2005 Award Recipient

Philip B. Ryan ’65

Phil Ryan, you have served in a variety of roles over the years that have had significant impact on your alma mater and your class. In all that you have done, your loyalty, your commitment, and your affection for WPI have been conspicuous by their intensity over the years.

After earning a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, you began your career with Humble Oil. In 1970 you received an MBA from Harvard Business School, and soon after became an owner and officer of the Bigelow Company, a management consulting and private investment banking firm. From 1990 through 1997 you served as president of Optima Health and CEO of Elliot Health System, managing hospitals, an outpatient surgery center, an assisted living facility, and physicians' practices, among other operations. In 1998 you formed P. B. Ryan Associates, LLC, a strategic consulting and private investment company focused on enhancing the value of entrepreneurial firms. Currently, you are CEO of Merchants Automotive Group, a privately owned diversified transportation company with activities in corporate fleet leasing, new and used vehicle sales, and real estate investments.

Your engagement with WPI began the day you strode onto campus as a freshman. Your long list of activities includes the Student Activities Board, Student Government Association, Tech News, Newman Club, and Varsity Club; you also participated in sailing and played varsity hockey. You belonged to Phi Kappa Theta fraternity, and you were selected a member of Skull in recognition of your leadership.

Though busy with your career, family, and other interests, you always found time to make WPI a priority. Starting in the early 1970s, you served as a class agent and Reunion Committee chair. As a member of WPI's Management Board of Advisors, your keen business sense was a valuable asset to the department. During the 1980s, WPI benefited from your expertise as you chaired the Alumni Association's Public Relations Committee and served on the Corporate Relations Advisory Committee.

You enthusiastically stepped up to the plate as you chaired your 20th Reunion in 1985. Five years later you chaired the 25th Reunion Gift Committee; your management of that effort led your class to raise a record setting $282,215 with a participation rate of 62 percent. In preparation for your 40th Reunion, you served on the Steering Committee for your class.

Beyond your commitment to your class, you have provided longtime service as a member of the Alumni Association's Executive and Trustee Search committees. In 1999 you were elected to membership on WPI's Board of Trustees, where you are currently a member of the Executive Committee.

Phil Ryan, your dedication to your fellow classmates, to WPI, and to your community has set a standard for volunteerism and involvement. It is a privilege to present to you the Herbert F. Taylor Alumni Award for Distinguished Service to WPI.