he left the state again to earn a master’s degree in deaf education at McDaniel College in Westminster, Md., after which he began his full-time teaching career at the Kentucky School for the Deaf, in Danville, Ky., where he eventually rose to become principal.

At the end of a decade at Kentucky, Peltier returned to the American School for the Deaf as assistant superintendent, a position he held for almost 20 years before moving to Vermont to become the chief executive officer of a state and school service provider of deaf services. In three years he was back at the American School for the Deaf, this third time as superintendent and executive director.

The school has the distinction of being the first school for the deaf in the United States and will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2017. The faculty and staff serve more than 180 students on campus every day and more than 350 people in the community each month. Updating ASD’s historical facilities is Peltier’s top priority right now. He is the project liaison for a new, 62,000-square-foot educational building currently under construction.

Peltier still finds time to attend University athletic games and stay in touch with his fraternity brothers. And he says the career that began as a student employment opportunity has been very fulfilling.

“Most fulfilling are the students,” Peltier notes. “They bring a positive attitude to everything they do. They overcome communication challenges every day, and that’s something to admire.”