

David J. Brule Sr., *MI B '72*

Endowment for the Michigan Beta Chapter at Michigan Technological University

David Brule is a native of Michigan's Upper Peninsula (UP) having spent his entire academic and professional life in this part of the country...and likes it that way.

He has enjoyed an extremely successful career in engineering yet shares that his academic travels starting out were "Somewhat interesting..." Upon graduation from high school, he was accepted into only one school, Northern Michigan University. During his brief time there, he focused more on college life and the activities offered rather than academics. He was asked to leave because he received grades of "F" in each of his four classes and admits that he had "No direction in life, no focus...I was having fun." The dean of students kept open the possibility of returning saying that he was the kind of person who should be studying for a Ph.D. With that remark, David turned things around. Newly married, he went to work as a lineman digging holes in -30°F weather which afforded him time to contemplate his future and at the same time igniting an interest in his work on electrical lines. It occurred to David that his interest in the power field was fairly significant and he decided to do whatever it took to return to Northern Michigan University, which he did. David went on to stellar academic performance and in the fall of 1969 transferred to Michigan Technological University to join their electrical engineering program.

David was invited to join Tau Beta Pi during his junior year and became president of the chapter attending the annual Convention in Knoxville, TN. He was also instrumental in raising money for the Bent monument which stands on campus today.

Fresh out of college, he went to work for Wisconsin Public Service where he worked as a Division Engineer. At the same time he was contemplating either pursuing graduate work at the University of Wisconsin or joining his family's business, MJ Electric, which at the time was an electrical contracting firm. He made the decision to join MJ Electric in June 1973 and has worked there since. David notes that they were a relatively small business when he eventually purchased it from his father and grew it to become one of the top ten electrical contractors in the U.S. He sold MJ Electric in December 2000 but continued with another company called Systems Control that provides protection and control equipment for the electric transmission grid. In 1985, David purchased a patent for the BOSS Snowplow and it became the #1 largest selling brand of snowplows in North America. He

eventually sold BOSS Snowplow to The Toro Company in 2014.

A primary interest of his family is in education of children in the U.S. and the developing world. This has led to providing significant funding for libraries and the purchase of books and educational materials locally and in ten developing countries. Support for Michigan Tech includes funding for the MBA program and scholarships for electrical engineering students. Michigan Tech also hosts a STEM summer program for which David funds attendance for 100% of the children from the Iron Mountain region resulting in around 50 full-ride scholarships to this youth program which targets middle school students. David remarks that it's great for Michigan Tech because 70%+ of all these students apply there for college.

David has a long history of volunteering with Michigan Tech having served as a member of the trustees (twice as chair). He received an honorary Ph.D. from Michigan Tech and notes this recognition was an honor.

David also finds time to have fun and cites his former hobby of racing sports cars. Because the sport as something he had wanted to do since the age of 12, he took a driving class in 1995 and in the process was able to meet Phil Hill, a Formula One World Champion. He has taken part in the 24 Hours of Daytona race twice and in the second year took second place overall.

Make Things Happen

David maintains that there are three types of people in the world...those who make things happen, watch things happen, and wonder what happened. His advice to students is to be a member of that first group, believing that the biggest single measure of future success is the level of tenacity an individual shows at an early age. He encourages students, "Continue working hard and ultimately you can achieve anything you want."

Being chosen to join TBPi was something he cherished. He shares, "My academic performance early on was obviously quite poor and to receive the nomination to Tau Beta Pi representing high academic achievement in a field known to be difficult and at a highly regarded school meant a lot." His support of the Chapter Endowment Initiative stems from his belief that "It is important for others to have the opportunity to receive the recognition that represents a lot of hard work and tenacity...the fundamentals of success...and I want my chapter to continue to recognize those worthy individuals."

