

A Symbiotic Relationship

WPI's History Intertwined with Morgan Family

FOR 149 OF WPI'S 150-YEAR HISTORY, there has been a Morgan on the Board of Trustees. From Charles Hill Morgan, appointed by Ichabod Washburn in 1866, to Philip R. Morgan, now concluding his term after 21 years, members of the Morgan family have supported WPI in a multitude of ways.

While a number of Morgans attended WPI, far more WPI alumni spent their careers with the Morgan family business—Morgan Construction Company. Founded in 1888 by Charles Hill Morgan to design, engineer, and manufacture high-speed long rolling equipment for the steel industry, the company remained in Worcester for five generations and after 120 years was sold to Siemens in 2008.

"It's been a symbiotic relationship," said retired CEO Philip Morgan in a recent interview. "We were an engineering company, and WPI is a school of engineering. What was good for Morgan Construction was good for WPI, and vice versa."

As he sees it, "John Boynton established the school to produce an educated workforce, and WPI grew as a source of talent for a whole variety of businesses in Worcester."

For both the family and the company, WPI has served as "the garden," said Peter S. Morgan, Philip's uncle and retired member of the firm's leadership team. "Tech was where we found key people for the company," citing among others Victor Edwards, WPI Class of 1883, whose inventions in the company's early history helped boost its growth. More recently, Michael Eldredge '89 began with Morgan in 1992 and now heads the Worcester long rolling operations within Siemens.



Philip Morgan points to a model of Morgan Hall as members of the Morgan family proudly look on.

"We recognized the value of a WPI education and having engineers coming out of school ready to contribute," said Philip. After the Plan was implemented, he said, the company found "tremendous advantages" from the new approaches that promoted both teamwork and individual thinking.

A WPI education was not a given among family members, but Paul B. Morgan, son of founder Charles Morgan, graduated in 1890. His younger brother, Ralph, had attended WPI as a member of the Class of 1894 and Charles's eldest son, Harry, began classes in 1873, but neither completed their studies. In later generations, Peter Morgan graduated from the School of Industrial Management (SIM) in 1955 and Benjamin Morgan (grandson of Paul B.) earned a WPI degree in 1961.

Back in the garden, Peter continued, "it needed cultivation" to ensure a bountiful harvest, "and that's where Morgan-Worcester came in." A foundation created in 1953 to support the company's charitable activities, it served to provide a steady source of funds despite the inevitable market gyrations in the steel industry. WPI benefited in several ways,

as Morgan-Worcester Inc. offered matching gifts for employee donations, and underwrote two annual scholarships for children of employees.

Service to WPI for several family members has gone far beyond financial gifts to include advice, infrastructure, and improved undergraduate learning. In addition to their roles as trustees, both Peter's father, Philip M. Morgan, and his brother, Paul S. Morgan, chaired the board, while Peter served on the SIM board for many years.

"One of my earliest memories of my grandparents," said Philip, "was when they entertained the WPI president in their home." Philip M. Morgan and his wife, Marjorie, lived on Worcester's Cedar Street. "In Dad's time," Philip continued, "he would bring in Presidents Cranch and Strauss."

For WPI's 75th anniversary, Paul B. Morgan literally built bridges among campus communities. He spearheaded a campaign to erect the bridge across West Street between Boynton Hall and Alden Memorial to honor the late President Ralph Earle in 1940. In turn, Philip M. Morgan ensured more on-campus

THE VIEW FROM THE HILL

From the Alumni Association President

DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

I hope this letter finds you rested, relaxed, and ready to engage with your alma mater in 2015. This will be another year of celebration for WPI as the clock ticks closer to the university's 150th birthday. For real-time news, historical details, and other information, follow the official WPI Sesquicentennial Twitter handle @WPI150 and visit 150.wpi.edu. Be on the lookout for commemorative 150th celebration beanies – presale details (with proceeds to support WPI Alumni Association sponsored scholarships) should be out shortly, and I anticipate excitement equivalent to an iPhone rollout!

Engaging with WPI during events like the Sesquicentennial doesn't just give you the chance to have fun with fellow alumni, students, and staff, it also opens up a broader set of fulfillment opportunities in volunteerism. Impact as an alum was a goal defined and exemplified by Ted Coghlin '56, who recently passed away. Ted's tireless commitment to the broader Worcester community and WPI specifically – chairing every one of his Reunions, and being the volunteer of volunteers for the university – are examples of how a single person can have impact through engagement.

The creation of the Foisie Innovation Studio remains a top priority for WPI and for our worldwide alumni community. The cause has recently been emboldened by the Alden Trust Challenge – and it will be a challenge! The Trust will contribute \$3 million toward the project, but first the alumni and the Institute will need to raise \$9 million. We will have our first big chance to show our support for the Foisie Innovation Studio and the Alden Trust Challenge on March 19: 24 hours of giving to see how much we can raise and how many people can give. Keep your eye on social media, email, and your mailbox for more about March 19.

The Foisie Innovation Studio will make a lasting impact on generations of students. Recognizing a need in enhancing the student experience at WPI was the first step. President Leshin's vision of impact as a "third tower" was the second step. Executing against the need and the vision is what lies ahead, and I have every confidence that we will be there to support WPI just as alumni were there 100 years ago to enhance the campus with Alumni Gym.

Looking ahead to summer (and nicer weather), be sure to block out Alumni Weekend 2015 on May 28–31. Classes ending in 0 and 5 will have reunion activities, and we will honor 10 alumni for their professional achievements and service to WPI: Philip Ryan '65, Joseph Adams '75, Laurence Jones '75, Robert Martin '75, Michael Aghajanian '80, Jason Anderson '95, James Giza '95, Joseph Santos '95, William Herbert '05, and Michael Ferro '10.

But Alumni Weekend isn't just about getting alumni back for reunion years. The Alumni Association Board of Directors and the Alumni Relations staff are hard at work to broaden the offerings with the addition of a "reunion college" to help upcoming reunion planning committees better plan their activities, as well as a volunteer expo where alumni can learn firsthand about the opportunities to give back to their alma mater. More details on both of these programs will be out shortly, but more important, the room blocks are ready!

With best wishes,



Myles Walton '97

housing with the construction in 1958 of Morgan Hall, the school's second dormitory, complete with cafeteria and private dining halls.

From campus to classroom impact, Paul S. Morgan rallied family members in 2010 to endow the Morgan Center for Teaching and Learning, which supports new teaching innovations and enhances teaching effectiveness at all levels of a WPI education. Modeled after Harvard's Derek Bok Center, the Morgan Center is helping WPI professors meet the challenge of preparing the next generation of engineers, scientists, and industry leaders. It's a cause Charles Hill Morgan would have championed in his own day.

As the fifth generation of Morgan trustees, Philip Morgan has extended his term as trustee beyond traditional limits. He has remained involved, he said, both out of respect for his family's legacy and with excitement about the university's future prospects. "This place is doing tremendous work," he said. "We're in the sweet spot for what the United States needs. It's rewarding to be a part of it."

When Philip's term ends this spring, his younger brother, Daniel, will pick up where he left off as a WPI trustee. And in the future? "I would love it if there were six generations of Morgans to serve and contribute to WPI," said Philip.

As Peter said, with a smile, "You really can't separate the family from WPI."

— Allison Chisolm