



Photo courtesy of The Kalgoorlie Miner

WASM ALUMNI

50th Anniversary

Left to right: WA School of Mines alumni Dennis Sands, John Kelly, Doug Marshall, Malcolm Wills and Brian Phillips all from the class of 1966

Brian Phillips

WASM took the opportunity to recognize some of its longest-standing alumni at the 2016 graduation ceremony. Among those honoured was retired surveyor and engineer, Brian Phillips, who recalled a heady career that included window cleaning and managing Alan Bonds' mining interests. Even now, he can't quite retire, fully, still holding mining directorships, but finds some time for "boating" and travel.

1. Where were you born and when?

Launceston, Tasmania, 1942.

2. When did you attend WASM?

1964-1966.

3. What did you qualify as?

Mine surveyor and mining engineer.

4. Where was your first job?

During WASM studies I was with the North Kalgoorlie Mines and Western Mining. I also ran a window cleaning business for three years. After graduation, I worked as underground miner at Mount Lyell Mining and the Railway Company, Tasmania, where I had worked as a miner before attending WASM.

I was later promoted from shift boss to mine superintendent. In 1975 I was transferred to the London office of Consolidated Goldfields, the parent company of Mt Lyell, and became responsible for designing underground storage facilities for North Sea Oil. I was later transferred to Cornwall.

5. What was your best job?

I was the general manager with Wheal Jane Tin Mine in Cornwall in 1977. Cornish mining people are great characters and Cornwall is one of the most beautiful parts of the UK.

6. What was your career highlight?

The mid-1995 takeover of Metals Exploration by Alan Bond gave me the opportunity to manage the setting up of the original Big Pit in Kalgoorlie. I was also a director of Bond's private company which managed his mining interests.

Later, in 2005 and, until recently, I was chairman of three companies at the same time: Indophil Resources (feasibility work on major copper-gold property in Mindanao, the Philippines); Panoramic Resources (two nickel mines in WA); and White Rock Minerals (completing feasibility on silver-gold property in northern NSW).

My last full-time executive role was Managing Director, Mining Project Investors Ltd, a private company that listed on the ASX and operated the Silver Swan Nickel Mine (WA) and the Stawell Gold Mine (Vic).

7. Where do you live now and what family do you have?

I now live in Melbourne, and have 10 grandchildren.

8. What are your retirement hobbies?

I'm still the non-executive chairman of Panoramic Resources and White Rock Minerals. Travel and boating are my two main "relaxation" interests.

9. How you feel about your WASM 50th anniversary honour?

The 50th anniversary celebration was a marvelous opportunity to return to the school and see the changes as well as the original elements that I remembered.

The staff from Curtin and the local WASM people were enthusiastic and attentive, and can be justifiably proud of the work they are doing to continue and maintain the WASM standard and reputation.