

A West Coast Visionary in the Model of Mr. Hershey

MIKE KENNA
Entrepreneur and Social Activist,
MHS Class of 1970

An entrepreneur and champion for small business, public transit, and historic preservation. The force behind the efforts to create a community bank post 9/11 to lend money to local businesses and help the town weather the recession. A regular contributor of time and resources to humanitarian causes including, with his son, adopting a community in Guatemala for which they've helped to build a community water system and school.



Upon graduation from MHS and college, and after a year of driving his MGB, traveling, climbing, and backpacking throughout the west, Mike Kenna, '70, found himself in the town of Port Townsend, Washington, population 9,000. Struck by the magnificence of the land, sea and the charm of a town rich with historic seaport heritage, Mike settled thousands of miles away from his childhood home to start his life. He combined a passion for print and graphic design with a deep devotion and inspiration of wilderness and preserving the land and sea. This was his motivation to launch the first sustainable graphic design and printing company, which he called Printery Communications. One of the first green print providers in the U.S. – well before it was fashionable to be “green” – Printery has offered environmentally sustainable printing solutions for 33 years. Today, he and his wife, Pat, employ 25 co-workers, including their 22 year-old son.

Mike came to MHS and chafed under the rules he encountered from his houseparents who were firm in their guidance and strict about ensuring that the children in the house grew up with the structure that may have been missing from their lives. In fact, Mike parlayed an interest in photography and drawing into “chores” at the school's print shop as a means of escaping the “farm” jobs that were part of contributing at MHS, but not necessarily the best-loved chores.

But photography and graphic design quickly became an avocation, not just a diversion from chores, under the guiding hand of Mike's teacher, Mr. Hugendubler. With his tutelage, working in the school's print shop which produced the MHS's quarterly magazine and annual reports, he honed his skills in design, print, and photography. Mr. Hugendubler was not only a skilled teacher but also a mentor:

“He took me under his wing and encouraged me to apply for college at Rochester Institute of Technology,” where Mike received a full scholarship.

Like Milton Hershey, Mike's sense of humanity extends well beyond the borders of his business. Just three years after his arrival in Port Townsend, Mike was elected to the City Council where he put his values to work in the service of the community. Still in his twenties, he served four consecutive four-year terms while becoming President and Mayor-Pro-Tem of the City Council. In this role, he was a champion for small business, public transit, historic preservation, and marine conservation. After 9/11, Mike was one of three founder/directors to create a community bank whose main mission was to help small local businesses. Mariner Bank became very successful, lending money to regional businesses and helping the city survive the recession.