2010 Award Recipient

Paul Chodak III '85

Energy is one of the most pressing issues of our day. Paul Chodak, with your extensive knowledge of energy issues and hands-on experience in the energy industry, you have become just the kind of leader that WPI strives to develop in each student.

After earning your bachelor's degree in chemical engineering, you accepted a commission in the U.S. Navy, serving more than seven years as a submarine officer, including qualification as a chief engineer. During that time you also earned a master's degree in civil engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1992. You were then awarded a Department of Energy Fellowship and went on to earn a doctorate in nuclear engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1996. You put your knowledge to work at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where you delved into the technology and complex policy issues surrounding nuclear power and proliferation risks.

In 2001, you embarked on an impressive career at American Electric Power, one of the nation's largest power generators. You first joined AEP's Service Corporation as a senior project manager. Your talent and expertise quickly surfaced, and you advanced to leadership positions in Regional Engineering for Regulated Generation, Corporate Technology Development, Environmental Programs, and New Generation. Since 2008 you have served as president and chief operating officer of Southwestern Electric Power Company, with 439,000 customers in Louisiana, Arkansas, and northeast Texas. In August 2010, you became president and chief operating officer of AEP's Indiana Michigan Power. In this new role, you are leading the company in meeting the energy needs of 582,000 customers in Indiana and Michigan.

Throughout your career you have always remembered the important lessons you learned at WPI, about working with people, teams, and communities. You have been described as thoughtful in your work with employees, and exceedingly conscious of the communities in which you have worked and lived. You are a role model for our students, a leader whose vision is grounded in theory and practice.

We are proud to recognize you today with the Robert H. Goddard Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement.