

2018 NATIONAL
Petrizzo
Career Service
Award

As a longtime NCMPR member and community college communicator, **Mark Petersen** embodied what the Petrizzo Career

Service Award represents. He worked in college marketing and communication for more than 20 years. He served on the NCMPR Board of Directors from 1995 to 2006, including stints as District 6 director and president. Above all else, he was a leader, consummate professional, mentor and friend who left an indelible mark on all those he met. Sadly, Petersen passed away on May 29, 2017, after a lengthy and courageous battle with cancer.



**MARK
PETERSEN**
NCMPR PRESIDENT,
2002-03

PRESENTED
POSTHUMOUSLY

Petersen made his career start in marketing at Weber State University, and in 1987, he found his true calling as director of marketing and public relations at Dixie State College in St. George, Utah (now Dixie State University). He held that position for 17 years, and under his leadership, the community college's staff grew to eight employees and enrollment quadrupled. He led the creation of the popular Dixie State Magazine and the college's first viewbook. It's estimated Petersen created, wrote and edited hundreds of publications and directed nearly as many marketing campaigns over the course of his career at Dixie State. Those who were members of NCMPR during Petersen's tenure remember the fact that Dixie State won numerous gold, silver and bronze Paragons year after year.

In 2004, Petersen accepted an offer to serve as the executive director of cultural arts at Dixie State. A lifelong theater buff and member of several chorale groups, he jumped at the opportunity to marry his love of theater arts with his passion for community colleges. His first task was to develop a marketing campaign for the opening of the new Eccles Fine Arts Center. His hard work paid off – the grand opening was at full capacity, and the first season quickly sold out.

In 2007, Petersen made a difficult decision to leave Dixie State to become CEO of a nonprofit organization, Mentors International. While no longer a member of NCMPR, he kept in touch with his NCMPR friends and colleagues and continued to make his mark.

Chris Taylor, who started his professional career working for Petersen, shares, "I don't think I could have started my career off on better footing thanks, in large part, to his mentorship. He had an uncanny way of connecting with people. He had

the ability to motivate and get the most out of those he managed and worked with. He thought big and had a high standard of excellence, all while creating a work atmosphere that was both enjoyable and rewarding.”

Another colleague and former NCMPR president, Donna Hatchett, recalls, “Mark was so committed to NCMPR. I remember he would ask me for advice during his presidency and worked so hard on the conference program (in Las Vegas in 2003). His dedication knew no bounds, and he even personally provided the pre-Paragons entertainment that night, singing show tunes for all of us.”

Upon Petersen’s untimely death, the outpouring of love and sympathy from current and former NCMPR members was overwhelming. Kari Gabriel, a former NCMPR member, says it best: “It’s people like Mark who make NCMPR a family.”

The D. Richard Petrizzo Award for Career Achievement honors a professional for career accomplishments in community college marketing and public relations. It is named after the award’s first recipient, a former NCMPR president who helped shape the organization in its early years.