

Robert E. Poole '72

Bob Poole says he's never actually built a building. But the president and CEO of S&A Homes and Poole Anderson Construction, State College-based residential and commercial construction companies, says he has worked on every phase of building, from carrying concrete blocks for foundations to hauling bundles of shingles up ladders. The experience gave him a better appreciation for what it takes to build, he says, and the construction crews respected him for being out there. Though he wasn't out building the buildings, Poole did everything else when he entered the construction business 25 years ago: he sold homes, helped buyers pick finishes, and even drove them to the lender for a mortgage.



Today, S&A Homes and its affiliated companies build more than 600 residential units plus commercial buildings each year. S&A is one of the top 200 homebuilders in the country. Beyond commercial and residential construction, Poole's holdings include building supply, realty, property management, and home-funding concerns. He gets by on just a few hours of sleep each night. "I love what I do and whether it's my business dealings or my non-profit work, I can't wait to get to it each day," he says. As a kid growing up just outside Philadelphia, Poole says his first love was baseball. When he realized he probably wouldn't play beyond high school, he considered pursuing sports announcing at Syracuse University. Instead, he enrolled at Penn State. "It had a good accounting program, I liked numbers, and it was affordable," he explains.

After graduating, he accepted a job with an accounting firm in New York. He left that firm in 1975 to be the treasurer of Chemac, Inc., a New Jersey chemical machinery importer. While there, he earned an M.B.A. from Farleigh Dickinson University, but he says that in the back of his mind he always wanted to be an entrepreneur. His brother-in-law had a home building operation in Central Pennsylvania, which was how he got into real estate. Poole opened a State College office and has grown the company ever since, doubling its size every five years, a trend he plans to continue. "It's important that this company survives me," he says. "A lot of people have dedicated their lives to growing the business."

Poole devotes considerable time and money to local organizations. He was chair of the Centre County United Way's 2004 campaign, co-chair of the State College YMCA's capital campaign, and supported the development of the S&A Stadium and baseball fields at the Shaner Sports Complex. He serves on the boards of two land preservation organizations and is committed to providing affordable housing. Poole has also served as chairman of the board of The Second Mile for 12 years. Among other honors, Poole was recognized as the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County's Entrepreneur of the Year in 2000.

At Penn State, Poole has served on many committees and currently sits on the Smeal College of Business Board of Visitors and Schreyer Honors College Advisory Board. Penn State has previously honored Poole as an Alumni Fellow in 2001 and an Outstanding Accounting Alumnus in 1999. A life member of the Penn State Alumni Association, Poole and his wife, Sandy, live near State College. They have three grown daughters and three grandchildren.

