

THE TWO RIVER TIMES

## SCENE

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## RICHARD MASER

*Designing a Better World*

LIKE A LOT of college students, Richard M. Maser worked various jobs to earn money to help pay the bills.

He didn't realize it then, but he was laying the groundwork for becoming an entrepreneur who today is the founder, president and CEO of Maser Consulting, a Red Bank-based engineering firm with more than 600 employees and 21 offices along the east coast from New York to Florida, plus New Mexico.

His firm specializes in private and public site development; and municipal, traffic and land surveying.

As he grew his business he also specialized in keeping his people happy and productive so they stayed – as many do – for 20 or 30 years.

“You have to understand people's personalities and I credit the many jobs I've had for that,” he said during a recent interview at his headquarters on Newman Springs Road. “In college I worked for UPS loading trucks, I managed a pool hall, I delivered oil to houses and apartment buildings, I picked up flowers at Newark Airport.

“So I dealt with a lot of people and had a lot of different bosses,” he said. “That taught me how to interact with people.

“We do that here. We do motivational value training with staff,” he explained. “You can't have the same approach to talking to everybody. You have to adjust your style depending on the other person. One size doesn't fit everybody.”

Growing up in Newark as the second oldest of five children also helped him learn how to play well with others. It certainly taught him a strong work ethic, Maser said.

“My father was a fire captain in Newark, a hard-working blue collar man who always had a part-time job,” he said. “My Mom had a part-time job at S. Klein (on the Square) in Newark,

but mostly she was a stay-at-home mom and we were a handful.”

He spent his summers at his grandparents' bungalow in the Leonardo section of Middletown and one of his high school jobs was clerking at the local Foodtown.

So it seemed fitting that Philip J. Scaduto, vice president of Food Circus Super Markets which owns area Foodtowns, nominated Maser for the 43rd Joshua Huddy Distinguish-

Sen. Joe Kyrillos (R-Monmouth), who has known Maser for about 30 years, presented the award to his friend. Kyrillos also is a previous award winner. He said their children grew up together. (Maser, twice divorced, is the father of Elizabeth, 24, Emily, 21, and Richard 19.)

“Although he wasn't a Boy Scout, he exemplifies all the attributes of a great Boy Scout,” Kyrillos said. “He's a very impressive busi-

nessman who owns one of the largest engineering companies in the state that he started from scratch.”

lived on the second floor. Friends referred clients to him, former colleagues worked part-time for him.

“One of the things I always wanted, philosophy-wise, was to balance private sector land development (parking lots, grading, drainage) and public sector municipal work (roads, parks, water towers for towns),” Maser explained, so that when one of those areas took a downturn – such as the residential market in the late '80s – he had government work to keep him afloat.

His next milestone was in 1998 when he fired his No. 2 man over philosophical differences just in time to take advantage of the boom in his industry in the early 2000s, he said.

And here's where that ability to read people became a really important advantage.

“Since then I've attracted a lot of positive people from different geographic locations, different skill sets, and built my business around a lot of strategic hires,” Maser said.

That's how he ended up with an office in Albuquerque. As part of the firm's business plan, a decision was made to invest \$1.5 million in geospatial survey technology, including Mobile LiDAR laser scanning equipment. This cutting-edge technology can be mounted on a vehicle or train and scan everything in its path to produce a high definition map that is stored in the cloud.

The scanned data contains millions of points of highly accurate information used for mapping roadway and railway features and assets such as tunnel clearances, lighting fixtures, manholes, and intersections.

“We wanted to know who was the best person who does this type of work. And that person happened to live in Albuquerque,” Maser said. “We bought the equipment, but first made sure he was on board.”

Maser said he didn't even ask the guy to move for the job.

“One thing you learn is anyone who moves out West never moves back East,” he said with a laugh.

“We now use the equipment all over the country,” he said.

Maser is sincere when he credits his success to the people he hired.

“It's not anywhere near all about me. It's really the team I've developed,” he said. “We have 60-plus shareholders that come from diverse backgrounds – women, surveyors, scientists, engineers – it's a diversified group and that allows for a lot of input from different viewpoints and that makes us successful.”

Maser also donates to and sits on the board of local charities and nonprofit groups, but never more than two at a time so he can give them the attention they need.

Take Lunch Break of Red Bank, which provides food, clothing and services to community members in need.

“I passed their building every day on my way to work and saw regular people walking in who needed help. It just looked like a worthy cause to me.”

He couldn't join their board, but his company is doing pro bono survey work for a new building in Shrewsbury.

However, Maser recently joined the board at The Arc of Monmouth, for people with mental and physical disabilities. At the suggestion of his fiancé Debbie Parker, he hired an Arc client to do office scanning. It worked out so well, he said, he plans to expand the program to other offices.

Maser, now 66, said he keeps promising his fiancé he will slow down from 55 to 40 hours a week.

“That's like retirement to me,” he jokes, adding his only hobby is boating. “I enjoy what I do. Maybe we'll just take more vacations.”

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**– PHILIP J. SCADUTO**

ed Citizen Award that he accepted Nov. 5 at a dinner attended by 270 people at Trump National Golf Club in Colts Neck.

“I always looked on this award as *the* greatest award any individual can get in Monmouth County,” said Scaduto, who received the award last year. “It's very desirable and you're lucky to receive it.

“Richard is an all-around great guy who's a community advocate and does a lot for a lot of charities. He's an all-around great guy, and very deserving.”

The event raised at least \$295,000, which will be used by the Boy Scouts for programming and maintaining local camps, said William P. Montanaro, director of development and marketing.

nessman who owns one of the largest engineering companies in the state that he started from scratch.”

Maser graduated in 1973 from the Newark College of Engineering, now a part of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, he said. During summer breaks, he worked at T&M Associates, Middletown, first as a surveyor then an inspector. After graduation he was offered a job and he took it. Four years later he moved to Shoor DePalma, another local firm.

He learned a lot at both firms, he said but was frustrated and decided to start his own company in 1984 with \$84,000 he had left after his divorce. He opened an office in a small house on Main Street in Marlboro and

DANNY SANCHEZ



BY GRETCHEN C. VAN BENTHUYSEN