

## James R. Sikler

### Education



James R. Sikler graduated from Collinwood High School in June 1952.

While at Collinwood, Jim played varsity basketball, baseball and football. It was there that he learned the value of remaining cool under pressure. Perhaps, Jim's finest moment as an athlete came in his senior year, during a very close basketball game between Collinwood and a formidable team from Mansfield. Collinwood was at its home court, losing 37-36. With barely four seconds remaining and the excitement mounting, Jim got the ball mid-court and threw a high arc, scoring just as the buzzer sounded. Collinwood won 38-37.

Jim received both his Bachelors and Masters degrees from Kent State University and participated in the Doctoral Program at the University of Akron.

After serving two years in the U.S. Army and graduating from Kent State University, Jim started out as a Physical Education Teacher. By 1972, he reached one of his professional goals by advancing to the rank of Principal of Beachwood High School before the age of 40. A year later he was promoted to the Assistant Superintendent of Beachwood City Schools and remained in that post until 1978.

Later that same year, Jim reached a second goal when he accepted the offer to become Superintendent of Streetsboro City Schools before the age of 45. In Streetsboro, Jim was in charge of a growing, rural "blue collar" system with a budget of \$9 Million and 230 employees. Despite the recession of 1979 to 1982, he was instrumental in persuading voters to approve two operating levies and two bond issues. Jim was elected President of the city and county Chamber of Commerce and fostered close business partnerships with the schools. Ever mindful of rising health care costs, he established a consortium of twelve districts that initiated a self-funding concept for health insurance. The result was a significant annual savings for each of the participating districts.

In 1983, the people of Westlake persuaded Jim to become Superintendent of Westlake Schools. This time, Jim was the Superintendent of a prestigious suburban school system with a budget of \$15.3 Million and 390 employees. Jim oversaw the administration of educational programs, transportation, food service, personnel and maintenance operations. Jim's efforts on behalf of a \$5.3 Million capital improvements project resulted in its successful passage by the voters of Westlake. Again, Jim initiated cooperative partnerships with business and served on the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce.

Jim retired from education in 1986 to live in North Carolina, but continued to make good use of his executive skills by taking on increasingly more prestigious occupations. From 1986 to 1988, Jim worked as Legal Administrator for one of the three largest law firms in Greensboro, North Carolina. Jim then spent the next four years as Medical Group Manager for the Pinehurst, North Carolina Orthopaedic Clinic. Jim spent the last seven years of a highly productive career as Chief Executive Officer of the Pinehurst Medical Clinic, retiring in 2001. Jim is a member of several professional organizations, enjoys golf, exercising and keeping in touch with other Railroaders.

Jim and his wife Cheryl have three children, Jim, Tom and Kellie, and four grandchildren.

