

Pete Kowalewski, P.E.
Founding Principal



He had no idea when he started that high school geology class on Long Island, N.Y. that he was about to discover a new passion. Geology and ecology class field trips brought scientific theories to life through hands-on experiences and Pete was intrigued. His interest grew further during a capstone project on the cogeneration of electricity at landfills which demonstrated how to capture gas to generate electricity. So, when a family friend suggested Colorado School of Mines he decided to check it out. One visit to the campus and he was sold. Was it the small size of the college (equal to his high school) or the small town feel of Golden? Perhaps it was the 75-degree day in February, even with snow on the ground, that persuaded a young Pete to leave his lifelong home of Long Island in pursuit of something new.

While earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Geological Engineering, Pete maintained a variety of interests. He developed lifelong relationships with his fraternity brothers at Kappa Sigma. Although a varied athlete in high school, he focused on baseball at Colorado School of Mines (CSM) and was a 4-year starter with the distinction of captain during his senior year. It was late in his college career that he honed in his volleyball skills. Despite the fun, CSM put a focus on

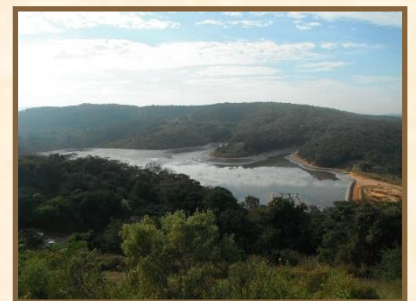


academics before athletics so he made time for studying, too. In fact, he enjoyed it so much he stayed to pursue a Master of Engineering in Applied Mechanics.

Upon graduation Pete set out to find work with an environmental engineering firm. However, the first opportunity for this eager engineer was a lab tech with SRK Lakewood “cleaning dirt”. He took the job, but when a staff engineer position became available at the end of that summer it opened the door for Pete to join the mining industry...and he has never looked back. He went on to become a project engineer and ultimately led the Geo-Environmental Division.

It was during this time at SRK that Pete met Matt Fuller, CPG, LEG (co-founder of Tierra Group International, Ltd.) and they have worked together ever since. Pete highly regards Matt saying, “he has taught me a lot about the international arena and has provided a lot of guidance that I still incorporate daily”. After a short time, Pete and Matt joined with another engineer to start the mining group at Olsson Associates. “It was a great opportunity to work with guys I respected and take on a new challenge”, says Pete. That new challenge came quickly as he became the lead for the Water Resources Group where he learned about municipal stormwater work and developed client relationships that still exist today.

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*“On my first day of work I learned a healthy respect for the decisions that need to be made each day...it put in perspective the magnitude of the decisions that have to be made and the impact of those decisions.
I don’t take that lightly.”*
...



One of the highlights of Pete's career came in 2003 when he was invited into ownership of a new engineering firm, Vector Colorado, with five professionals he greatly respected. He reflects, "in retrospect it was one of the best decisions I ever made, but also one of the riskiest". As a young engineer, only 10 years in the industry, a lot was at stake professionally and financially.



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"When we formed Tierra Group we wanted to create a healthy work environment for employees where they would be appreciated and taken care of by the employer. Too many businesses focus on their own health at the expense of the employees. We wanted to create an opportunity for employees to be involved in something bigger than themselves."



Pete bet his house on this decision! The business prospered and a year later he relocated to Elko, Nevada to open and manage Vector Nevada.

Pete's time as co-owner of Vector helped shape the decision to launch Tierra Group International, Ltd. Pete and Matt wanted to start, and grow, a company that could provide a select menu of services in the best manner possible. Starting with a core group of team members that have worked with Pete and Matt since Vector, Tierra Group has grown into a Client-Focused, Team-Oriented group of professionals. Pete firmly believes the team's quality is validated by the faith of so many clients that continue to work with them through the years and is grateful for those relationships.

None of these successes are taken for granted. Pete finds that every day brings new learnings. He believes it is important to apply these lessons every day; to know when to step back to assess a situation versus stepping up to take action and making the necessary decisions.

When Pete is not on the road visiting mine sites, he can usually be found travelling with his family, serving as an elder at his church or playing the drums. After a few years of piano and cello Pete he took his first drum lessons the summer after 5th



grade and played through high school in ensembles, orchestra, jazz groups and marching band. He has played bass drum, snare drum, timpani, and more but one of the highlights of his early musical "career" was playing the percussion set in the orchestra pit for the high school musical "Oklahoma". As an adult, he has been part of a recording group, toured for many years and now plays regularly at his church. He enjoys the comradery with good musicians and getting lost in the music provides a total escape.



Pete, **Wannabe Bubba Watson** by his golfing buddies, jokes that golf is "the game he loves to hate". Despite being a southpaw, Pete learned how to play on a hand me down set of right-handed clubs he received from a friend in high school. Now, with the correct set of clubs and color coordinated attire he plays whenever he can, acknowledging there is always room for improvement. One thing Pete forgot to mention is that he is Tierra Group's two-time reigning bowling champion.