

## Mayor David J. Wenzel



Mayor David J. Wenzel, a native of Scranton, Pennsylvania, began his formal education at the University of Scranton after graduating from Scranton Central High School in 1963. Mayor Wenzel received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Infantry Branch of the United States Army in 1969. Mayor Wenzel completed Infantry Officer Basic Course at Ft. Benning, Georgia in 1969 and Jungle Expert Training at Fort Sherman, Panama Canal Zone. Mayor Wenzel was stationed at Ft. Riley, Kansas with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division before eventually deploying to the Republic of South Vietnam in charge of a mortar platoon of Company A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry, 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Americal Division in 1970.

Mayor Wenzel was on patrol with his men in 1971 when he stepped on a land mine and was severely wounded, eventually losing both legs above the knee, his left hand, and the use of one eye. Mayor Wenzel returned to Scranton after eight months of rehabilitation at Valley Forge Army Hospital. Mayor Wenzel enrolled in the University of Scranton's Graduate School, and earned his Master of Business Administration in Accounting in 1974.

Mayor Wenzel began his service to the city of Scranton in 1974, when he served as Bicentennial Coordinator until 1975 and served as the Executive Assistant to Mayor Gene Peters from 1976 to 1978. Mayor Wenzel was next elected as Tax Collector of the City of Scranton, a post at which he served from 1978 to 1985. As Tax Collector, Mayor Wenzel was responsible for collecting real estate tax for the city government, Scranton School District, and Lackawanna County. Additionally, the office was responsible for collecting the wage tax for the City and School District as well as the per capita tax, the mercantile tax, and the business privilege tax.

From 1986 to 1990 Mr. Wenzel served as the twenty-seventh Mayor of the City of Scranton. During his tenure in office, Mayor Wenzel accomplished many things, notably planning and executing the construction of the Steamtown Mall in downtown Scranton, a project worth an estimated \$70 million. Additionally, Mayor Wenzel aided in naming the Steamtown area as a national historic site which consists of 35 locomotives and 100+ railroad cars. Subsequently, the National Park Service would eventually spend \$63 million refurbishing the site resulting in a first class exhibit of American railroading.

Mayor Wenzel served as the Stand-by Director of the Pennsylvania Selective Service (1979-1985), a member of the Pennsylvania State of Labor Handicapped Building Compliance Review Board (1995-1998), a member of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor Vocational Rehabilitation Board (1999-2006), and served as the Finance Chairman on the National Council on Disability after receiving a Presidential appointment (2000-2006).

Mayor Wenzel's military decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, South Vietnam Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. His civil service decorations include the National Disabled American Veteran of the Year (1978), Pennsylvania Jaycees, Outstanding Pennsylvanian (1979), the "Cyrano Award" from the University of Scranton Graduate School (1984), Scranton Times Newsmaker of the Year (1985), the O'Hara Award from the University of Scranton (1989), and the "Liberty Award" from the Interdependence Day Committee of Northeastern Pennsylvania (2005).

Mayor Wenzel now serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Scranton as well as Lackawanna College and recently authored "Scranton's Mayors," a compilation of biographies of the twenty nine Mayors of Scranton. Mayor Wenzel resides in Scranton, Pennsylvania with his wife Janet who is a retired Elementary school teacher from the Scranton School District.