2010 Award Recipient

Leo Gestetner '95

Leo Gestetner, from your early days as an enterprising teenager to your current business successes, you exemplify the WPI ideals of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Like many well-known entrepreneurs, you found your calling at a young age. Your grandmother gave you a BBC Micro computer for your 10th birthday. Three years later, you wanted an upgrade, so you sold the Micro for a profit through a free-ads newspaper. You bought a new, more powerful computer and later sold it, also for a profit. At age 16, you began selling Psion computer organizers. While your peers were likely more consumed by the typical teenage interests of music and fashion, you had become one of the largest North London dealers for the home computer manufacturer, Acorn.

At WPI you earned a bachelor’s degree in management information systems and complemented your studies with an active life outside the classroom. You learned valuable lessons in teamwork and leadership from your involvement in Hillel, swimming, skiing, sailing, fencing, Scuba Club, International Student Council, Management Society, and European Student Association. Yet you never veered from your path as an entrepreneur.

Not long after graduating from the university, you launched an IT consultancy company, Unicorn IT Solutions, which provided outsourced IT solutions to small and medium entrepreneurs. In 1999 you and your brother established a successful Internet company, Shopsmart.com. You sold this shopping portal in 2001, then embarked on your latest endeavor: buying, selling, and actively managing a group of brand-driven companies. You have now firmly established Heath Capital in your new base of Los Angeles. In many ways, your career has come full circle, back to the ambitious teenager. Even then, you sought innovative ways to provide a quality product to your customers in North London. Today, you pursue the same goal on a global scale.

In recognition of your remarkable career, we are proud to honor you today with the Ichabod Washburn Young Alumni Award for Professional Achievement.