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LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ALUM MIKE ELAM NOMINATED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR ST. CHARLES COUNTY

March 24, 2021

By Sanorah Eldred

Lindenwood University prides itself on the motto of Real Experience, Real Success. Not only is this Lindenwood's motto, but it is also a great description for Mike Elam, a Lindenwood University Alum who has just recently been nominated as the Chairman for the Council of St. Charles County. Through his hard work and dedication, this alum is making real change happen.

Mike Elam, a long-time member of the St. Charles community, has an educational career that is much different than most college students. Mr. Elam grew up in a small town in Northwest Arkansas where he attended high school and eventually college at Arkansas State University. Though he began his career at Arkansas State, he did not finish there. He instead went on to join the Naval Reserve as a Hospital Corpsman where he received the *Navy League Award* in basic training. Eventually, he ended up in St. Louis and began to work for a local radio group as a creative services director. As his life continued, so did the expectations of his employers. Though he had much experience, he lacked the necessary degree to ensure his job security.

Instead of letting fate take hold of his opportunities, Mr. Elam decided that he would finish his degree and earn the educational qualifications to back up his experience. It was through Lindenwood's online night program that Mike Elam was able to earn his degree at almost 50 years old!

After receiving his degree, Mr. Elam was later elected as a County Council member for District 3 of St. Charles County in April of 2013. Each year the Council votes for one of the seven council members to be elected as the Chairman of the Council. The Chairman is the council member that leads the meetings and decides on agenda items. For the past two years, Mr. Elam has been voted as the Council Chairman. In his position he hopes to achieve many goals in support of his community. When asked what his goals are for the County Mr. Elam states,

“So, I often joke if you live in St Charles County that would make you: Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise! My personal goal is to build on these winning attributes to find more ways for us to lead the way and set the bar in our state and our region. This year we were able to launch a Port Authority for St Charles County, which was a three-year project that I championed because it allows us to access many tools for economic development, and hopefully they can leverage our many assets to everyone's benefit. Going back to the early days of our state, St Charles County has had a leadership role in developing the direction of our state. My goal is to rekindle that leadership role for our region and our state.”

The positive outlook he has on his journey ahead is the same optimistic mindset he needed to push him through his challenging academic journey. With the support of his family and his Lindenwood community, Mr. Elam has been able to make quite a name for himself. When reflecting on his time at Lindenwood Mr. Elam states,

“As a busy working adult, the evening program at Lindenwood allowed me to successfully go back to school some twenty-five- years removed from the classroom. My instructors were all amazing and helpful and most were working in the communications industry and offered great advice I could apply the next day at my office. Since receiving my degree, I have seen a number of doors open.”

The nature and flexibility that a Lindenwood education provides is just one of the many factors that has led Mr. Elam to his success.

This success is something that all college students strive for. To inspire, to learn, and to be successful. The best advice that Mr. Elam has for college students is to have confidence in themselves and their own voice. He even goes on to say that,

“We need more people to get involved in the development of our community so that all voices are represented and heard. One of the best ways to open doors is to put yourself out there and find ways to engage. There are great community programs to help you do that like Vision St Charles Leadership. They have developed a mentoring program that helps to team you up with a community leader with common interest.”

Mr. Elam's belief in people developing their own leadership abilities is evidence of not only his leadership abilities, but the confidence he has for the community that he supports. Lindenwood is excited to see the positive influence that Mr. Elam will have throughout his next year as Council Chairman.