

Richard Sunderland Memorial Endowment



In high school, Dick took all the required college courses needed for entrance into an engineering major in college. However, during his senior year of high school, he decided college was not for him. Even though he was a straight “A” student and was accepted by many colleges, Dick wanted to work with his hands. He decided to take the four year apprenticeship program that was offered by Pratt & Whitney. This began his career in manufacturing.

After graduating at the top of his class and working at various shops in the area, Dick decided to start his own business. In 1976, he proudly established D & S Manufacturing.

As the years passed and the business grew, Dick became heavily involved in the local chapter of Western Mass Precision Institute and Western Mass Mech Tech. He was an officer in both organizations and moved onward to serve on many committees both on a local level and later, on a state level. Dick increased his involvement with the manufacturing sector as a driving force in establishing the School to Work Program. He worked tirelessly setting up apprenticeships with the local schools. Dick set an example by hiring students from the Westfield Vocational Technical High School to work on the co-op program at D & S Manufacturing. When he later became involved with Western Mass Mech Tech, he again set an example by hiring the Mech Tech students on a rotating four month employment. Ultimately, D & S Manufacturing employed a total of eight members of the Mech Tech program.

Through his involvement on many committees servicing this industry and volunteering numerous hours, the PIC REB Board of Springfield elected Dick as their Volunteer of the Year in 1994.

Using his involvement with several organizations at the state level, Dick was instrumental in securing grants and funding for new machinery for the Westfield Vocational Technical High School. Due to his dedication to the manufacturing program at Westfield Voc Tech, the Westfield School Committee further honored Dick by naming a manufacturing room in his honor. What a great tribute to someone who gave unselfishly to an industry that he loved so much! This was an honor that he truly would have been grateful for. Dick loved being involved with anything that would benefit the machining industry, especially programs involving students in school who were just starting out in this field.

Unfortunately, Dick passed away unexpectedly in 1994 before receiving these honors. He never knew the impact that he had on the manufacturing industry and the future generations of machinists.

This scholarship was established by family and friends immediately after Dick’s untimely death at age forty-nine. We hope it will benefit students from the machining program at Westfield Vocational Technical High School by furthering their education in this field. As this industry changes constantly with new technology, the need for further education increases.

Written by: Sandy Sunderland

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