

Business Times



**ALUMNI VISIT NEW
SHERIDAN CAMPUS
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Sheridan rules in 2011

New business campus welcomes Hall of Famers

A tour of the new Mississauga building for Sheridan College's School of Business took place recently, with the school's new Hall of Fame inductees taking part.

The tour was led by Karam Daljit and Bill Holmes, the School of Business dean at the Hazel McCallion campus.

The school is well ahead of itself in meeting enrolment targets, with many of the programs for September already wait-listed.

The Business Hall of Fame alumni included Michael Cloutier – Business Administration Marketing class of 1979. The president and CEO of the Canadian Diabetes Association was inducted in 2006.

Prior to joining the Canadian Diabetes Association in July 2010, Cloutier was the president and CEO of four organizations dedicated to the development of products vital to enabling people to live longer and healthier lives. Most recently, he was with Critical Outcome Technologies Inc., an early-stage biotechnology company based in London, Ontario.

From 2003 to 2007, he led Mississauga's AstraZeneca Canada, the second-largest pharmaceutical company in Canada with annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion and over 1,500 employees.

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“If you’ve got a medical degree, you need to constantly upgrade your skills. Why is it not the same with a business degree?”

- Randy Pilon

Virox founder bullish on college education

BY MIKE BEGGS

“Do you want an MBA graduate from 1968 doing your business plan,” Randy Pilon asks?

This Sheridan College alumnus is president and CEO of the local Virox Technologies Inc., a startup company with a patented technology in disinfection and sterilization called Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP), now used in 600 hospitals across Canada, and in the healthcare, dental, veterinary and food processing industries in 56 countries (partnering with leading global players).

After graduating from the Sheridan business program in 1982, Pilon began his career with eyecare giant Bausch & Lomb (Canada), a company known for mentoring those on the fast track. So, while climbing the corporate ladder to executive vice president – with seven promotions in 13 years -- he also completed the Queen's Executive Program, the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management MBA Program, and Director Education Program, and the Harvard Business School Strategic Planning and Competitive Advantage Course.

He sees lifelong learning as “critical” in these fast-changing times.

“To me, it's more about refining your skills,” says the Lorne Park father of three. “When I did the Queen's Executive Program in 1985, the internet was just emerging.”

“If you've got a medical degree, you need to constantly upgrade your skills. Why is it not the same with a business degree?”

In 1997, Pilon was offered the position of general manager at Bausch and Lomb, but chose to pursue the entrepreneurial bug instead.

He immediately began working on two business plans, one of which put him in touch with lawyer David Woolford, (a partner in Virox), who recommended him to prepare a plan for a scientist who had been working on a new hydrogen peroxide-based disinfectant for a decade.

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Tuesdays with Morrie

Here is the story of Mitch Albom, a journalist, and Morrie Schwartz, his former college professor. Sixteen years after graduation, Mitch learns that his old professor is battling Lou Gehrig's Disease. They are reunited and a simple visit turns into a last class in the meaning of life.

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Pilon remembers college days

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Within four months, a plan was in place. Virox was incorporated in July of 1998, as Pilon gathered up a group of seed investors to purchase the rights from the inventor, aiming to refine, patent, and license this technology, and bring it to the world through strategic alliances.

The development of AHP represented the first real breakthrough in chemical germicides and cleaners in over 20 years. Harnessing the cleaning and disinfecting powers of hydrogen peroxide for the first time, AHP can disinfect in 1 minute (10 times faster than many Quat-based products), is non-toxic, non-irritating to the skin and eyes, and does not leave active ingredient residues on surfaces.

Virox received a big boost in credibility with the use of AHP during the 2003 SARS outbreak in Toronto -- which landed Pilon's face on the front page of the Globe and Mail, and The Financial Post. Since then, Virox has appeared three times in Profit magazine's Companies To Watch For rankings.

Infection control has become a "huge deal" within the healthcare industry.

"We see hand care products everywhere. People are focusing more and more on prevention than cure," he says. "The illness you can get could be debilitating, if not life-threatening. People are very concerned about pandemic flus."

All the while he has kept his ties to Sheridan going – be it serving as a convocation speaker or guest lecturer for the business program, sitting on its campaign cabinet, doing one-on-one coaching of finance student, Trevor Bodogh for the CBC-TV show Dragon's Den, or hiring Sheridan graduates to work at his firm.



Randy Pilon

AHP offers new levels of efficacy and safety, and is environmentally-friendly, to boot.

"As you move disinfectants out of the hospitals into the public markets and start disinfecting the elevator buttons at First Canadian Place, you need the safest product possible," he adds.

From 2005 to 2007, Pilon and his core partners (Woolford and Martin Harry) focused on the repurchase of shares, and today Virox is a debt-free company.

In 2008, Virox purchased a 46,000-square-foot production and R&D facility on the Oakville-Mississauga border, providing a solid foundation for continued growth within the \$20 billion-plus global market for cleaning and disinfecting products.

At this Health Canada-licensed facility, Virox has assembled a skilled team of 46 employees, to create new products, work on partner-sponsored research, and ensure quality operations.

Virox holds seven patents, and has six more pending. It partners with eight major brands including Tier 1 players like Bayer, which uses AHP in its own product, Peroxiguard.

"The one common thread is, all those products have the AHP logo," he explains. "We have sort of an Intel inside strategy. We're in over 63 countries now, and growing very rapidly."

"The commercialized logo, that's our technology. We refine and protect."

"We don't have a single sales rep," he continues, "but on any given day, there's thousands of reps representing our technology under different companies."

Pilon, 49, also a director with mForterra Environmental Corporation (a TSX listed organics company), has taken control of the promising Mississauga-based signage technology company, FusionCast, and is poised to open a swank dog complex in Clarkson. It will include a spa, hotel, veterinary clinic and retail outlet all in one, called Dog Day's Night.

"There's a huge gap in the market, where people don't want their prized little pooch in the kennel," he says. "It's going to be high-end, with a huge, huge emphasis on safety and service."

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Most significantly, he sponsors the Virox Future Forum for top business students – having committed a total of \$270,000 to make it an annual event through 2016. Guest speakers have included David A. Foot, author of the bestselling book, Boom Bust Echo.

"It's a chance to talk to the speakers, meet their peers, and think about the direction they're taking," he offers.

Pilon believes too many parents look at the university their children go to as a "trophy" as opposed to what they will do with their degree, and he considers college, "a great place to start."

And what about the opening of the new Sheridan Business campus, which will bring 1,700 students to downtown Mississauga, in Phase 1?

"It's monumental," he says. "I'd like to see some of the big companies in Mississauga step up and recruit Sheridan students, and look at Sheridan as, perhaps, the farm team to the NHL."

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