

Gary Laabs

Nursing, 2008



As an outstanding alumnus, Gary Laabs has not distinguished himself in one career field but in three chosen fields. His first career began shortly after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh when he was drafted into the U.S. Army. He made the Army his career, retiring as a lieutenant colonel after 20 years. While serving, Laabs earned an MBA from Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

After retiring from the Army, Laabs began his second career – director of human resources at Utz Quality Foods in Hanover, where he was later promoted to vice president of human resources. While at Utz, he worked closely with HACC's Gettysburg Campus on developing various training programs for Utz employees and the Hanover community.

During his career at Utz, Laabs also prepared himself for his third career – nursing – by volunteering on six medical mission trips outside the United States. He retired from Utz in December 2006, and in January 2007, he began taking nursing clinicals at the Gettysburg Campus. He graduated from HACC's nursing program in December 2008 at the young age of 65 and now works as a registered nurse at Hanover Hospital.

Laabs strongly believes in giving back. He continues to participate annually in medical mission trips in support of Medical Ministry International (MMI). He chairs the Hanover Area Council of Churches' Healthcare Committee, whose projects include free medical clinics for the needy, flu shots, weekly blood pressure checks and diabetes education and screenings.

This outstanding alumnus is also a strong advocate for HACC. He has served on the Gettysburg Campus Advisory Committee since 2005, and most recently he joined the HACC Foundation Board. Laabs was instrumental in securing major gifts to establish the Arlene Utz Hollinger Foundation Scholarship and the Elsner Engineering Works Family Scholarship, both at HACC. In 2014, he was recognized for his volunteer work by receiving the first Central Penn Parent's Healthcare Heroes Volunteer Award.

HACC Impact

"HACC allows individuals to improve both personally and professionally. HACC attendance benefits the individual, his or her employer and the community. This is why I am passionate about HACC."