George Rupp shares a laugh with former Vice President Al Gore, who gave a series of lectures at the Graduate School of Journalism following his narrow presidential election defeat.

**By Jason Hollander**

George Rupp smiles when he talks about sitting in his family’s Packard car while traveling across New Jersey’s Pulaski Skyway, into the Holland Tunnel and finally emerging to find the giant spectacle of Manhattan on the other side of the window. The experience is a memory he acquired for him as a child since his parents, both German immigrants, would usually venture into the city to socialize with family and friends.

Because of this early exposure to New York, when Rupp assumed Columbia’s presidency in 1993 after eight years of living in Houston as the president of Rice University, he considered the move something of a homecoming. It also happened to be the beginning of a new era at Columbia.

During his tenure, Rupp has helped the University’s undergraduate schools reach record levels of applications and admission rates, raised nearly $3 billion in one of higher education’s largest ever fund-raising campaigns, built strong relations with the community and brought in a number of world class faculty members.

But Rupp has never been one to limit his vision to an institution or a city or a country for that matter. After nine years of proven success at Columbia, he leaves next month to replace Reynold Levy (the new president of Lincoln Center and ’73 Law School graduate) as president of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The Committee, founded in 1933 at the request of Albert Einstein, is among the world’s largest non-sectarian non-profit agencies providing global emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement services for refugees, victims of oppression and violent conflict.

*After Nine Years of Proven Success at Columbia, George Rupp Turns to a Global Cause*

This will not be Rupp’s first effort at providing assistance to people in need. He was influenced at a young age by his mother’s strong convictions, which he says were “always resistant to unfairness and authoritarian imposition,” and as a result, became “very active in issues involving race relations and social issues as a high school and college student.”

Rupp discovered a University vast and diverse in its composition and studies. As an undergraduate majoring in economics and the Goddard Institute for Space Studies and one at Barnard College) in 2000 Commencement exercises.

**George Rupp speaks to boxing legend Muhammad Ali who received an honorary degree from Columbia at the 2000 Commencement exercises.**

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