

# Michels named Waubonsee 'Fab 40' alumnus

## Sugar Grove village president earned degree at WCC

SUGAR GROVE – A lifelong resident of the area, P. Sean Michels leads the booming Sugar Grove community as village president, ensuring a healthy climate for residents and businesses. Waubonsee Community College is proud to honor him as one of the college's "Fabulous 40" alumni.

As part of the college's yearlong 40th anniversary celebration, which officially began Aug. 25, 2006, with the grand opening ceremony for the college's new science building, Waubonsee is honoring 40 alumni and students who embody the mission, vision and values of the college.

Growing up north of Waubonsee's Sugar Grove campus, Michels would come to campus to play tennis and even learned to drive a stick shift in Waubonsee's empty parking lots during off hours. It shouldn't be a surprise then that the Kaneland High School graduate chose Waubonsee to begin his higher education.

"I was working at Kane County Bank and Trust and was able to work at the bank in the afternoon and earn money to pay for college," he said. "It worked out real well. A lot of my friends were there, and I just realized that it was a good value for the money."

At Waubonsee, he found instructors who cared, and even met his wife, Valerie, in one of his classes.

"I met my wife in Barb Gore's chemistry lab," he said. "Ms. Gore had study sessions at her apartment. We would go over there before a test and work on problems. She was always so willing to help us. The teachers are great and personable. They really do a good job preparing you for a four-year school. They lay the foundation."



Submitted photo

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Michels led a full life as a student at Waubonsee. In addition to working, studying and going to class, he played soccer for the Chiefs on a team that was ranked 17th in the nation.

After earning associate degrees in education and business, Michels transferred to Illinois State University, where he would earn a bachelor's degree in finance. Seeing how some of his classmates who came to college directly from high school behaved, Michels did not regret his decision to start at Waubonsee.

Returning to the area from ISU, Michels worked for 18 years for several local banks, including Kane County Bank and Trust, Aurora National Bank, First State Bank of Maple Park,

and finally Old Second National Bank as executive loan officer. Along the way, he earned an MBA from Aurora University. He even taught two semesters of macroeconomics at Waubonsee.

After gaining 18 years of banking experience, Michels joined McCue Builders as a construction foreman and project manager, a position he has held for the past nine years. His work has led him to be active in many of the local chambers of commerce.

In the early 1990s, Michels began to get more involved in Sugar Grove. He served on the public works committee and later the village finance committee, before being elected to the Village Board as trustee in 1997 and village president in 2001.

"I had the confidence that I would do the homework to make good decisions for the community," he said. "It's been very fulfilling. You make good decisions and all-in-all people are happy with how Sugar Grove is growing. In the last 10 years, we've been able to make Sugar Grove a better place to live. I understand the area and what people like about the area."

With his strong community background, Michels is able to sell the many strengths of Sugar Grove.

As Waubonsee celebrates its 40th anniversary, Michels is busy preparing for Sugar Grove's own milestone – the village's 50th anniversary of incorporation. The village is planning a celebration for early September to mark the occasion.

Michels credits the support of his family with helping him find success.

"I've been fortunate to have great family support from my wife and parents," he said. "They've worked hard alongside me."

Michels and his wife have four children, Abby and Nicholas, 14-year-old twins; Madelyn, 10; and Sophie, 6. He is active in his children's lives, coaching them in softball, soccer and basketball.