



TIM HIGGINS

In His Element

By Symone C. Skrzycki

A beaming Tim Higgins eagerly retraces the beginnings of his environmental career.

“Growing up, I was always kind of wild and outgoing,” he notes, chuckling. “I enjoyed the outdoors – camping, hiking, boating and fishing. In high school, I enjoyed classes like Earth-space, geology, biology and chemistry.”

Another key factor: He’s a proverbial people person.

He incorporates all of those qualities into his role as vice president of business development at KERAMIDA, Inc., a global sustainability and EHS (environment, health and safety) services firm headquartered in Indianapolis. He joined the team in 1994.

Shortly thereafter, Higgins began a long collaboration with the Indiana Chamber on educational trainings. Among his current contributions are developing agenda and program content for the Chamber’s Environmental Permitting and Reporting Conference (a two-day event covering the most common environmental reporting issues impacting companies and communities across Indiana) as well as

the Sustainability Leadership Conference (which helps prepare companies for current environmental, social and governance regulations that directly impact their operations and strategy).

“There’s so much involved in putting on both programs,” explains Jennifer George, director of business education and events. “Lots of topics and lots of speakers. Tim’s instrumental in pulling all of them together.”

Higgins asserts that the events are valuable for new and experienced professionals.

“A lot of times at the conferences, half the room is full of attendees with at most one or two years of experience doing environmental management – mostly in a manufacturing facility.”

As for more seasoned veterans? “They tell me that you only have to have one or two takeaways that they can bring back to their facilities and it make a difference.”

Career trajectory

Higgins graduated from Ball State University with a bachelor’s of science degree in environmental science and natural resources. His first job was with EQC, a small nonprofit in Indianapolis.

“It was an environmental information service,” Higgins describes. “We were nonpartisan and sort of a middleman of information between



Higgins works behind the scenes to develop agendas/programs for various Indiana Chamber conferences. At the events, he's front and center, putting attendees at ease with his warmth and wit.

the regulated community and industry.”

Higgins honed his business development skills by selling EQC memberships. In addition, his job encompassed projects such as hosting educational workshops and publishing a monthly newsletter highlighting the latest on Indiana environmental laws and rules.

“We kept those rules updated (via print) because you couldn’t get online and find any of this stuff,” he shares, noting that back then (early 1990s), there was no internet.

“It was such a people-oriented organization,” Higgins fondly recalls. “I met and befriended a lot of people working there. It exposed me to the environmental legal community, industrial and business environmental managers, utility environmental managers and governmental agency folks. A lot of consulting firms that were part of the EQC as well.”

One individual who made a lasting impression was the late Colonel Noble Beck, president of EQC.

“He was a really interesting guy,” Higgins remarks. “I was a young kid at that time. We did a lot of (work-related) functions at the Hessler Naval Armory (in Indianapolis). The reverence that people held for Colonel Beck was unbelievable. Once in a while I’d call him ‘Colonel Beck,’ but he was always just ‘Noble’ to me.

“He was a wonderful gentleman and gave me a lot of general life lessons as I was getting going into business and working for him.”

Vicky Keramida, who established KERAMIDA in 1988, is another mentor.

“When I came to work for KERAMIDA, Vicky just wanted me to be me (in his approach to business development),” he comments. “She gave me a lot of rope. I had ideas on how we could grow the business and different

things we could do, and she let me run with a lot of those things. That was invaluable.”

Empowering employers

Uncertainty regarding how to navigate everchanging laws, policies and regulations can derail an employer’s compliance efforts.

Higgins, who sits on the Indiana Chamber’s Environmental Policy Committee, is appreciative of the organization’s “dedication” to such matters. He takes pride in working with the Chamber to help shape strategies and cut through the complexities – especially as it relates to business education.

The partnership has been beneficial to companies attending the events and to KERAMIDA. “Our involvement allows us the opportunity to get in front of a broader

audience all at one time (via promotions and participation at the events),” Higgins remarks. “We don’t cover all of the services that KERAMIDA offers by any means, but we very thoroughly cover what our environmental compliance team does on the air, water and waste side.”

George offers her impression: “What I like about working with Tim is he knows you can’t just have the same agendas year after year. New topics have to be introduced that are vital for businesses to be aware of – whether it’s in the safety arena, compliance or something else.

“He also does a great job serving as master of ceremonies, introducing speakers and making attendees feel welcome. He’s knowledgeable. He’s affable. He’s approachable. And it makes people gravitate to him.”



Enjoying the outdoors and quality time with his daughter.