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Shelby graduate celebrates success of his first book

Megan Ward
Star Staff Writer

SHELBY — Harry Nolan Jr. was voted most likely to succeed when he graduated from Shelby High School in 1960.

“Maybe they knew something I didn’t,” Nolan said last week from his alma mater, Duke University, where he was signing his book for readers. It thrilled him to see his book displayed on the checkout counter at Duke’s bookstore, next to books about Coach K.

Nolan’s first book, “Airline without a Pilot: Lessons in Leadership,” is ranked in the top one percent of Amazon.com book sales.

The book, about the decline and bankruptcy of Delta, is also sold at Barnes and Noble stores and at Hudson Booksellers at the Atlanta airport. It has been printed in German, Japanese and French.

“Sometimes I have to pinch myself,” Nolan said.

Nolan, a consultant at his Atlanta firm, Management Advisory Services Inc., said his specialty is business strategy and leadership.

He’s been writing this book in his mind for about 10 years; collecting anecdotes, stories and lessons. It took him about six months to put it on paper.

The story includes behind-the-scenes information from 59 members of the “Delta family.” Nolan examines the leadership of Delta’s seven CEOs and board of directors. He names the decisions that he believes made the company successful and the decisions that took it down.

“It’s not a pretty story,” Nolan said. “But it was a story that demanded to be told.”

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