

Alfred P. and Lorelee West  
2007 WPHS Alumni Circle of Distinction

As a 14-year-old boy, Al West noticing that the “snowbirds” in his native Florida needed someone to cut their lawns while they summered up North. Instead of peddling his services door-to-door, he called on a few bank trust officers who were more than willing to connect their high-end clients with a summer lawn service. West’s colleagues still don’t know which is more impressive: a high school student with that kind of marketing savvy or one who knew there was such a thing as a bank trust department.

Before he graduated from Winter Park High School, Al dreamed of becoming an astronaut; but he didn't make the cut because of poor eyesight. He then studied aerospace engineering at Georgia Tech and applied his know-how to bank transactions. He then founded Simulated Environments as an MBA grad student at the Wharton school 1968. He developed an early model for automating back-office operations for banks and financial institutions and also a computer simulator that trained bank loan officers in credit lending practices. Al then reached into asset management and private equity transactions. Today, Al is the billionaire cofounder, chairman and CEO of SEI Investments that manages \$160 billion in assets.

Al’s financial services firm provides products and services to institutions, private banks, investment advisors, investment managers, and ultra-high-net-worth families. In 2007, Forbes put Al’s net worth at \$1.4 billion. Al West had collected all manner of national awards, including his selection as the “2012 Business Leader of the Year” as well as the “B’Nai B’rith International Distinguished Humanitarian Award.”

But there is more to the story because Al married Lorelee West who was also a Winter Park High graduate. Together they have become possibly the most generous donors of their wealth to worthy causes in the United States. As parents of a troubled child themselves, the Wests have donated their most lavish gifts on organizations dealing with mental illness. Also, the Wests have donated thousands of dollars and have hosted splendid events for wounded soldiers by touching their lives with exciting fishing trips for wounded veterans in Alaska. They have also provided major contributions to various schools and colleges—particularly toward those focused on medical science.