

James D. Giza '95 MS

ROBERT H. GODDARD AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Jim Giza, you serve as an example of how to use a WPI education as the foundation for a career as an entrepreneur. We are pleased to recognize you today for your accomplishments.

After earning your undergraduate degree at Hartwick College, you came to WPI to earn a master's degree in computer science. From WPI, you went on to two corporate positions and quickly learned that the typical professional path was not for you.

Instead, you took the road less traveled, working for several start-ups. Among other leadership roles, you were a project and tech lead at Interleaf, a maker of electronic publishing software; a principal software engineer at Lotus, where you worked on a high-profile Notes application related to the 1996 Olympics; and principal software engineer at AOL, where you implemented key features of AOL desktop client Data Security and Client/Server Authentication.

You joined Boston Light Software, a maker of website development software, at its inception and served as its vice president of engineering. You stayed with the company through its acquisition by Intuit, where you served as group product manager and technical evangelist.

You and several friends who had been together at Intuit, Boston Light, and Interleaf then went on to launch KAYAK,

a travel price comparison website. At KAYAK you spent, in your own words, "nine years of joy," helping grow the company from nothing to 200 employees and an IPO in July 2012. KAYAK was eventually acquired by Priceline.

Upon leaving KAYAK in 2012 you began spending significant time with WPI's Tech Advisors Network and in a few months began serving as WPI's Entrepreneur-in-Residence, helping our undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and alumni turn their ideas and research into commercial ventures. Your focus has been to guide

these budding entrepreneurs through the Tech Advisors Network and to connect WPI to medical staff at UMass Medical Center to create new medical products.

Besides time spent helping WPI and Worcester-area tech startups on a pro bono basis, you have been spending a growing amount of your personal—literally, hands-on—time assisting the community by applying your skills as a Kripalu Certified yoga teacher and a personal trainer, leading ten free community classes per week.

Jim Giza, your impressive record of success and service to your alma mater set an example for our students and alumni. The WPI Alumni Association is proud to present you with the Robert H. Goddard Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement.

