

# MIKE CAMPBELL

## Volunteer of the Year

By Charlee Beasor

**B**e careful if you sit next to Mike Campbell – he might just ask you a deep, soul-searching question, such as “What is your purpose in life?”

“We had a family dinner and I asked a loved one once – this was years ago – I said, ‘Why are you here?’ and she looked at me and said, ‘To eat dinner,’” he recalls with a chuckle.

“And I said, ‘No, no, no, you missed the point.’ People don’t think about that stuff. They don’t.”

But that’s what Campbell focused on every single day as chief wellness officer for insurance and risk management company Neace Lukens. He helped his co-workers and clients realize that to achieve true wellness, employees (and employers themselves) have to be able to identify their purpose and meaning in life. Without doing that, he says, wellness cannot occur.

“If you don’t have a meaning and a purpose in life, why would you want to change anything? Let’s eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die; so why would I want to be healthy or change anything?” he asks.

“If I’m going to do something that really works, I need to help people find their purpose in life. Because if I help an employee find purpose in his or her life, now they have a motivation to be healthy. Now all I need to do is show them how to do that.”

### ‘Do the right things and right things happen’

Campbell’s desk (he retired from day-to-day duties shortly after this interview, although still consulting with some clients) features photos of some VIPs: his family, including a photo with his arm around his father, Amos. In the corner of the photo is a small plaque that reads, “Walk your talk.”

It’s an inspiring message for Campbell, whose personal mission in life is “to see people change for the good.”

The family is rich on mottos and personal missions. Amos’ mission was “to add to life.” Campbell says his son’s mission is “to help others.” And the family’s motto is “Do the right things and right things happen.” (That was also the motto of Campbell’s employee benefits company CLS Benefit Solutions, which he sold to Neace Lukens in 2007.)

Campbell’s religious and political philosophies and business acumen were highly influenced by his father. But he was also motivated by his father’s health and lifestyle choices – to do the exact opposite in his own life.

“My father, who I loved dearly and passed away three years ago, was the opposite of (good health). He smoked heavily; I never smoked. He overate; I never did. He was obese; I never have been overweight. I’m the same size now I was in college,” Campbell shares.

“And so as happens between father and son, I kind of set out to do the opposite of what he was doing in those unhealthy areas, while at the same time adopting the good things from him that were far more important: working hard, walking your talk.”

Amos was also instrumental in getting his son started on

Mike Campbell visits with Neace Lukens client MacAllister Machinery and president Chris MacAllister. The company has a clinic on-site for employees as part of its wellness efforts.



a public speaking path. He sat his son (then age 10) down to listen to motivational speaker Earl Nightingale's famous recording, "The Strangest Secret."

Campbell's first speaking gigs came during high school: As a junior, he entered the Voice of Democracy contest (winning at the state level), and then as a senior, he was asked to preach a sermon in church. Campbell was also a professional gospel singer for seven years and recorded 11 albums in the 1970s.

"If you're in front of people, you want to motivate them to do things; the motivational part just kind of came naturally. It was a collage of things that influenced me to do that and I continue to do it. It may change in nature in the future, but I think it will always be part of what I do," he adds.

### The missing link to wellness

While Campbell works in wellness now, he started out on a different path: ministry, graduating from Kentucky Christian University with a degree in theology. He says the two callings are interconnected.

"When you look at my degree versus what I do today, it's a very short journey. Real wellness is first spiritual, second emotional and third physical," he says. "It has to be in that order if a healthy life is going to be sustainable. If you don't look at it first spiritual, then what you do physically isn't going to last. Sustainability is a big issue. This is the reason that many people are saying that wellness is failing."

As Campbell joined the employee benefits business in the late 1980s, he said it became apparent to him where the problems with benefit and health care costs started: unhealthy lifestyle choices.

Campbell points to a report commissioned by Congress from the Rand Corporation, *Workplace Wellness Programs Study*, as proof that there's more work to be done in workplace wellness.

"The conclusion of the study is wellness is failing. It's not accomplishing anything. The very specific reasons are they're (companies) not dealing with the real issue. It's a spiritual matter," he maintains.

It goes back to helping people discover their purpose in life, he says.

"We are facing a big, big problem that's going to bankrupt this country if we don't deal with it. So there's not a lot of time (to waste) and to continue to fool around with what's been happening doesn't make a lot of sense," Campbell exclaims.

"To help people establish a mission or vision for their life, in my opinion, has to be the No. 1 priority in a wellness venture. Because you do that and you're going to change the culture of the organization and stand the best possibility of actually sustainably changing a lifestyle for people."

### Wellness Council advocate

Campbell's involvement with the Wellness Council of Indiana (WCI) has certainly changed over the years. Today, he enjoys being on the board of directors and recruiting employers to join the organization.

"Everywhere I go, I take this with me," he says, gesturing to the WCI handbook. "And when I'm out there talking with someone from the standpoint of Neace Lukens, I'm always

talking about the Wellness Council, encouraging them to become a member and become involved."

He first became familiar with the organization in 1997 when it was called the Wellness Council of Northwest Indiana. He was asked to join the team and take the program statewide. Campbell served as de facto president until the WCI became a part of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce in early 2011.

Chuck Gillespie, WCI executive director, says Campbell's efforts over the last decade on behalf of the organization secured its success.

"I can think of few people that have the passion,

drive and commitment to wellness that Mike has. He is not usually talking in the mainstream; he pushes the envelope," Gillespie shares.

He also notes that many of Indiana's wellness leaders, despite often being business competitors, were trained by Campbell.

"He knows how to take off his business hat and put on his wellness hat more than anyone else," Gillespie emphasizes. "I can't truly describe the commitment he has given to Indiana – to the nation even – for wellness. He has the willingness to say what needs to be said. He is a true leader."



**Campbell has received numerous recognitions for his work, including the Friend of Wellness Award by the Fisher Institute of Wellness and Gerontology at Ball State University. He was also named Top Employee Benefits Consultant by *Risk and Insurance* magazine and received the Responsibility Leader award from Liberty Mutual in 2012.**