

2015 W. Neal Kocurek Commercial Real Estate Special Achievement Award Recipient

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Pete Winstead doesn't mess around. He gets to the point and gets things done.

That's the way it's always been with this ambitious attorney, now poised to turn 75 and still going strong.

In honor of his leadership and civic involvement that has had an indelible and positive impact on Austin's real estate scene, Winstead is the recipient of Austin Business Journal's 2015 W. Neal Kocurek Commercial Real Estate Special Achievement Award.

Though complicated tax issues have been his foremost area of expertise, Winstead's extracurricular activities in Austin have played a pivotal role in its development.

Winstead is a founder of Winstead PC, which started in Dallas – his hometown – with three partners and one associate in 1973. Today there are 345 lawyers in 10 locations across the U.S. Austin has been a key site for more than 25 years.

"We needed to have an office in Austin because there's always something going on at the Capitol," Winstead said.

The partners couldn't find the right person, however, to step into a leadership position at an Austin outpost in 1987 – especially given that the economy then was abysmal.

"I said, 'Hell, I'll go down there and open an office and I'll be back in two years.' But I fell in love with Austin, got involved politically and I'm still here," Winstead said.

His wife Tomi and five children joined him somewhat apprehensively, but no one ever looked back.

The dynamic couple became politically connected at the upper echelons of power – think George W. Bush – and were frequent participants at charity events.

"Pete hit the ground running and he has never slowed down," said Sandy Gottesman, founder of real estate firm Live Oak-Gottesman and a cornerstone of Austin's business community. "It didn't take long before Pete's advice and counsel was being sought on most major initiatives."

Beginning in the mid-1990s, Winstead was appointed to leadership roles in a variety of transportation organizations, including the Texas Turnpike Authority, Capital Area Transportation Commission and Citizens for Mobility.

He largely is credited with the creation of Central Texas toll roads, including State Highways 130 and 45 and U.S. Highway 183A – all of which ushered in new opportunities for real estate and economic development during the past decade.

Winstead is a former chairman and board



The honor this year goes to attorney Pete Winstead.

member of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, the Real Estate Council of Austin and the Greater Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council. He also served on board of trustees for St. Edward's University, as well as many other organizations including KLRU-TV, Hill Country Conservancy, Boy Scouts of America and United Way – just to name a few.

"I served on boards and chaired galas. My strategy was always to help make things happen; to move the ball forward," Winstead said.

While handling complex tax cases and the initial public offering for Dell Inc. – he has known CEO Michael Dell for years and still does some work for the Round Rock technology giant – Winstead embraced a broad agenda to support a more progressive Austin.

He played pivotal roles in the relocation of the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport to the site where Austin-Bergstrom International Airport operates today. He lobbied for nonstop flights between Austin and San Jose, Calif., paving the way for greater synergies between the two tech hubs.

Winstead represented Catellus Development Corp. – which never had any history of development in Texas – in its successful bid to redevelop the old Mueller airport into a vibrant master-planned community, a process that continues.

"I helped put the right face on them and to get that work for them," Winstead said. "I'm most proud that they got a 7-0 vote in favor (from City Council)."

Winstead has always advocated for responsible development, which pays respect to the environment.

"What's good for the environment is good for the city. These young, high-tech people coming

here like that," Winstead said.

The local younger generation have Winstead, in part, to thank for transforming Austin from a modest college town into a thriving economic engine, which ushered in thousands of new employment opportunities and essential societal infrastructure, said Gottesman.

"There is hardly a civic project in which Pete has not been involved," Gottesman said.

At a time when many folks might think about slowing down, Winstead still comes into the office each day.

Currently he chairs the volunteer campaign committee charged with raising \$50 million for Seton Healthcare Family's new teaching hospital that will serve students of the new Dell Medical School on the University of Texas campus.

On any given day, Winstead is engaged in encouraging others toward community involvement and mentoring young lawyers. He also remains entrenched in politics and hopes to keep the ball moving forward, particularly in the area of transportation.

"We haven't kept up with infrastructure to handle our growth. The projections that it could take 2.5 hours to get from downtown Austin to Round Rock – that's scary," Winstead said.

He also said he hopes recently elected Mayor Steve Adler is firmly committed to streamlining the city's convoluted and expensive development processes.

"It's crippling business," Winstead said.

Still, he's hopeful that the recent change in governance and new blood in the business community will presage greater urban maturity.

"I really do think things are looking up," Winstead said.