

ALUMNI

National American University Alumni Spotlight

Jim Stalzer, State Representative, South Dakota '78 B.S. Business Administration, NAU-Sioux Falls

Jim Stalzer began his educational journey at the University of Northern Iowa, a journey that was interrupted by his service in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam Era.

Although he attended Northern Iowa for two years and had two years' credit from Air Force classes, he had no degree to show for it.

In 1974, he aimed to change that by joining the first class of students at the new Sioux Falls, South Dakota extension of NAU, then called the National College of Business.



Jim chose NAU, as many do now, because it provided the flexibility to secure a Bachelor's degree while taking night classes. Although NAU in Sioux Falls was a new offering, he felt comfortable with the university given its long history in Rapid City, South Dakota, and assurances by then-Campus Director Robert Cook that if Jim failed, so did NAU.

"Bob assured me that failure for me would mean failure for NAU," said Jim. "If I was committed, I would have my Bachelor's in four years. In fact, I earned it in just 3.5 years because I was able to transfer some of my prior college credits."

In 1978, Jim secured his Bachelor's of Business Administration, graduating Summa Cum Laude. With his new degree and the electronics training he received in the military, he secured a management position at Sencore, a manufacturing company based in Sioux Falls, SD, where he had been working since 1971.

In addition, just 6 months after graduation, he received an urgent call from Bob Cook.

"He offered me a position as an NAU instructor. His Finance instructor had taken a teaching job out-of-state," explained Jim. "Even though I had just graduated, he insisted I could handle it. And, he was in a bind. I had just 20 minutes until the first class started!"

Although he was given only a 20 minute warning, Bob's assessment of Jim's abilities as an instructor was spot on. Jim continued teaching for NAU for the next fourteen years.

"I really enjoyed teaching," said Jim. "I only stopped because my travel schedule for work made it very difficult to continue."

Jim enjoyed a long and successful career, working 15 years for Sencore and Litton Microwave Cooking in management positions, and the next 23 years as a Senior Network Administrator for Fiserv, a provider of financial services technology.

Jim retired in 2012, but didn't slow down.

"I started my adult life by serving in the U.S. Air Force," explained Jim. "Once I retired, I wanted to serve again, this time in our State Legislature."

In 2012, Jim was elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives for the 11th District in Sioux Falls, and this year, he is running for the South Dakota Senate. In addition, he was recently selected to serve as the State Chairman for the American Legislative Exchange Council and has served for the past two years as the South Dakota House of Representatives Delegate to of the Assembly of State Legislatures.

In addition to his service in the military and the legislature, Jim has a 40 year history of community involvement, helping organizations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Jaycees, his church and more. Jim has been married to his wife, Carol, for 49 years. They have two children, Pam and Steve, and three grandchildren.



"I am proud of my accomplishments," said Jim. "I have a great family, was fortunate to enjoy a long career, and I feel blessed to be able to continue volunteering and serving others in my retirement. My NAU education and the support offered by Bob Cook and others during my time there was certainly foundational. It gave me a very strong base on which to continue to grow and succeed."