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A Discussion with Professor Mike Waller

By Steve Sena, '95

For another installment of nostalgia, I sat down with Professor Emeritus Mike Waller to discuss his career and history with Miami's Paper Science program. In this article we delve into his education, work and personal life, teaching history, and activities post-retirement in 2007. I hope you enjoy and learn a few things you may have not known about a brilliant guy we had the privilege to call professor since 1979.

Professor Waller is still fit as a fiddle and remains very active in his retirement. Hobbies include outdoor activities, travel, weekly road bike excursions, and volunteer work for Meals on Wheels every Thursday. For those who may not know, time volunteering with Meals On Wheels consist of packing out roughly 50 meals for community residents who are unable to buy and prepare their own meals. Then the team of volunteers split up and take those meals to people's residences. In some cases, this personalized delivery is the only verbal interaction all day for the elderly or handicapped individual. Truly noble work.

Personal History Mike was born and raised in Buffalo, NY and all throughout high school - which was more of a "vocational" high school rather than a traditional high school - he intended to pursue carpentry as a career. His father was an independent contractor who designed, built, and installed tobacco drying systems for farmers and had a solid customer base in Southeastern Canada. That's where Mike spent a lot of his spare time growing up. Perhaps that experience is where he began a life-long passion for 'heat transfer'. All his plans for the future began to change as opportunity knocked.

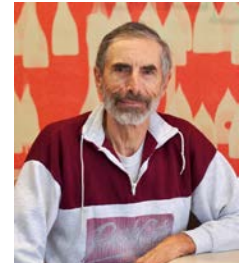
With excellent grades and a stellar SAT score, Mike was awarded a full-ride scholarship to Rensselaer Polytech Institute in upstate New York, a college known for tough engineering programs. Mike chose to study Mechanical Engineering to suit his passions. For some additional

living expenses and to fill time, Mike was also in the ROTC program at RPI, working his way up to 1st-in-class commander of the unit at Rensselaer. While studying at RPI, Mike happened to be at his sister's place under the kitchen counter fixing her sink when he was awkwardly introduced to her best friend Marcia. That chance meeting with Marcia turned into a wonderful 53 year marriage that as Mike puts it, "just might work out."

Upon graduation, Mike had some choices to make. His commission in the service would most certainly have taken him to SE Asia, where things were escalating into the Vietnam war. Another option was to continue into graduate studies at another tough engineering institution Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mike chose grad school and felt he could, "handle the work, being older than the typical undergraduate students who, notoriously, get easily overwhelmed at MIT." He also had some work experience with his father's business and internships at Union Carbide to help build his resume. A couple years later, Mike finished grad school with his masters in Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Doctorate degrees. (It wasn't until years later that MIT offered PhD's in Engineering.)

Early Career in Industry MIT graduates are heavily recruited by the consumer products giant Procter & Gamble.

With his advanced degrees in hand, he went to work for P&G in their product development labs in Ross, OH amongst a team of chemistry PhD's. Merely weeks into his new role came his introduction to the industry we all know and love. While at work one day, a guy named Gill Hammond, who worked in the FamilyCare (Tissue/Towel) business unit, came into the Ross Technical Center and asked a simple question, "are there any Engineers here?" Mike was the only one.....so three days later, he found himself in Green Bay, WI on the start-up team for a new tissue machine.



The competencies Mike developed during that experience led to many more machine start-ups during a significant capacity expansion period in P&G's FamilyCare history - for the next 13 years, in fact. Ultimately, Mike was named the Senior Engineer for Papermaking at P&G, whose machines are highly advanced and designed to create unique advantages in the consumer products they produce. It's certainly not a commodity market, but one driven by trade secrets and memorable marketing campaigns like "Don't squeeze the Charmin" and "Bounty - the quicker picker upper."

By this time, Mike and Marcia had three small children while living in Clermont County outside of Cincinnati. The travel demands (often globally) of his role were wearing thin on the family. And even when he wasn't out-of-town on machine start-ups, he had almost an hour commute to P&G's Winton Hill Technical Center. None of this was conducive to enjoying his children during the brief period when they were young and impressionable. He even turned down a job offer from Beloit because it just meant more of the same, or worse.

Academia Calls Mike had some familiarity with Miami, having attended each year the annual Automation Symposium for local paper companies held by the Paper Science department and the Pulp & Paper Foundation. Due to the popularity of this symposium, the department chair, Ed Brandon, wanted to expand the degree curriculum to include Process Control classes. So when Dr. Brandon placed an ad for a Process Control Professor at Miami in the TAPPI Journal, Mike took notice....and

(continued on Page 2)

A Discussion with Professor Mike Waller (cont.) applied, despite the 40% pay cut the family would have to endure.

He got the job. The family simply adjusted to the loss of income; family life improved dramatically. His commute went from 1 hour each way to 5 minutes! Eventually Marcia even joined the faculty of Miami in the German Department, ultimately retiring around the same time as Mike in 2009. A neat outcome of this decision to focus on the family is that all three of Mike and Marcia's children (current ages 52, 49, and 47) all still live in Ohio and gather regularly.

Mike's first teaching experience in 1979 was filling in for Alan Springer, who was away in Malaysia on sabbatical, in Heat Transfer and Mass Transfer. Heat was his favorite class to teach for the next 30 years. Also, during the early years, Statistics was only taught by the School of Applied Science for the engineering and computer science students. That also turned out to be one of Mike's favorite classes to teach, along with Fluid Dynamics which played off his research work as a grad student at MIT. About Statistics, Mike quipped, "Now you have Excel, and it's BOOM BOOM."

The unique teaching style we all know, and loved (or hated), harkened back to Mike's experience with professors at RPI and MIT. "I believe in tough exams that force you to think instead of spewing memorized facts." I guess all of us alumni can still remember solving test problems on the planet Htrae, whose properties were based on Ria in the atmosphere, and Retaw in liquid form. To most students' chagrin, Professor Waller's exam questions were never recycled - they became homework in the next academic year. As for the daily quizzes, he based that philosophy off an RPI professor who never lectured, only spending his class time asking questions of the students and keeping a running log of who correctly answered his questions and who didn't. All those binary tallies for each student made up a test grade at the end of the semester.

When I asked him what it was like working with all the long-time faculty in Paper Science, he said that it was better than he expected since nearly every professor was first in industry before becoming a college professor. That made the material, research, and job preparation for students more practical and less theoretical. Right from the beginning, Friday's from 3-5 pm was the department meeting - and that led to the "attitude adjustment hour" uptown immediately following the meeting. Amazingly, that Friday happy hour with his colleagues still continues to this day despite the fact that all the attendees have long since retired.

Looking Back As we wound down our time together, I wanted to see what Mike thought of when asked how the industry has changed over his career. What has been a big innovation? He quickly responded that "through air drying" a.k.a. TAD was a major shift in the consumer products we are all used to using today. "Selling air to customers has worked."

When I asked how students have changed over that period, he mentioned that two years after retiring, he reluctantly agreed to cover a semester of Heat Transfer for whatever reason the regular professor couldn't do it. He noticed a lack of energy and buzz with the class; one that he attributes to the growth of the Engineering School in general. No longer was it just a coalesced group of Paper students in Heat (I was determined to get that phrase in here), but a broad range of chemical, mechanical, electrical, and bio-medical engineering students, all of which preferred to be distracted on their phones instead of engaging with other students and intently listening to the lectures. Mike expressed concern over how well this young group of adults will be able to focus on the task at hand after being raised on social media. He also wondered if young people today have failed enough, or are too privileged in their up-bringing. There is a lot to be learned through failure. "Maybe old geezers like me can't see it any differently."

The closing thought to leave you with, based on my time with Professor Waller, is that his "Four Things of importance" he repeatedly iterated during his years of teaching are still true for him today (Health, Family, Religion, and Job - in that order). Now, his "job" is focusing even more on the first three things. I want to thank Mike for his time and for challenging us all when we were students. As it turns out, that's what we needed to succeed in our careers and in life.

After reading Steve Sena's feature article, don't you agree that now is the appropriate time to honor Professor Waller? Mike Waller impacted the lives of many of us students as a professor at Miami from 1979 through 2009. His style of teaching was to engage the student to think about the problem systematically, and to apply the engineering principles to solve the problem. No cookie cutter solution here -- understand the problem and apply the principles. The thinking process that he cultivated benefited many of us in our careers. And now we can give back to Mike. Just like last year, where we successfully completed the campaign to honor Bill Scott with an honorary scholarship, this year we do the same for Mike Waller. We are officially kicking off the campaign for the Mike Waller Honorary Scholarship. We hope you will join this effort to endow the scholarship through your contribution by going to..... Givetomiamioh.org/PSEfindividual and designating the Mike Waller Honorary.



QR Code for Donations

Announcing the Campaign to Substantially Increase Scholarship Endowments

A Call to Leaders: Shaping Our Industry's Future Leaders is our new campaign designed to substantially increase the value of scholarship endowments in the PS&E Foundation. Over time, the impact of the scholarships has been strongly outpaced by tuition inflation. To continue to attract high ability men and women to the industry, we need to increase the relevance of our scholarships. As of this printing, we have raised \$1,800,000 in additional endowment funds, and we are pursuing additional significant gifts. The strategy includes gifts from industry companies, as well as gifts from friends of Miami's Paper program. Please consider your ability to participate either by endowing a scholarship yourself, setting up an estate gift, or contributing to the Mike Waller Honorary Scholarship request. More communications will be forthcoming under separate cover.

Bill Scott Honorary Scholarship

In January, we kicked off the fundraising for the Bill Scott Honorary Scholarship to recognize the great contributions Dr. Scott made to the Paper program, and the help he gave to shape the careers of so many of us graduates. The response of alumni and friends has been astounding -- in less than 11 short months, the scholarship endowment has been funded and can be awarded in April at the Student Recognition Banquet. *Thanks to all of you who contributed to this endowment.* Responding to this fundraising, Dinesh Paliwal ('83) created his own tribute to Dr. Scott, as announced in the next column. Let's now turn our attention to funding the Mike Waller endowment!

Paliwal Foundation – Dr. Bill Scott Leadership Scholarship

Dinesh Paliwal ('83 MS) was on campus on Nov. 6 to celebrate his generous gift to fund the Paliwal Foundation/Dr. Bill Scott Leadership Scholarship. After dinner, he presented his donation to fund this scholarship, which honors Bill for his dedication and his impact on the students. A great act of giving back by Dinesh, and a great honor for Bill Scott!



From L-R: Dinesh Paliwal, Bill Scott, and Gary Rudemiller

2019-20 Recipients of Premium Scholarships

PCA Scholarship

The Paper Science & Engineering Foundation at Miami University awarded 3 **Packaging Corporation of America (PCA)** scholarships to students in the paper science and engineering curriculum who demonstrate superior leadership, creativity, and academic achievements. These prestigious awards are full tuition scholarships. Recipients of these highly competitive awards were selected by a committee and the 2019-20 winners are:

Delaney Brown, Hayden Hoogerhyde, and Kate Witzgall

These scholarships were awarded this academic year for the very first time and are provided through a generous donation made by PCA this Spring.



Kadant's Woody Tyler Memorial Scholarship



Molly McCudden, a current Paper Engineering senior, was selected as the 2019-20 Woody Tyler Memorial scholarship recipient. Molly spent the summer interning with Georgia Pacific in Big Island, Virginia. Congratulations Molly!

Bob and Sue Feeser Scholarship



Julia Poth is one of our current Paper Engineering seniors and was selected as the recipient of our 2019-20 Bob and Sue Feeser Scholarship. This award is a full tuition scholarship provided through the generosity of Bob and Sue Feeser. Julia spent the summer interning in Menasha, Wisconsin with Sonoco. Congratulations Julia!

Bob and Barbara Williams Leadership Scholarship

The Paper Science & Engineering Foundation at Miami University awarded 6 **Bob and Barbara Williams Leadership Scholarships** to students in the paper science and engineering curriculum who demonstrate superior leadership, creativity, and academic achievements. These prestigious awards are \$5,000 per semester scholarships. Recipients of these highly competitive awards were selected by a committee and the 2019-20 winners are listed below.

The scholarships are provided through the generosity of The Bob and Barbara Williams Foundation. Mr. Williams was a force in the global pulp and paper industry as co-founder of the James River Corporation. His legacy continues to be felt through his scholarship endowment's encouragement of high leadership standards for graduating engineers.



From left to right: Stephen Art, Emmett Bryan (1st Semester), Madelyn Holthouse (2nd Semester), Faith Moreno, Gillian Murphy, Anthony Weise

Scholarships — The best gift students receive!

Thank you for considering the Paper Science & Engineering Foundation with your gift giving.

You truly enrich the students' lives and we continue to be humbled by your generosity.



Dr. Gary Rudemiller
Executive Director
RudemiGR@MiamiOH.edu



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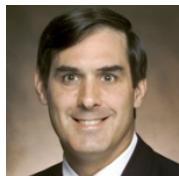
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The Foundation welcomes **Dr. Keith Hohn**, Chair of the Chemical, Paper, and Biomedical Engineering Department. He joins us from Kansas State University.

Look for his feature article in the Spring newsletter.

Interesting Activities for Our Paper Professors



Dr. Steve Keller presented three papers at PaperCon this year in the Process Control and NetInc sessions and the International Paper Physics Conference session. The American Chemical Society recognized the importance of paper in its celebration of Earth Week this year. As such, Dr. Keller contributed two articles to the ACS student magazines, and gave a keynote presentation at the Division of Chemical Education at the ACS national meeting. Besides research, he is now finalizing preparations for another study abroad trip to Central Europe for this year's cohort of 19 students.



Dr. Doug Coffin was conference chair and presented a paper at the 2019 International Paper Physics meeting held in conjunction with PaperCon 2019 in Indianapolis, IN. Doug will give one of the invited plenary talks at the 2020 Progress in Paper Physics Meeting in Jyväskylä, Finland in June. Doug has joined the editorial board of Tappi Journal and was just named the Programme Secretary for the 2021 Fundamental Research Symposium in Cambridge, UK. On campus, Doug has been a principal in developing the Systems Automation component of the CEC Boldly Strategic Initiative, which will better align Miami's Engineering programs with the needs of Industry 4.0 and the Internet of Things.

PSEF Corporate Partners

Welcome to our newest corporate member:



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2019 Internships & Co-ops

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Location</u>
Josh Ackley	Georgia Pacific	Atlanta, GA
Andy Almquist	Essity	Middletown, OH
Stephen Art	Domtar	Plymouth, NC
Jessica Beltridge	Alsip MiniMill	Alsip, IL
Tom Borthwick	Graphic Packaging	Middletown, OH
Delaney Brown	Avery Dennison	Painesville, OH
Emmett Bryan	International Paper	Franklin VA
Mekel Chapman	Domtar	Plymouth, NC
Thomas Chhim	Georgia Pacific	Neenah, WI
Daniel Craft	WestRock	Lancaster, OH
Will Cummins	P&G	Cincinnati, OH
Jake Dankert	Voith Paper	Appleton, WI
Sydney Dowden	Domtar	Port Huron, MI
Nicolas Erazo	ABB	Westerville, OH
Alexandra Filatraut	Mercedes Benz Financial	Farmington Hills, MI
Willow Guenther	International Paper	Shreveport, LA
Gabrielle Herbert	Domtar	Johnsonburg, PA
Madelyn Holthouse	Sonoco	Hartsville, SC
Hayden Hoogerhyde	EDT	Norcross, GA
Tori Jones	Greif	Massillon, OH
Jarred Karikas	Domtar	Hawesville, KY
Evan Keith	Georgia Pacific	Monicello, MS
Jared Kingston	WestRock	Plymouth, IN
Jay Koehler	International Paper	Georgetown, SC
Sam Lyon	WestRock	West Point, VA
Molly McCudden	Georgia Pacific	Big Island, VA
Joseph Meredith	Pratt	Valparaiso, IN
Eric Moran	WestRock	Atlanta, GA
Faith Moreno	Greenpac	Niagara Falls, NY
Gillian Murphy	Graphic Packaging	Middletown, OH
Monica Nguyen	Graphic Packaging	Middletown, OH
Kerri Peterson	Greenpac	Niagara Falls, NY
Julia Poth	Sonoco	Menasha, WI
Jacob Reid	ABB	Westerville, OH
Victoria Rozenshtraukh	HC Company	Middlefield, OH
Ameera Salah	Johnson Electric	Vandalia, OH
Angel Shores	NISource Natural Gas Co	Toledo, OH
Adam Stall	Continental	St. Mary's, OH
Piper Stulley	Sofidel	Circleville, OH
Hans Weimerskirch	Georgia Pacific	Atlanta, GA
Anthony Weise	Domtar	Kingsport, TN
Kate Witzgall	Solenis	Middletown, OH

* Boldface indicates PS&E Foundation corporate members.
Thank you for your financial support of our mission!

SAVE THE DATES



Miami University Spring Career & Internship Fair
 Wednesday, February 12, 2020
 Millett Hall, Oxford, OH 45056

Paper Engineering students will be polishing their resumes and preparing to meet with you to discuss your internship, co-op, or full-time job opportunities. Let the Foundation assist you in connecting with the best and the brightest students at Miami University.



Student TAPPI 4th Annual TopGolf Networking Event

In conjunction with September's Fall Career Fair.

Mingle with the students for a relaxed and fun afternoon.

More details to come later!



PSEF Student Recognition Dinner

Tuesday, April 21st, 2020 5:00 pm
 Miami University
 Armstrong Student Center

An impressive event to cap off the Foundation's Annual Meeting where we recognize our talented paper engineers and generous supporters who make it all possible. Thanks to you, we will be awarding around **\$265,000** in scholarships in the 2019-20 academic year!

2020 Banquet Speaker Announcement



Mark W. Kowlzan
 Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
 Packaging Corporation of America

We are very pleased to announce that Mr. Mark Kowlzan will be our keynote speaker for the 2020 Student Recognition Dinner on April 21, 2020. Since 2016, Mr. Kowlzan has been Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Packaging Corporation of America (PCA), and in 2017, he was named the 2017 North American CEO of the Year by the RISI. Mr. Kowlzan's progression to his present role began in operations in 1981 with International Paper. In 1996 he joined PCA, and his responsibilities escalated over time through operations management roles to lead to the office of Chief Executive Officer in 2010. Today, Mr. Kowlzan also participates on the Board of Directors for the American Forest & Paper Association, and is a member of the Board of Trustees for our PS&E Foundation.

He received an undergraduate degree in Natural Science from Assumption College; an undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering and Pulp and Paper Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell; a graduate degree in Pulp and Paper Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell; and an MBA from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. His commitment to ensuring the supply of future Paper Engineers to PCA is evidenced by his recent \$1,000,000 donation to substantially increase the existing PCA Endowed Scholarship in the Paper Science & Engineering Foundation at Miami University. We look forward to being inspired with his presentation.

TAPPI Student Chapter Activities

Submitted by Hayden Hoogerhyde, President

This semester, more than 20 of our Student TAPPI members had the opportunity to partake in the second annual TAPPI Topgolf Outing. This year, we had representatives from seven member companies and a great time was had by all. The event gave both students and company representatives the opportunity to connect on a more personal level in a fun, casual environment. Our student leadership has seen the event grow since its inception in Fall 2018, and we are extremely excited to see how it blossoms in the future. Student TAPPI has thoroughly enjoyed its year thus far, and we look forward to the "Paper Engineering in Austria and Central Europe" Study Abroad and the TAPPI/PIMA Student Summit in the near future!



2019-20 Student TAPPI Officers
 Delaney Brown, Madelyn Holthouse, Jessica Bettridge,
 Julia Poth, Hayden Hoogerhyde

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