

VERN BUEHLER HONORED WITH THE SPIRIT OF OLD MAIN AWARD

As just about every Utah State University Partners in Business seminar starts, everything stops so the man with a bow tie can be introduced.

It's Vern Buehler, and for the people at the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business there aren't many who command the respect that he has earned. He's played a key role in the history of the school and was the founder of the Partners in Business program.

It seems hard to imagine the USU campus without Vern. He regularly walks to campus from his home to attend a seminar or conduct other business on campus. When Jon M. Huntsman came to visit, a video had been prepared about the School of Business and it featured, of course, Vern Buehler.

Last year he received a very prestigious university-wide honor. He was presented with the 2007 Spirit of Old Main Award.

"A bow tie and a boundless heart — for decades now, friends of Utah State University have learned to associate one with the other," Buehler's award citation reads. "And always the bow tie and boundless heart arrive alongside that reassuring smile, that indomitable spirit and that visionary intellect of Dr. Vernon M. Buehler."

Vern, who graduated in 1941 with a bachelor's degree in accounting, returned to USU in 1967 after a career in the military, having earned his CPA, a Harvard MBA and a doctorate from George Washington University. He served for 21 years as a management professor before he retired at age 70. He went on to be a volunteer professor in Thailand, Poland, Ukraine and Russia.



Vern Buehler (right) at the USU Veterans Memorial with his good friend and fellow USU alum Col. Doyle "Dode" Rees.

His donations to the Huntsman School of Business have been generous over the years. He funded endowments in the Partners in Business program, scholarship endowments at the Huntsman School of Business, and was a leading influence in the creation of USU's Veterans Memorial and the Russell Maughan Aviation Memorial outside the Dee Glen Smith Spectrum. He has also funded the Dr. Vernon Maughan Buehler and MaRee C. Buehler Endowed Professorships at the Huntsman School of Business.

The Partners in Business program he founded has drawn such speakers as Milton Friedman, Alan Greenspan, Peter Drucker and W. Edwards Deming.

"I'm proud of having been instrumental in getting the Partners program going and its continuance," Buehler said. "When I say that, I really include the Shingo Prize because that was all a package when I left after 21 years of teaching and working building up the program."

In Vern's acceptance speech for The Spirit of Old Main Award, he said his most "treasured accomplishment" was that he married "the talented and beautiful coed, MaRee Clawson of Hyrum." She passed away in 1990 after battling Parkinson's disease.

While Vern's accomplishments and contributions have been impressive, it is something else that draws people to him.

"Our office is a brighter place when Vern comes to visit," said Alta Markeson, the school's executive director of development. "He always has a warm smile and a cheerful greeting. Vern doesn't have a pretentious bone in his body. We are lucky to have him as an alumnus and an emeritus faculty member, but we are blessed to count him among our friends."



Buehler was presented with the 2007 Spirit of Old Main Award for his years of service and numerous gifts to the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business.

Recently Vern went to Dallas, Texas, where the Shingo Prize for Operational Excellence had plans for him. They honored him and Norman Bodek, as co-founders of the Shingo Prize, by inducting them both into the Shingo Academy.

It probably won't be the last time someone wants to give Vern an award. However, his Spirit of Old Main Award may always sum it up best. It reads, "In celebration of his distinguished life, tireless service, visionary philanthropy and abundant influence on Utah State University and the world, tonight we honor a soldier, an academician and a generous heart by proudly bestowing The Spirit of Old Main Award for lifetime achievement on Vern Buehler."

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