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Mike Daniels : Distinguished Achievement Award - Business

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2010 Distinguished Achievement Award - Business

Mike Daniels '86

Mike Daniels is an accomplished businessman, active volunteer and proud parent (along with wife, Sherry) of seven children. In everything he does, he strives to have a positive impact on people and their lives. He hopes, ultimately, to make the community a better place. It seems he is already doing just that.

Mike graduated from St. Norbert College in 1986 with a bachelor's degree in business administration. His first job was with USA Financial Services. By March of 1987, he was vice president of commercial lending with Associated Bank in Green Bay. A mere six years later he became president/CEO of Rincon Bank & Trust in Georgia. Mike returned to the area and to Associated Bank in 1995 as senior vice president of commercial lending. In 2000, he co-founded Nicolet National Bank with Robert Atwell. He remains there today as president and COO.

In less than ten years, Nicolet National Bank has grown from a fledgling community bank to a full-service bank with 120 full-time employees and over \$650 million in assets. According to Donald J. Long Jr., a long-time colleague and friend, Mike and Robert have built a great business model and set a standard of excellence in community banking. Nicolet has been acknowledged as one of the fastest-growing banks in the United States. Some cite the "customer-first" culture at Nicolet as a big reason for its success.

Mike credits much of how he approaches things today to lessons he learned from St. Norbert College coaches Don LaViolette and Mike Heideman. Mike says, "Both men are quality human beings who (at the time and to a degree I did not realize) taught me about hard work, dedication, teamwork and respect." In his office at Nicolet National Bank, Mike still displays a sign that Coach Heideman taped to his football locker in the fall of 1985. It reads, "No team, regardless of its physical capabilities, can win unless its members have togetherness and a mutual love for one another."

Mike is a dedicated servant of his community. He is a past board member of the CP Center and the UW Green Bay Phoenix Athletic Fund. He is a current board member for the Brett Favre Fourward Foundation, the Nicolet Foundation, and the Deanna Favre Hope Foundation. He coaches football at St. Philip's. He also serves St. Norbert College on the President's Advisory Council and the new Outdoor Athletic Facility Steering Committee.

Scott King, former president of Bank One in Green Bay, joined Mike at Nicolet National Bank in 2003. Scott says at Nicolet, they like to joke about the “Mike discount.” He explains that most of the people who work for Mike took a pay cut to do so, some to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars. Scott says: “His ability to lead and inspire people to perform at their best is well worth the lost wages. After all, money isn’t everything and people like Mike are not exactly a dime a dozen.”

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