2005 Award Recipient

Bernard H. Brown

Bernie Brown was an inspiration to all who knew him. His caring for people from all walks of life, particularly for the students at WPI, was exceptional. No issue was too large or small; Bernie approached each one with the resolve to do what was best for the situation.

It was the summer of 1966 when Bernie joined the Student Affairs division as assistant dean of students, thus beginning a distinguished career of over 38 years, many of them as vice president for student affairs, and all of them as a key member of the WPI administration.

From the moment he arrived on campus, Bernie had an impact on the lives of students and fellow administrators. He was quickly recognized as someone who could be creative and get the job done. He was the proverbial 24-7 administrator, always ready to extend a helping hand to an individual in need - days, nights, weekends.

Bernie took a particular interest in international students when they first arrived in Worcester. He followed them through their years on campus to help them succeed and he stayed in touch after they left the campus. Not one to stand on protocol, he just wanted to do what was right for students and for WPI, and he was extraordinarily successful in completing his mission.

Through the years Bernie developed a true fondness for WPI's crew program. With his support, the program was elevated to varsity status, and the men's and women's programs both now enjoy a remarkable presence both locally and nationally. The crew teams have achieved much success, inspired in large part by the commitment of a handful of individuals led by Bernie. As a testimony to his commitment to crew, the Bernard H. Brown shell was dedicated in his honor last year.

But Bernie was more than the consummate professional and role model. He also had a passion for gardening (with a particular fondness for lilies) and greatly enjoyed preparing and serving food. He was the hit of any party or gathering, with his very special sense of humor and the ready smile that endeared him to everyone with whom he interacted. Some have said he had it all - and he shared it generously throughout his life. Bernie indeed made a difference at WPI and with the WPI family.

WPI is proud today to recognize, posthumously, Bernie Brown for his tireless efforts on behalf of the students and alumni of WPI and the university itself, by presenting to his wife, Gayle, and their family, the William R. Grogan Award for Support of the Mission of WPI.