

## PROFILES OF DIXON EMPLOYEES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### BADGE NO. 1

MARTHA STUBBS

BY CARYN R. SAGAL

**As an elementary school student, Martha Stubbs remembers visiting a pickle factory at 800 High St. in Chestertown, Md. By sheer coincidence, she'd later return to that same site for employment at Dixon Valve & Coupling Co., which purchased the property in the mid-1970s and occupied it until earlier this year.**

"I thought I would try out the job because it was close to home, but I must have liked it because I'm still here 45 years later," Stubbs says.

Her tenure with Dixon began in 1976. Stubbs was the first hourly employee hired in Chestertown, badge No. 1.

Based in the machine shop, she worked with different equipment—punching holes, loading pipes and setting up machines.

In 1986, Stubbs moved to the warehouse, where she continues to serve as a distribution specialist. In addition to answering phones and greeting visitors when they arrive, she orders supplies for the warehouse and branches, assists in the assembly area, prints orders and bills orders that ship out.

"I like the people, the company and the work," she says. "I can come in and do my job without someone standing over me. If I need help, I just ask."

Declaring that "Dixon is a great company to work for," Stubbs adds, "It treats employees fairly and offers a good health insurance plan, a retirement plan, vacations and bonuses."

She has seen many improvements through the years and is particularly pleased with "having onsite



physical therapy and being able to work in newer, air-conditioned buildings. Plus, we have a really nice lunch for Christmas and we receive a turkey and time off for Thanksgiving."

And speaking of holidays ... Stubbs loves to spruce up her home and Dixon with festive decor. Her office embellishments have ranged from a small Christmas tree with Dixon's safety clip as an ornament to a "Peanuts"-themed tree with Charlie Brown and Snoopy, in addition to wreaths on the doors and decals on the big windows.

More elaborate at home, she says she once outlined the whole house in red lights and placed candles in the windows, multi-color lights in the bushes and figurines in the yard.

"Ever since, I just decorate the bushes and windows and put figures in the yard," Stubbs says. "But I try to change it up every year."

In addition to Christmas decorating, she's even gone so far as to dress up her dog for Halloween and have him greet trick-or-treaters with a basket of candy.

Stubbs' other leisure time pursuits include gardening, going to the beach, visiting her son and grandchildren, and spending time with her friends.

Proud that she's still part of the Dixon team at age 71, Stubbs plans to retire in four years.

"I still like what I do and look forward to doing the best at my job," she says.



## FLYING HIGH, DOWN UNDER

ANDREW PRENTICE

BY CARYN R. SAGAL

**Growing up in Australia, Andrew Prentice spent his vacations searching for gold in the Outback. Fond memories of camping out with metal detectors, picks and shovels inspired him to pursue a career in mineral exploration and production.**

Prentice began with hands-on roles at mining companies involved in gold exploration and production before switching to technical product sales.

Soon after he joined Mining Supplies Australia, Dixon Valve & Coupling Co. acquired the company.

"I remember at the time thinking, 'This is going to open up some great opportunities,' and I was right," Prentice says. "Twenty-five years later, I'm still here!"

Through the years, Prentice has held senior regional management, product management, sales and marketing roles with Dixon Asia Pacific. He's moved several times throughout Australia with his wife and two

children, and the family even relocated to Singapore for three years.

"Dixon has given me many opportunities to work in different roles in different regions of the world, to be entrepreneurial and develop new skills," Prentice says. "I really enjoy working with such a diverse group of people—customers, distributors and suppliers from all over the world."

That diversity has brought unique opportunities, as Prentice predicted, such as building business in regions where English is not the first language or is very limited, which Prentice describes as "particularly challenging but exciting at the same time."

In 2017, Prentice was promoted to group vice president of Dixon Overseas Operations. Now based in the Australian city of Perth, he oversees business in the Asia Pacific, as well as in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Prentice considers himself "very fortunate to lead an amazing team across the overseas regions covering all aspects of our business."

"That team comprises talented and creative people who are humble and always keep it real," he says. "They also do great work in the community raising money for the homeless, the children's Christmas appeal and other worthy causes. We have a great culture here."

When he's not at the office or traveling for work, Prentice spends most of his time exercising—running, taking outdoor boot camps or working out at the gym or in the water.

"I grew up surfing at every possible chance and still venture out every now and then," he says.

Prentice also loves sports, especially Australian rules football (AFL) and his beloved West Coast Eagles. When his kids were young, he coached their Little League AFL teams and was involved in other community sports.

Now 51, Prentice says he has "so much more to accomplish—the overseas region has huge potential with many more exciting opportunities ahead."

# NET GAIN

ALVARO PRADO

BY CARYN R. SAGAL

**The game of tennis brought Alvaro Prado from Guatemala City to Chestertown, Md. Soon after, it led him to Dixon.**

Prado started working with the company in 2002 after Washington College in Chestertown recruited him as a varsity tennis player. Adjusting to life in another country and speaking English full-time were tough enough, yet he faced another hurdle.

Per NCAA Division III rules, Washington College could not award an athletic scholarship. The coach and admissions team found an academic grant for Prado, but he would need to find alternative ways to pay for tuition, room and board.

While focusing on his studies (and compiling a 21-5 doubles record and 21-11 singles record on the tennis court), Prado took a part-time job at the college's gymnasium. That's where he met Richard "Flats" Flaherty, for-



mer Dixon sales president and a frequent squash player.

"One day, Mr. Flaherty's squash partner did not show up so I filled in," Prado says. "He asked me if I spoke Spanish and I explained that Spanish is my first language. Then he hired me as a part-time translator."

Prado stayed with Dixon through his upperclassman years and became a full-time employee upon graduation, working in exports.

"When my visa expired the following year, Dixon

had no one in sales looking after the Central American market, so I requested and received that opportunity,” he says. “I ended up living in Guatemala and working for an American company. It was and *still* is a great scenario, and I think it works nicely for Dixon, too.”

Now 39, Prado oversees communication with distributors in Central America, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. He also seeks new product opportunities, trains and supports distributors on Dixon products, and searches for new distributors when necessary.

“I enjoy working for a company that represents good values,” Prado says. “I also enjoy doing sales calls with distributors and always look forward to learning something when I go out in the field. Communication with the management and exports teams makes my every day enjoyable.”

Before the pandemic, he would travel one week to a Central American country, then follow up at home, spend the next week in South America and so on. But during the past year and a half, he’s stayed in Guatemala and conducted business through emails and virtual trainings.

When he’s not working, Prado enjoys spending time with his wife and two children, visiting zoos, riding bikes and watching movies. And, of course, there’s tennis.

“I play about four times a week and try to teach the sport to my son and his close friends,” he says.

Prado also volunteers with Guatemala’s National Federation of Tennis. “I love chatting with kids about the benefits of playing a sport while keeping up with good academics,” he says. “I tell them that tennis is a tool that will help you do well in life.”



## TRAVELIN’ MAN

RICH SMITH

BY CARYN R. SAGAL

**After serving in the U.S. Navy and playing drums in a traveling band, Rich Smith decided to find a permanent career. He started as a pump and air compressor mechanic before taking sales positions with industrial bearing and hose distributors.**

Then came that life-changing phone call in 1982. A former boss working at Dixon Valve & Coupling Co. thought Smith would be an ideal candidate for an inside sales position.

Smith heard positive things about the company. Within six months of taking the job, he says he found his true calling and knew he wanted to stay for good.

“Dixon has been my family for 38 years,” Smith says. “They’re a leader in the industry, and CEO Dick Goodall operates with ethics and takes care of his employees.”

Smith’s tenure with Dixon began at the Kansas City branch. He moved on to the Chicago center, and later opened the Tampa and Cleveland centers. Since 1985, he’s been based at the Chestertown headquarters.

A leader with the Bayco Division, Smith manages sales operations everywhere east of the Mississippi River, as well as in Central and South America. His favorite part of the job is “traveling throughout the country and overseas representing Dixon.”

Work has taken him to Canada, Mexico and all over Central and South America. He typically spends three weeks on the road each month and takes four international trips a year.

Smith says his proudest accomplishment is “working with distributors and end users to promote Dixon products.” Through the decades, he’s “seen the company expand its product lines and become more diverse.”

Now 70, Smith plans to retire in December of 2023 and is “trying to figure out how to stay active and enjoy life.”

Until then, he says he’ll continue to enjoy coming to work and representing Dixon. On weekends, you can usually spot him hitting the links at his local country club or boating on the Chesapeake Bay or Chester River.

Smith also enjoys spending time with his two grown sons and playing guitar. Still rocking out after all these years!



# PRICE'S PASSION

MARY PRICE

BY CARYN R. SAGAL

**Interested in a business career where she could help people, Mary Price joined Dixon in 1984.**

"I thought I had the best job ever," Price says. "Who would have thought I would be sitting here today as a senior vice president of this great organization?"

Starting as a secretary for Dixon's sales executives, Price says she "attended many meetings and learned all about the customers, products and how we do business."

She quickly rose through the ranks, moving to exports and advertising. In the early 1990s, CEO Dick Goodall offered Price a promotion to human resources, on the condition that she would finish her degree.

Taking him up on the challenge, Price took human resources classes at University of Maryland University College and "learned anything else I could." Not only did she earn her degree, she also received the industry's SHRM-SCP and SPHR certifications.

Based at the Chestertown headquarters, Price now leads Dixon's HR team in "strategies, policies and practices that create an engaged and motivated workforce." She oversees recruitment, retention, benefits, organizational development, safety and compliance.

"When you think of HR, you might think of hiring and onboarding, policy development, compliance and training," Price says. "But what it really amounts to is getting to know people and helping them. I have a great team in HR that wakes up every day thinking about how they can hire the best and encourage them to be successful. I could not be more proud of them."



Price says her favorite part of the job is traveling to Dixon locations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Australia. "We have the best people at Dixon," she says. "Without exception, they are friendly, smart, kind and hard-working."

"So many people here are looking for an opportunity to grow personally and professionally," Price says. "I hope my story motivates them and encourages them to talk to us about their dreams and ambitions."

Besides helping her co-workers, Price has been an active board member with Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's and a coach with Character Counts Kent County. (Dixon has provided coaches to Character Counts for more than two decades.)

"I am passionate about children and will do whatever I can to help our community be the place where our young people can thrive," she says.

When Price isn't lending her time and talent to inspire future business and community leaders, she enjoys remodeling, decorating and relaxing at the beach or pool with a good book. Her top priority, though, is spending time with her husband, four children, six grandchildren and a "very special toy poodle."