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Our Highest Honor

*Edwin F. Jaeckle Award goes to
Gerald S. Lippes '64*



Gerald S. Lippes '64 (left) and UB President William R. Greiner

“Committed to excellence.”
“Principled.” “Incredibly energetic.” “A problem-solver.”

Those were some of the words from the podium on Oct. 28 as Gerald S. Lippes was awarded the Edwin F. Jaeckle Award. Lippes, a 1964 UB Law graduate, is the 21st person to receive the Jaeckle Award, the highest honor the Law School and the Alumni Association can bestow.

The honoree, who has concentrated his practice in corporate and business law, is a founder and managing partner of the Buffalo law firm Lippes, Silverstein, Mathias & Wexler. He has represented such major businesses as Mark IV Industries, a Fortune 500 company for which he serves as corporate secretary. He also serves on the board of directors of Gibraltar Steel Corp., National Health Care Affiliates, Niagara Envelope and Upgrade Corporation of America.

In public life, Lippes has advocated widely on behalf of the University at Buffalo. He heads the Law School Dean's Advisory Council and the University's Regional Advisory Board. He also serves as a member of the President's Board of Visitors and as a trustee of the University at Buffalo Foundation. In addition, he works tirelessly for numerous civic, cultural and community development organizations.

“Law practice involves a lot more than simply getting the black letter right,” Dean Barry B. Boyer noted in his opening remarks at the Jaeckle Award luncheon. “A lawyer who

UB LAW

FORUM

Winter
1996

defines his practice broadly and works to achieve excellence in it becomes part of the solution rather than part of the problem."

Sal Alfiero, chairman and chief executive officer of Mark IV Industries, spoke of his "26 years of history, friendship and business association" with Lippes, saying there were times as the business grew when temptations arose "to play fast and loose."

But "the thing that was constant throughout this period," Alfiero said, "was an insistence and an absolute adherence to a set of ethical standards and a set of moral principles, and Gerry was the archetype of those."

Of Lippes' wide-ranging volunteer service, Alfiero said: "He's given of his time, he's given of his treasure, he's given of his reputation and standing in this profession. But most of all, to me, he has been, he is and he always will be my counselor, my colleague and my friend. Nobody deserves this award more than Gerry Lippes."

Bill Mathias, a former director of the UB Law School Alumni Association, and Lippes' colleague for

11 years, praised the honoree's "uncanny ability to develop and nurture his client relationships. Gerry is a problem-solver. He preaches and practices a get-it-done problem-solving approach."

He told of a time during heated negotiations over Buffalo's new downtown arena when two of the principals nearly came to blows. It was Lippes, he said, who stepped between them, calmed everybody down — and completed the deal.

And prodigious personal energy, Mathias said, enables Lippes to do what he feels needs to be done. "Gerry's energy level, which seems unlimited, has also propelled him beyond just the development of his own legal practice. His involvement in such a big way with so many community organizations has really made this area a better place. Gerry brings the same businesslike and direct approach to these organizations, which often need it so desperately."

UB President William R. Greiner, in presenting the award, spoke of Lippes' "many lives" — as an entre-

preneur with such businesses as Abel's Bagels and Delaware Camera Mart, as a legal counselor, as an adviser and negotiator, and as a friend to the University.

"There are only a handful of people I go to when I want to solicit advice," the president said. "And in the community, one of the first people I call is Gerry Lippes."

"He gives to the University vision," Greiner said, citing the challenge of maintaining UB's engagement with the Western New York community. "I think Gerald has been an exemplar of what the legal profession must be proud of."

In his acceptance speech, Lippes characteristically turned the focus again to UB. "We have a great university here," he said. "We have a faculty and an administration that's really unparalleled ... The University has to continue to strive to bring itself closer to the community, so that in the future there shouldn't be anything to distinguish Western New York from the University at Buffalo." ■

