

Making the World a Better Place

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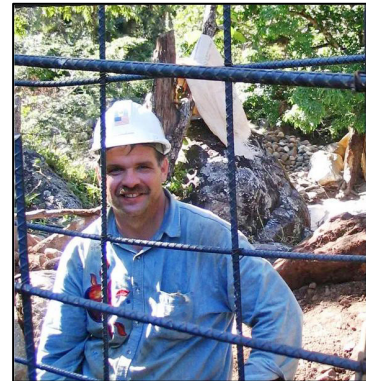


When not leading multi-billion-dollar interchange programs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, senior program manager Mike Paddock might be found on a project site anywhere in the world through his pro bono work for Engineers Without Borders and Rotary International. Mike's adventures over the last 20 years have taken him to five continents and have ranged from complex roadway improvements to smaller projects in villages where pedestrian and small vehicle bridges provide access to education/health care facilities, and safe drinking

water and sewer processing are welcome new assets.

In the Beginning

Mike joined CH2M HILL in 1988 and worked in the firm's Milwaukee office until 2015. As a licensed surveyor and civil engineering member of the Transportation Business Group (TBG), he grew from project support to project engineer to project manager to senior program manager for three of the state's largest and most complex programs – the Zoo, Mitchell, and Marquette Interchanges. All that came to a screeching halt with a sobering cancer diagnosis from which Mike wasn't expected to recover. Miraculously, he did. With this gift of a second chance, he began his journey toward giving back to a world so much in need. But how to get started?



Early Travels

Twenty-three years ago, Mike reached out to his Michigan Tech professor Linda Phillips, who was engaged in work overseas, and used his engineering skills abroad as Senior Designer of Civil Engineering in Bolivia. In 2004, Mike and colleague Max Schmiede established the Wisconsin Professional Partners, the core group and precursor to the Milwaukee Engineers Without Borders chapter. Mentors and colleagues Bud Ahearn, Pat Klampe, and Steve Wanders saw the reciprocal benefits of Mike's passion and encouraged

other like-minded professionals to join with Mike and Max to live the CH2M HILL legacy of making the world a better place. Mike smiles as he recounts being an early employee and receiving a signed copy of Jim Howland's *Little Yellow Book*, which still influences his choices to this day.



A Commitment to Service

One of Mike's guiding principles is to go where he "can be the most helpful." This core value led him to participate in projects sponsored by Bridges to Prosperity and Rotary International. Supported by the firm's culture of helping, Mike led CH2M HILL's outreach efforts from 2004 – 2015, encouraging a generation of engineering

professionals to engage with the communities around them and make a difference. He still occasionally serves as an adjunct professor and mentor at Marquette University.

Still Giving Back

In 2020, with the pandemic's limitations on travel, many of the infrastructure projects planned were put on hold. They were replaced with a new kind of project – those oriented toward addressing healthcare concerns by implementing more robust technologies at water and wastewater treatment facilities to help healthcare facilities. Through the United Nations' Crisis Bureau's offices in 140 countries, Mike found himself working for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in disaster response activities. Mike soon founded the UNDP Infrastructure Academy to build and add engineering capacity around the globe.

Advice for Junior and Intermediate Professionals

Ever the mentor, Mike shared a few thoughts for those among us who are still in the developing years of their careers.

"You can't make a bad career choice before you are 30, or today's new 30, which is age 50. So don't stress! Your life is not over if your first job is not your long-term plan – you are building the foundation. You may find what you are doing is not your passion, but don't give up. All the experience is priceless. All the perspectives are valuable, making you a more rounded engineer and project manager. Broaden your foundation, tackle it all, then be

willing to change and adapt. Work to gain the credibility your desires and passions warrant. Of all things, loyalty is one of the greatest legacies of CH2M HILL.”

You can learn more about Mike’s work by reading his books, *Building Barriers* and *Global Inspirations*, which are available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other bookstores.