

Founder's Club Banquet 2017

Saturday, November 4

Dr. Stephen Wells

Welcome to all and thank you for joining us at the inaugural Founder's Club dinner. You are the reason we are here tonight! We are honoring you as a select group of donors in the President's Club who have stepped up to provide the type and level of support that has profoundly impacted New Mexico Tech, its students and faculty. We have named this select group, the Founder's Club, in honor of those visionary individuals who donated the land to create New Mexico Tech more than 125 years ago. We all owe them a debt of gratitude for having the foresight and the generosity to establish this fine institution in a small rural community along the Rio Grande.

Their generosity serves as an inspiration to us all. As with our Founders, we owe you a debt of gratitude for your generous contributions that have shaped the present and the future of our university. Through your goodwill and generosity, we continue to honor and build upon the Founders' commitment to Socorro and to this university.

We are taking several significant steps as part of our efforts to strengthen Tech's fundraising capabilities. Such steps include recognizing those who are profoundly committed to Tech and have given at significant levels. This is you! In addition, the New Mexico Tech Research Foundation is being transformed into a philanthropic Foundation, moving all of its intellectual property oversight to the NMT University Research Park Corporation. The generosity of the Research Foundation this year has allowed NMT to build a well-staffed Office of Advancement. A well-staffed office is key in both effective fundraising and stewardship of donors.

The significance of increased fundraising for NMT, is not only because of a need to diversify funding sources, but because it also helps to provide our students with the highest level of academic support, college life and amazing careers upon graduation.

NMT is special because we provide a world-class education, conduct innovative research, and create applied engineering and scientific products that forever change the world.

NMT is special because its means being part of a family that has an academic lineage going back to 1889. Being part of the family of students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors that reflects a 127-year-old history of accomplishments and pride!

We are special because science and engineering makes the world what it is for humanity!

I hope that during the Social Hour you all had a chance to interact with some of our faculty members who have demonstrations of their research. And I hope you noticed the signs of “This is Why” NMT is so special.

Let me thank the professors who agreed to join us this Saturday evening, giving you a glimpse into some of the educational and research activities that happen on campus.

- Dr. David Grow of the Mechanical Engineering Department
- Dr. Sharon Sessions of the Physics Department
- Dr. Virgil Lueth of the Bureau of Geology
- Dr. Michael Hargather of the Mechanical Engineering Department and
- Dr. Chelsey Hargather of the Materials Engineering Department
- Dr. Matt Zimmerer of the Bureau of Geology
- Dr. Michael Heagy from the Chemistry Department
- Dr. Michaelann Tartis of the Petroleum & Chemical Engineering Department

These faculty and others are the reason that New Mexico Tech is such a gem and recognized for its high national rankings. Every year we are featured by all the magazines that rank American universities – Newsweek, Forbes, U.S. News and World Report, College Factual, and several others. For example,

- *College Factual* ranks Tech No. 1 nationwide among all universities in value in Engineering & Physics.
- Overall, Tech ranks No. 1 in New Mexico, No. 2 in the Southwest, and 31st among all public universities nationally.
- NMT is ranked 14th in nation among **all** public and private universities for graduating students that go on to obtain a PhD.

Hopefully you all readily see ***why is Tech so special***, and why this great institution, the students, and the faculty of today are so deserving of your continued support.

Since the beginning of the President’s Club and the President’s Golf Tournament, we have raised more than \$2 million and given scholarships to more than 300 students. That’s 300 NMT graduates who might not have otherwise been able to afford to finish their degrees.

I want to personally thank all of you for your generous contributions and your future consideration.

Now ... before I sit down and let you all eat. Let me just say that we all have at least one thing in common – our passion for this special university we call NMT – so I hope you take some time this evening to get to know someone new and make new connections.

Enjoy your meal prepared by Chef Chris Griego and Chartwells!

[Award Presentation]

[Dr. WELLS continues]

Let's thank Chef Griego and Chartwells for that outstanding dinner. At this point in the evening, we have a very special new award to give, so if I can have your attention as you continue to enjoy your dinner. During my tenure as President at the Desert Research Institute and of the Geological Society of America, I created a President's Medal to honor individuals or corporations that profoundly impacted the institution or society. So this year to honor such individuals and their influence on Tech, I have established the NMT President's Medal.

This medal – and subsequent medals – will be conferred to those individuals who have profoundly enhanced the university through four criteria – (1) significantly supporting the university through donations or gifts, (2) appreciably advancing STEM in higher education, (3) enhancing the professional growth of the sciences and engineering in the service of humankind, (4) and/or significantly enhancing the reputation of New Mexico Tech nationally or globally.

Tonight we are honoring one of our most treasured professors and a member of the Founder's Cub with the inaugural NMT President's Medal – Dr. Frank Etscorn! Frank, you have profoundly changed the orbit of New Mexico Tech because you excel in all four of those criteria! Dr. Etscorn is recognized for inventing the nicotine patch right here at NMT. His innovation and its subsequent success provided a foundation of support at Tech that is unprecedented.

Please allow me to give to you the cliff notes version of Frank's life story.

Currently Frank has retired from Tech, but he is on campus to give talks several times in recent years and is teaching a class again. If you've ever met Frank, you know that he's not an ivory tower sort of academic. He's out-going, gregarious, funny, and witty. Frank is quick with a story and even quicker with a laugh.

He grew up in Kentucky and wasn't always the best student. His journey in academia didn't get off a smooth start. He flunked out of the business program at Western Kentucky University ... twice, then flunked out of a school in Florida as well.

But Frank persevered. He went back to Western Kentucky and earned two degrees. He then earned his doctorate in experimental psychology from George Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee.

He joined the faculty at New Mexico Tech in 1977 in the Psychology Department, becoming a full professor and dean of students in 1985.

Frank almost killed himself a couple times while testing his invention. So we all are glad your research didn't turn fatal ... and we're glad you're here to receive this award tonight.

After several years of experimentation and testing, Frank and New Mexico Tech were ready to file for a patent. After more than two years of legal battles, we were collectively awarded the patent in 1986.

The nicotine patch patent turned out to be quite lucrative for both Frank and the university. Since 1995, the revenues from the Habitrol patent have allowed the NMT Foundation to contribute more than \$14 million in student scholarships. Since 2000, 3,572 students have received merit scholarships thanks to the endowment and thanks to Frank Etscorn's invention.

We thank you for your achievements and your dedication to NMT. You are without a doubt an extremely worthy recipient of the first President's Medal.

Dr. Frank Etscorn, please come forward. I am pleased to present you with the first New Mexico Tech President's Medal.

[DR. WELLS continues]

It is my pleasure to inform you that my staff and I are launching a new capital campaign in the very near future. We will be looking to you – and our alumni, industrial partners, and other donors – not only for advice but to help us raise funds to build a new recreational/wellness center that we are now calling the Body and Mind Center.

As many of you witnessed yesterday at the Loma Theater, we are working diligently to create what I call a "sticky campus" – a place that give students, employees and local residents a reason to stay in Socorro and enjoy the amenities we have to offer.

This gym is almost 80 years old, and it's time for New Mexico Tech to invest in a new facility that will meet the needs of modern times. The new Body and Mind Center will include all the standard amenities of a gymnasium – an Olympic sized indoor pool, an indoor track on the second floor, a weight room, a bouldering wall, two gyms, and much more. It is called the Body and Mind Center as we all know how interconnected the mind is with the body. Healthy bodies yield creative minds...and as many alumni will testify, reduces the stress levels of that occasional occur here at Tech.

In addition to recreation, the Body and Mind Center will contain academic and research spaces. We plan to have classrooms and laboratories that relate to the fields of biomechanical engineering and biotechnology. These are two growing areas of research and instruction at New Mexico Tech, and we need new space purpose-built for to grow these programs.

We can ask the State of New Mexico to fund the portions of the new building dedicated to our academic mission, but we will be asking the broader community to help us raise funds for the recreational offerings of this building. Our students will step up with fees to support the endeavor, and our Mayor is offering his support to help create a facility that can be shared with Socorro residents. We need you to join us to our campaign to create a new recreational center for Tech. I hope you through tonight's program you will understand "This is Why" we need to

continue your generosity to make New Mexico Tech a “sticky”, welcoming, and healthy campus for all of our students and faculty.

As we ramp up this capital campaign you will be hearing from our Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations.

In addition, tonight we have a very special guest who will join us shortly. In the meantime, I’d like to invite Dr. Michael Heagy to the stage for a demonstration of “better living through chemistry.” And when I say “better living,” what I mean is “ice cream.”
Dr. Heagy, take it away.

[Dr. WELLS CLOSING REMARKS]

Thank you all for coming! We hope this evening has given you a better understanding of “Why” New Mexico Tech is so special and “Why” what you do makes this university so special.

Have a wonderful evening and please be safe on your way home tonight.