

RECIPIENTS OF THE MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR AWARD

1954	Arthur R. Whiteman '27, Finance	1992	Otto R. Weber, M.D. '41, Medicine-Humanitarian
1955	Edward C. Uhrich, M.D. '33, Medicine-Pathology	1993	David Q. Voigt, Ph.D. '44, Author-Educator
1956	Joseph H. Hartshorn, Ph.D. '39, Geology	1994	David I. Bowser '57, Building Construction
1957	Joseph S. Gumpfer '35, Finance	1995	A. John Gabig '53, Corporate Law
1958	Richard M. Light '41, Electrical Engineering	1996	A. LeRoy Baker, Ph.D. '57, Scientist-Biochemistry
1959	Col. Burdsall D. Miller '38, Military Service-Air Force	1997	Merrill Lynn, Ph.D. '48, Research Scientist
1960	William P. Wagner '27, Industrial Service Engineering	1998	Ivan N. Dietrich, J.D. '42, Law
1961	Laurence W. Fredrick, Ph.D. '45, Astronomy	1999	Wayne W. Hepler '43, Engineering-Aerospace
1962	Kenneth V. Hatt '41, Business	2000	James J. Finnegan '48, Editorial Writer
1963	John T. Hart '36, Personnel Management	2001	George W. Cave '47, CIA: Directorate of Operations
1964	William E.C. Dearden '40, Marketing	2002	Robert J. Brill '60, Agribusiness Entrepreneur
1965	Frank J. Brady, M.D. '37, Medicine-Anesthesiology	2003	J. Barry Love, Ph.D. '51, Teacher and Philosopher
1966	Charles F. Bofinger '43, Advertising	2004	Brigadier General Richard C. Zillmer '70, Military Service-Marine Corps
1967	William J. Geen, Esq. '47, Law	2005	Alan D. Kraschesky '78, Broadcasting
1968	Col. Edward J. Rutty '47, Military Service-Marine Corps	2006	E. Michael Kenna '70, Graphic Arts/Entrepreneur
1969	Harry D. Snow '43, Entertainment	2007	Thomas G. McClay '67, Electrical Engineering/Entrepreneur
1970	Albert D. Rickmers '40, Education	2008	Gerald P.H. Ballough, Ph.D. '76, Professor/Neuroscientist
1971	E. Hale Jones '50, Public Relations	2009	Mary T. Pentel, M.D. '86, Medicine-Dermatology
1972	The Rev. Dr. Clark E. Hobby '47, Religion	2010	Richard Purcell '61, Manufacturing/Entrepreneur
1973	Lewis W. Eckert '39, Research and Development	2010	Milton Purcell '64, Manufacturing/Entrepreneur
1974	John M. Aichele '39, Business Affairs-Education	2011	Paul Taylor '53, Logistics Engineering/Aerospace
1975	Archie L. Good, V.M.D. '38, Veterinary Medicine	2012	Captain Kimberly (Bishop) Elenberg '88, U.S. Public Health Service
1976	James D. Dower Jr. '35, Architecture	2013	Drew M. Wolf '85, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist
1977	William H. Pugh '43, Government-Diplomatic Service	2014	Jason S. Wolfe '87, Inventor and Entrepreneur
1978	K. Thomas R. Davies, Ph.D. '53, Theoretical Physics	2015	J. Anthony Graves, Ph.D., M.D. '87, Pediatric Cancer Researcher
1978	Richard W. Davies, Ph.D. '54, Theoretical Physics	2016	Johnny Mills '75, Entertainment
1979	David B. Bowman '46, Law	2017	Eric M. Welsh '84, Military and Business Leadership
1980	E. Wallis Callahan '44, Culinary Arts	2018	Wendy A. MacClinchy '92, Global Humanitarianism and Peacekeeping
1981	Michael Kay '54, Thoroughbred Racing	2019	William C.B. Harding '78, Biomedical Engineering and Innovation
1982	Charles G. Gebelein, Ph.D. '47, Chemistry		
1983	John F. Rineman '45, Medical Service Administration		
1984	William M. Duff '52, Architecture-Building Construction		
1985	William R. Fisher '50, Education		
1986	James C. Mancuso, Ph.D. '45, Education-Psychology		
1987	J. Bruce McKinney '55, Business Management		
1988	James D. Hoeschele, Ph.D. '55, Biomedical Research		
1989	Adrian E. Taylor '47, Advertising, Design, Journalism		
1990	John A. O'Brien '61, Psychology		
1991	Graham W. McIntyre '49, U.S. Army-Education		

2020

Alumnus of the Year

Milton Hershey School®
takes great pleasure in announcing
Charles “Chuck” Seidel
CLASS OF 1987
Alumnus of the Year 2020

His deeds are his monument
— his life is our inspiration.

CRITERIA AND NOMINATION INFORMATION FOR
SELECTION OF THE MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL
ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR AWARD

The MHS Alumnus of the Year is the highest honor the school can bestow on a graduate. Each year, we strive to identify those graduates who have distinguished themselves to be worthy of this recognition. To enhance our ability to identify a robust group of exceptional candidates from which to choose, we need your assistance.

Milton Hershey School accepts nominations year round for the Alumnus of the Year award. Submissions for the following year must be received no later than Oct. 1 of the preceding year. Detailed nominations are not required; however, the more information provided about an alumnus the stronger the nomination becomes, pending our research and fact checking. More detailed Alumnus of the Year Award criteria can be found on the mhsalum.org website; however, primary considerations for this prestigious honor are presented below.

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Is recognized as a leader/outstanding contributor by their peers in his/her chosen profession
- Exhibited continual promotion in his/her chosen field
- Received awards acknowledging performance and noteworthy levels of achievement

HUMANITARIANISM AND EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO OTHERS

- Provided leadership in a volunteer or service organization
- Performed acts of community service through charitable organizations
- Recognized for his/her community service involvement

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL HIGH STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- Highly regarded within his/her professional and home communities
- Demonstrated ethical behavior in both personal and professional relationships

SERVICE TO MHS AND CHILDREN

- Returns to campus to participate in student-related activities/events
- Provides graduate assistance or recruiting support in his/her home community
- Has expressed interest in or actually volunteered with student/alumni programming
- Demonstrated support of MHS, current students, alumni, and MHS Alumni Association

Nomination information is available online at mhsalum.org/stay-connected/alumni-recognition. You also may request information by contacting the MHS Alumni Relations Office by phone, **888.MHS.ALUM**, or by email to mhsalum@mhs-pa.org.

In keeping with Milton and Catherine Hershey’s Deed of Trust, Milton Hershey School nurtures and educates children in social and financial need to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

— MHS MISSION STATEMENT

A Message from the President

It is with great pride that we select Charles “Chuck” Seidel ’87 as Milton Hershey School’s 2020 Alumnus of the Year. Chuck’s success is a tribute to the work ethic and enterprising spirit he developed while at Milton Hershey School. He has dedicated his life to serving others and faithfully living the Sacred Values of MHS and the U.S. Air Force.

In 2015, I was honored to attend Chuck’s Air Force retirement ceremony. He retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel as integration chief for the Long Range Strike Bomber program—one of the Air Force’s top three programs. Chuck was division chief for program integration for two years at the Pentagon. He led a specialized team that coordinated the activities of a 77-member office for a \$70 billion initiative and oversaw the planning, programming, and budgeting efforts with Congress to develop the new bomber. He is now a senior project manager for HXFive, where he is a subject matter expert supporting the Munitions Division at Hill Air Force Base in Utah.

Earlier in his career, Chuck was selected to attend Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. Upon graduation, he was appointed director of operations for the C-5 Re-engine program. During the assignment, he deployed as chief of the local acquisition branch in Kabul, Afghanistan. Despite various roadblocks, his location team enabled the first-ever women-owned business and supported presidential election efforts.

Due to these efforts, Chuck was promoted to lieutenant colonel and selected to be the squadron commander for munitions at Hill Air Force Base. In this role, he led nine product teams dedicated to bombs, bullets, fuses, rockets, and explosive ordnance disposal equipment valued at \$450+ million per year. After three years of providing exceptional support to the warfighter in every theater, he was chosen for his role with the Long Range Strike Bomber.

Similar to Milton Hershey, Chuck encountered challenges early in life and chose to overcome them. Throughout his nine years at MHS, Chuck learned to cope with change and learned to become comfortable in situations that were uncomfortable. He learned it was necessary to get along with the other 15 boys in the student home. He also learned honesty and a great work ethic from houseparents, teachers, and coaches—skills that are required to be successful in any profession.

On behalf of Milton Hershey School, I am proud to present my friend and alumnus, retired Air Force Lt. Col. Charles Seidel, MHS Class of 1987, to the Board of Managers for the highest honor of Alumnus of the Year. This award acknowledges Mr. Seidel’s achievements and the great honor he has brought to his alma mater.

Peter G. Gurt ’85

President, Milton Hershey School





“There isn’t a single aspect of my life that MHS has not impacted.”

Charles “Chuck” Seidel '87 is a decorated, retired Air Force officer who came out of retirement to serve as a subject matter expert supporting the U.S. in its fight against ISIS. During his military career, he managed the program to design the Air Force replacement for the B-2 bomber and led efforts in Afghanistan to enable the first-ever women-owned business and supported presidential election efforts there.

Chuck enrolled at Milton Hershey School in October 1978 when he was 8 years old. His mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and in a few short years became confined to a wheelchair and unable to care for Chuck and his sister.



“When I arrived at MHS, I was just a kid. I was confused by how quickly what seemed like my perfect little existence changed so abruptly,” Chuck said. “Throughout my nine years, I learned to cope with change and learned to become comfortable in situations that were uncomfortable.”

Many coaches, teachers, and staff had an impact on Chuck, each in different ways developing his character and pushing him to reach his full potential. “It wasn’t until several years after graduating that I realized just how these amazing people had helped to prepare me for real-life,” Chuck said.

Talking about the foundational skills he learned at MHS, Chuck said he learned it was necessary to get along with the other 15 kids in the student home. “I also learned honesty and great work ethic from some of the finest houseparents, teachers, and coaches. These skills alone are plenty to be successful in any profession,” he added.

In Middle Division, Chuck lived at student home Birchland with houseparents Ben Helm '47 and his wife, Grace. “The Helms were two of the most gracious people I’ve met in my entire life,” Chuck said. “Not a day goes by that I don’t catch myself saying something or doing something that reminds me of them.”

Thinking about where he found a passion for his work, Chuck said it started with Mr. Helm, who was always busy picking up stuff, sweeping, etc. “I didn’t like doing work back then and complained continuously,” Chuck said. “But now, when I walk from the car to the house, I find myself picking up stuff in the yard and laughing to myself that I’ve become Ben Helm. I think I’ve used that same mindset at every job I’ve done in the Air Force ... there’s always loose ends to pick up, so go ahead and do it with a smile.”

In addition to houseparents, Chuck remembers the positive influence of Don Witman, principal at Catherine Hall, and Lewis Webster, teacher and coach. Chuck describes Witman as being genuinely kind to his mother during parent weekends when she required the elevator. He describes Webster as one of his toughest teachers, who also played basketball with him and another student at lunch. “I always appreciated his advice and approval.”



In 1985, in a magical moment as Chuck recalls, he caught the eye of a pretty, young classmate named Cyndi Crout, who would become his high school sweetheart and later his wife.

“There isn’t a single aspect of my life that MHS has not impacted, but some of the most important have been in strengthening my faith, my work ethic, and my ability to get along with and care for others,” Chuck said.

Chuck described his senior year as “a little rudderless.” When he was not accepted at the University of Pennsylvania, he lost focus and had no plan for the summer following graduation or for life after MHS. When the fall semester began, he enrolled at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC).

Having learned a little about the stock market from his eighth-grade typing teacher, as soon as Chuck graduated from MHS, he paid the tuition for the first semester at HACC and then opened a brokerage account with his savings to pay for the rest of his tuition.

That October, the stock market crashed. Chuck no longer had enough money to pay for the rest of his associate degree, so he dropped out and enlisted in the Air Force two days following the crash.

“That was the beginning of a whirlwind career and life serving our country,” Chuck said. “Twelve assignments, 10 states, numerous positions, two children, three dogs, and lots and lots of memories.”

When he was very new to the Air Force, Chuck was promoted to senior airman below-the-zone, a program where commanders promote outstanding candidates six months early. Later that year, he graduated from Airman Leadership School with the Distinguished Graduate Award.

After serving seven and a half years in the enlisted force, he was honored to attend Officer Training School. Shortly thereafter, Chuck transferred to the Air Force Acquisition Corps and was given the title, program manager. Since then, Chuck said he has managed more programs than he can count.

He retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel as integration chief for the Long Range Strike Bomber program at the Pentagon. He led a specialized team that coordinated the activities of a 77-member office for a \$70 billion initiative and oversaw the planning, programming, and budgeting efforts with Congress to develop the replacement for the B-2 bomber.

“I retired in 2015 because I didn’t think there would be anything comparable to designing a new bomber,” Chuck said. “I was wrong!”



While in Afghanistan, Chuck traveled throughout the country leading multiple missions to support the U.S. counter-insurgency efforts. Pictured are Chuck, second from right, and the team who served with him throughout his deployment.

After his retirement, he and his wife, Cyndi returned to Utah. Chuck worked as a contractor to help teach new program managers. After three months, he was tasked to lead a “Tiger Team” to increase bomb production to support U.S. efforts against ISIS. Over the next four years, he led efforts to change U.S. procurement law for explosives, changed export policies for bombs to support U.S. allies, opened a new chemical production facility, and opened two bomb-loading production lines.

The results were a savings of nearly \$1 billion between 2016 and 2020. He also increased production capacity 900 percent, and delivery times were reduced from more than five years to under two.

In the photo at the left, Chuck and a co-worker lay out the floor plan of a U.S. bomb plant using 3D-printed equipment. In the photo to the right, Chuck inspects finished production for the Air Force.



Highlights of Chuck's Air Force Career

- Led a team that put the first data link on fighter aircraft so they could share radar and targeting data
- Managed production for a \$1 billion missile upgrade program
- While deployed to Afghanistan, served as small business administrator for the country and oversaw micro- and small-dollar investments amounting to \$5 million per day
- Despite roadblocks in Afghanistan, his team enabled the first-ever, women-owned business and supported presidential election efforts
- As commander of the Air Force bomb squadron at Hill Air Force Base in Utah, led all bomb, bullet, and countermeasure procurements from 2010 to 2013
- In 2013, chosen as integration division chief for the Air Force's next-generation bomber—the replacement for the B-2



As chief of local acquisition in Afghanistan, Chuck visited various factories where he had negotiated contracts. “Providing jobs is the same as providing hope,” he said.

“I’m not sure what exactly I’ll be asked to do next, but I’m excited about new challenges and hopefully many years left to serve,” Chuck said.

During his military career, Chuck was recognized with the Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, NATO Medal, and many other notable decorations.

While in the Air Force, Chuck earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Southern New Hampshire University, where he was inducted into Delta Mu Delta National Honor Society, and a Master



U.S. Army General David Petraeus, CENTCOM commander and author of the U.S. COIN (counter-insurgency) Doctrine, presented his personal 4-star coin to Chuck in recognition of his work as chief of local acquisition in Afghanistan. Chuck’s efforts involved 75 sites throughout the country and were at the heart of the COIN mission.

of Military Operational Art and Science degree from Air University. He also earned a Master of Arts degree in human resources management and services from Central Michigan University.

Outside of work, Chuck enjoys reading, golf, and various outdoor activities. He also is learning to cook. A few years ago, Cyndi gifted him a Traeger cooking class, so he has been perfecting pulled pork, brisket, and ribs.

He and Cyndi have always been involved with their local church. From managing the books, to serving as the front-door greeters, they fill in where needed. Together, they serve as class agents for the MHS Class of 1987, and they stand ready to assist other graduates and students when they can. During the summer of 2018, they hosted a young graduate who was driving cross country to enroll at the University of San Francisco.

Chuck and Cyndi have been married for 32 years and reside in Savannah, Georgia. They have two adult children, Brittany and Brandon, and one grandson, Declan.

“Milton Hershey School rescued me from a life without parental supervision because my mom was sick,” Chuck said. “And, it taught me the importance of hard work and the value of true, lifelong friendships.”

While Chuck describes himself as rudderless for a short time after graduating from MHS, he said he found stability and direction once he became part of an organization that had core values similar to MHS.



Before returning to the U.S. from Afghanistan, Chuck presented a special award to the interpreter who put himself in danger to serve at Chuck’s side during hours of negotiations with elders throughout the country.

Similar to the message he offered at the 2016 MHS Memorial Day Assembly where he was the keynote speaker, Chuck offers the following advice to current students:

“First and foremost, answer the question of faith early in life. Secondly, deliberately look for the good in situations. Don’t be tempted to see the bad and have a pity party. Lastly, work hard, be kind, and always be honest—it will help shape how others treat you and how you approach the world.”

“work hard, be kind, and always be honest”

From left to right: Cyndi and Chuck Seidel, their son-in-law, Wilson; their daughter, Brittany; and their son, Brandon.

