It was nearly 20 years ago when Mark Dale found himself jogging around the University at Albany campus thinking, “I know there’s a tremendous university here. We should get more involved with the sciences and Business School.”

At the time, Mark served as Director of the New York State Police Forensic Science Laboratory System and President of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors. Recognizing the untapped opportunity to link arms with students pursuing careers in forensics and criminal justice, he set out to make a difference.

“Maybe it’s karma,” Mark shares about the steps that led him to his own career in law enforcement. After earning his bachelor’s degree in biology from Florida State University in 1970, Mark was drafted by the U.S. Army. “My introduction to law enforcement was when they sent me to MP (Military Police) School,” he explains. “I really liked it.”

Mark served two years with the U.S. Army 101st Airborne MP Company in Vietnam. “When I came home, there ‘just so happened’ to be a competitive entrance examination opportunity to work with the New York State Police and I jumped at the chance.”

About 10 years into his role as a police sergeant with the Valley Stream Station in Nassau County, Mark got a call from headquarters. “They did statewide search for officers with a biology degree and found me. I was invited to move into forensic lab work and without hesitation, I said, yes.”

With the New York State 1995 DNA laws on the books and the formation of the New York State DNA Databank and Commission on Forensic Science, Mark, now as Inspector, Laboratory Director, was authorized to hire up to 65 people. “We hired them all in a year,” he says about the feat. “All of a sudden we had dozens of new hires at the doorstep and I thought, how are we going to train these folks?”

Enter Dr. Donald Orokos, Associate Director of the Forensic Biology Program at the University at Albany. “Dr. Orokos is the true champion behind our efforts,” acknowledges Mark. “It is because of his steadfast commitment, leadership, and guidance that we were able to partner with UAlbany to accomplish three milestone accomplishments: the renovation of lab space for training, a DNA training academy, and the establishment of a Forensic Molecular Biology Graduate program.”

Mark purposefully chose the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program because every class was directly applicable to his work as a manager. “As a forensic lab manager, I’m managing very advanced technology that is high-cost, high-risk and has no tolerance for errors,” he discloses. “Much of what we do has a profound impact on victims of violent crime and community safety. It is essential to have a strong academic foundation in science and management before becoming a forensic scientist and/or forensic manager. The consequences of errors can be significant so it’s important to be meticulous and have the ability to make efficient and effective decisions.”

In Mark’s line of work, being meticulous includes building a solid foundation. “If your education can be directly applied to your work, that’s a rare treat,” he asserts. “The UAlbany Weekend MBA Program offers ample
introduction to the material, but if you really want to glean long-term, you need to apply and leverage in real time your new knowledge in your career."

“Before you commit to the MBA journey, know why you’re doing it,” offers Mark. “Be able to fill in the blank: ‘This MBA curriculum is going to give me the tools to ______________.’ Embrace the vision of how you’re going to apply your education before you start. There are no two ways about it. You need to plan your journey.”

Mark’s “why” revolved around effectively communicating the impact of forensic science with budget units who could say yay-or-nay to his many requests for funding. “Without funding, you’re dead in the water,” he affirms. “Having endless opportunities to present to my Weekend MBA cohort equipped me with the ability to articulate my needs and requirements to those who can help in both the private and public sectors. It helped me immeasurably.”

Mark’s other “secret to success” was the support he received from his wife of 41 years, Kathy. “Kathy is a 6th grade teacher with the Shenendehowa Central School System,” he touts. “She received her Master’s from UAlbany and understood there would be a two-three year time sacrifice as I pursued my MBA. She was 100% supportive.”

Upon graduation from the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program in May 2004, Mark Dale’s eyes were opened to the need for a dedicated forensic training facility. Partnering once again with Dr. Orokos, the North East Regional Forensic Institute (NERFI) was birthed, providing a 16-week “DNA Academy” in which students could earn 12 graduate credit hours.

“The beauty of it was gaining the ability to offer hands-on, efficient training without having to compete for instruments or lab time in a real casework laboratory,” explains Mark. “Prior, when forensic laboratories would hire someone even with advanced degrees, mentor training in a case work laboratory could be at least a year before they were afforded the opportunity to work on a case. It is very fulfilling to see students grow, graduate, and become hired by forensic laboratories or pursue advanced degrees. To cite a couple of ‘for instances’, after graduating from UAlbany with a Forensic Microbiology degree, Ashley Hart pursued a Law Degree; Jamie Belrose is completing her Ph. D. in Biology at UAlbany.”

Since Human Resource Turnover Costs would become Mark’s Master’s thesis, he naturally partnered with one of his professors, Dr. Wendy S. Becker, an expert in the field. Together, they have more than 70 years combined work history applied as management consultants to public and private sector organizations, trained more than 1,000 managers around the world and co-published many journal articles and books. The first book they co-authored is entitled, “The Crime Scene: How Forensic Science Works”. They are now completing a second book for Taylor and Francis Publishers, “Application of Business Principles to Forensic Laboratories,” to be published in 2014.

Even though he is “officially retired,” there’s a high probability you can still find Mark Dale in the lab. If he’s not there, he’s likely engaging in cycling, restoring a 1957 Chevy truck, woodworking, or grandparenting. Mark and Kathy’s son, Michael, lives in Weymouth, Massachusetts with his wife, Alana. Their daughter Amy lives in Carmel, New York with her husband Craig and two daughters, Abby and Kate.

“If you do it right, you will get much more out of life than you put in,” proclaims Mark. “Same holds true for the value of the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program. Make your journey count.”
Connect with Mark Dale here:


Publications and Research Articles: [http://www.beckerdaleconsulting.com/Publications.html](http://www.beckerdaleconsulting.com/Publications.html)

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