

The Distinguished Career Award is given to an individual based on esteemed and meritorious achievement in career and life. Candidates for this award are alumni of William Penn University or Nebraska Central College. This year's recipient, Mike Gates, began his career at the age of eleven when he delivered the Sunday New York Times on his bike at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station where his father was stationed as a test pilot. He received a dollar every week for his efforts.

Gates worked numerous jobs in gas stations, department stores, restaurants, and tobacco farms provided spending money until he left in August of 1961 to join practice for the William Penn College football team. While at Penn he continued working which included several gas stations and farms, he ran the front and back end of Mahaska Bowl (currently owned now by William Penn), and he was a bartender at Elmhurst Country Club.

Upon being graduated, he entered the U. S. Navy aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Yorktown deployed to Viet Nam. After a short stint as a signalman he joined Special Services where he was a nightly sports broadcaster to the fleet, taught high school classes to GED hopefuls, and wrote articles for the ships' daily newspaper. Gates real job aboard the Yorktown was recreation and morale. He organized and scheduled all of the ships' athletic teams to compete with other ships and countries, planned the ships band to perform at special occasions aboard and ashore, and would fly off the ship to develop tours and activities for the crew when it arrived in port.

After completing active duty with the Navy Gates, with the help of a former Penn student, joined Fairchild Semiconductor in Sunnyvale, California as their Director of Recreation. This matriculated into the Human Resources Department where he was responsible for employee relations for a large segment of the company.

He moved through several prominent companies in a Human Resources capacity until he arrived at Fortune 500 Company Raytheon in 1984, headquartered in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Human Resources at Raytheon included government security, compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, community relations, union negotiations, health & welfare, employee relations, compensation, benefits, training and development, and employment. Gates was responsible for some or all of these Human Resource components during his tenure at Raytheon.

He oversaw plants in England, Canada, and numerous facilities throughout the United States, with the most unique being White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. When he retired from Raytheon in 2001, Gates had 200 people reporting to him and was responsible for 10,000 employees.

Outside of work he indulged in tennis, softball, and road races. He was an active coach in Pop Warner football, little league, military football and softball, and adult softball leagues, and served on the town council in Westford, Massachusetts.

Gates also sat on the boards of The Big Brothers/Big Sisters of San Francisco, Hope for Retarded Children and Adults of San Jose, the Navy League, and the Tilghman Area Youth Association of Maryland.

Since retiring, Gates taught woodworking for an after school program for seven years, and has mentored two youth over the last nine years through Talbot Mentors of Easton, Maryland. He currently mentors a William Penn University student, in the Online/Evening program, through the Alumni Mentoring Program at the university.

Mike and his lovely bride Lynn, a 1967 graduate of Penn, live happily on the Chesapeake Bay in St Michaels, Maryland where in their spare time they enjoy gardening and sailing. In recognition of his personal career success and volunteer time given to assist young people in their own career skill development, William Penn University is proud to present the 2017 Distinguished Career Award to Mike Gates, Class of 1965.