

passions

IN LIFE AND PROFESSION

From spinning 45s to creating his own business, Mark Shy's successes are rooted in his DC experience

by Jeremy Ball '04 communication arts graduate, a guest contributor

Shy is his last name, but it's certainly not his approach to life.

Spend a little time with Mark Shy and you learn quickly that the guy is passionate about living life and passionate about his professional work. A 1975 graduate of Defiance College, the communication arts major has had an interesting career path; one he readily admits was not by design. He is the president of Renovators, Inc., a commercial and residential renovation company founded in 1994, in Columbus, Ohio.

As a student and Theta Xi brother, Mark thrived in the arts. He spent much of his time in Sisson Hall as a character actor and working in behind-the-scenes roles, primarily in set design, makeup design, and props. Mark was a feature writer for *The Defender* and a disc jockey for WDCW-AM, the former campus radio station, where he served as general manager his senior year and established an internship program with various radio stations. It was WDCW where Mark would lead his first renovation.

"The radio station was in bad shape, it was awful," said Shy, "and the college didn't have any money to fix it."

Sisson Hall had burned down just two years prior and the theater program suffered because of it. Mark knew he couldn't let the station fail too, so he and his fellow staffers donated their stipends to pay for a renovation



Now a successful Columbus businessman, Mark Shy '75 has stayed connected to his alma mater.

and equipment upgrade. The station lived to spin another 45, but Mark had no idea this event would foretell his career.

Mark's young career saw airtime as a radio intern in Columbus, Ohio, with WCOL-AM/FM. He worked in radio for a few years when an unexpected job offer made him consider a change.

"I loved my radio gig and suddenly I was offered a job in

sales with a construction company," Shy said, relating he was surprised and excited. "It was better money, and my parents said I was stupid not to take it, so I did." What followed was a six-year assignment in construction sales.

But Mark's interest in a leadership role prompted yet another change. Mark completed one *How to Start a Business* course at a local community college and created Renovators, Inc. The company has posted annual sales as great as \$12 million

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-- Mark Shy '75



Shy as a DC disc jockey

and has had up to 60 employees. (Not bad for a few years' experience and one business course.)

Mark's affinity for Defiance College has kept him engaged. His work with former President Dr. Jim Harris to upgrade campus facilities earned him a seat on the Board of Trustees. When Schomburg Auditorium underwent its long overdue renovation last year, Renovators, Inc. provided gift-in-kind services to help with the project.

Speaking to his career success, Mark says nothing is more rewarding than being an entrepreneur, and he is quick to offer that his successes are rooted in his DC experience. He is humbled by the support of great mentors.

"Dr. (Jan) Younger really encouraged me when I was just an average guy. He saw potential," Shy said of the man who chaired the

Communications Department and who he considers a friend to this day.

Dr. Younger speaks highly of Mark but admits he was a work in progress.

"Mark didn't come to me as a polished student," said Younger, "But he had the vision and passion to make the station better, he stayed with it." Dr. Younger joked that the radio staff was so determined that they strung together wire with chewing gum. "They had a strong desire to excel."

That same desire has Mark engaged in various commitments in the Columbus region. Mark has served on the Board of Directors of MAP Furniture Bank, is an active leader in his church's men's ministries, and he is a life-long member and volunteer for Boy Scouts of America. Mark is especially fond of attending DC with his twin brothers, Larry and Garry. Mark resides in Columbus, Ohio, with his wife, Becky, and their two teenage sons, Jeff and Zach. ♦

COACH OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Alumni Varsity 'D' presents the annual honors to Rich Thiel '00 and Vernon Kiehl '80

Defiance College Alumni Varsity D presented its annual Coach of the Year awards recently to Rich Thiel '00, Tinora High School girls basketball coach, and Vernon Kiehl '80, Perrysburg High School cross country and track and field coach.

Thiel's team at Tinora set a school record for most wins in a season with a 22-3 record during 2007-08. The team advanced to the regional semi-finals. Thiel was recognized as *Crescent-News* Coach of the Year, District VII Coach of the Year, and AP Northwest District Coach of the Year. In 2006-07, the team earned a 16-6 overall record and won its sectional championship.

Thiel graduated from DC in 2000 where he was a standout on the football team, earning individual honors in multiple seasons. He was a member of the baseball team his junior and senior years. Thiel and his wife, Andrea, reside in Archbold with their two daughters.

Kiehl, a 1980 graduate of DC, has coached track and field and

cross country at Perrysburg High School where his teams and athletes have received numerous honors. During his tenure, his track and field teams have earned a dual meet record of 283-81-2 in 23 years as well as an overall meet record of 2103-1470-2. He has coached eight Northern Lakes League team champions and has been named NLL Coach of the Year eight times. During eight years as head cross country coach, his dual meet record has been 67-51, and overall record is 940-739.

At DC, Kiehl lettered four years in track and three years in football. He and his wife, Kathy, reside in Perrysburg.



Vernon Kiehl



Rich Thiel