

DISTINGUISHED EAGLE SCOUT AWARD PROFILE

Submitted by the Sam Houston Area Council



In 1987, when a struggling oil and gas industry made job stability in that segment almost nonexistent, William (Bill) G. Higgs, ventured out with two partners to form Mustang Engineering to provide engineering, procurement and construction management of offshore oil and gas production platforms. Bill credits the lessons he learned during a lifetime of Scouting for the ability to get the company off the ground.

Bill got his start in scouting as a 9-year old Cub Scout in Cleveland, Ohio. His adult leaders provided continual challenges and mentoring, and he eventually became an Eagle Scout with three palms. Since then, he has been an active Scouting supporter and a driving force in raising funds for the nation's largest BSA local council – the Sam Houston Area Council, which encompasses Houston and 16 counties in southwest Texas and serves more than 160,000 scouts. Bill became the council's 26th Distinguished Eagle Scout in April 2004.

As a young man, Bill used the spirit and drive he found through Scouting to secure a spot at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He notes that the importance of Scouting is very evident in the academy's selection criteria. Three of 10 background questions asked on the entrance questionnaire had to do with Scouting experience. *Were you a Scout? Were you an Eagle Scout? Were you a senior patrol leader?* Bill said that these questions explore whether the candidate has been exposed to spiritual and moral codes, whether he has demonstrated individual initiative toward reaching a challenging goal, and whether he has leadership qualities.

At West Point, Bill competed in soccer, judo and wrestling. He graduated in the top 5 percent of his class in 1974 and was a semifinalist for a Rhodes Scholarship. He



William (Bill) G. Higgs

Became an Eagle Scout:
1967 in Cleveland, Ohio

Became a Distinguished Eagle Scout:
2004 in Houston, Texas

Occupation:
Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of
Mustang Engineering, an engineering firm
Serving the global oil and gas industry

served five years of active duty in the Army's combat engineering branch, was an honor graduate of the Army Ranger school and served as Alpha Company commander in the 8th Engineering Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, earning the rank of Captain.

When Bill speaks to groups about the benefits of Scouting, he relates his belief that Scouting improves a boy's life through the tumultuous years of 11 to 18, that it helps family communication, and that it provides the basis for lifelong values, service and achievement. He shares his secret formula of how to get youngsters interested in Scouting: "We hook them with activities based around knives, ropes and fire. What boy could resist those?"

Bill's knowledge of these Scouting tools has paid off in his own adult

experiences. He learned wood carving as a Scout and used the skill to carve a double chain link pendent that helped impress a young lady – who is now his wife of 30 years. He later carved a ball-in-a-box, earning the moniker of "Patient Boy" from his family. He used his skill in ropes to good advantage in his Army career for building bridges, lifting, securing loads and rappelling from helicopters. Those skills were put to good use recently, when he climbed Rio de Janeiro's Sugarloaf Mountain. Knowing how to start a fire with flint and steel served him well in the field as a Ranger, allowing him to prepare hot rations for his buddies while training in freezing rain in Florida swamps.

Bill's reputation in the engineering and construction industry has been recognized in many ways. His Mustang Company, now a business unit of Aberdeen, Scotland-based Wood Group, has grown to approximately 4,000 employees and is known globally as the leader in the engineering design of deepwater offshore oil and gas production facilities. Additionally, the company has built a stellar reputation in downstream, midstream, pipeline, automation and nonenergy process markets. Bill and co-founder, Paul Redmon, were awarded the 2004 Industry Achievement Award by the Engineering and Construction Contracting Association for their "visionary leadership" in the process industries.

Bill and his wife recently moved from Houston to North Carolina. They have two grown children. His son is a graduate of Texas A&M University and is an Eagle Scout. His daughter attends the University of Texas at Austin. Bill continues to be an avid spokesperson for Scouting and its values.

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