

## **Nick Lundquist – 2008 Award Winner – Winona Campus**

Nick Lundquist's arrival on the Winona Campus of Winona Technical Institute in 1978 was no accident. The Wadena native's journey took him south that fall, not because that's where birds fly for the winter, but because he'd been told that a man named Bob Olson (Sales & Marketing Instructor at the time) would help him recognize his gifts and visualize his potential. Nick's father and lifelong mentor, as well as technical educator himself, first directed Nick to Jon Kosidowski who further connected him with our beloved Mr. Olson.

He began his initial post-secondary education following what he thought was the ideal track for someone who had farm and construction experience as well as a mind for numbers – so he went into engineering. During summer breaks as a teenager, he'd worked in farm and construction settings. Some of the work kept him weeks and weeks away from home. With his ability with numbers and an affinity for people, Nick – a self-proclaimed "make a decision and do it" kind of guy – says he just realized he wanted to pick up the pace of his education and "Get in, get out and get on with it."

When he set foot on the Winona campus and met Bob Olson, he knew something special was in store for him. As it turned out, Bob's work ethics were very similar to those that Nick's father had instilled in him – "Get to work early" and "work while you are at work." Nick also found Bob's sincerity and genuine interest in his students to be far beyond his expectations. It didn't take Nick – who claims that high school was "mostly all about the sports," – long to re-channel his competitive nature, secure a part-time job, find housing he could afford and dedicate his efforts toward his studies.

It would seem that Bob's enthusiasm was contagious and his interest in his students' potential was insightful. Bob Olson introduced Nick to another man named "Bob" (Bob Kierlin), founder of Fastenal Corporation. Nick's feet hit the ground floor with Fastenal as he began learning the industry literally from the foundation up – working first in the warehouse and climbing to Executive Vice President of Sales.

Nick says he is proud to be an instrumental force in the launch of the Bob Olson Endowed Scholarship fund. Nick provided the initial challenge gift that has inspired and reunited other graduates who share the same level of gratitude and appreciation of the program and the gift Bob Olson gave them as their instructor. The gift will continue to provide support to other promising students for many years to come.

The message Nick gave us at the 2008 commencement ceremonies is this, "Treat your education like it's a job, do it honestly and ethically, get the best grades you can and along the way build the life you want. Surround yourself with people who care about you and the school, fellow students, staff, and the community. Our success in life is not only determined by the hard work of the individual but also by others."