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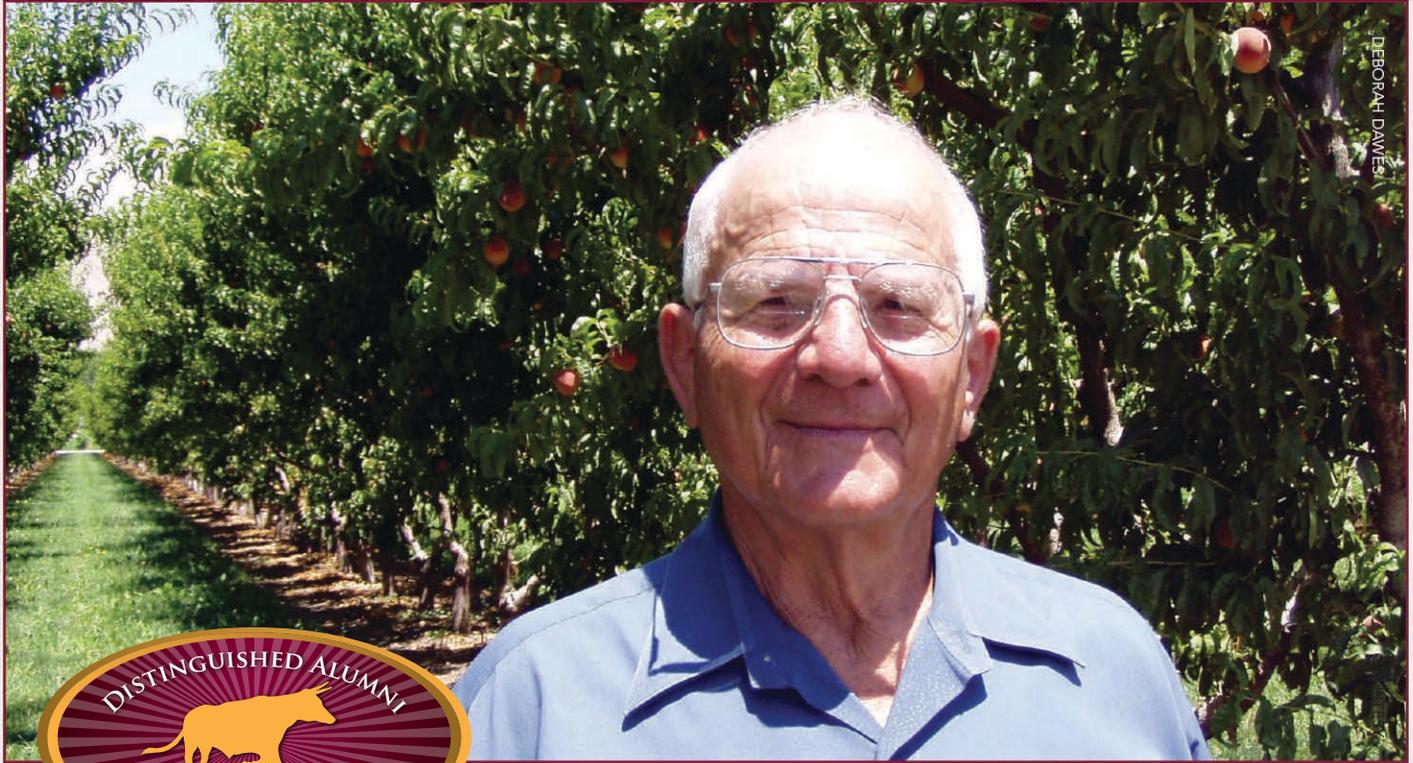
VOLUME 7.1



FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Viewing growth
through a new lens

AWARD WINNERS



AL RUCKMAN

By Deborah Dawes

Hometown: The Grand Valley

Age: 75

Profession: Civil engineer

Most memorable book: *The Bible*

Favorite place visited: The Grand Valley

Accomplishments:

- Four children and 22 grandchildren and great-grandchildren
- 52-year marriage to Sue
- Started engineering firm Soil Nail Launcher, Inc., renamed GeoStabilization International, with friend Bob Barrett
- Working with his children and grandchildren at GeoStabilization International and on Ruckman Family Farms — a farm and peach orchard in East Orchard Mesa
- Helped repurpose a British compressed air cannon developed to launch chemical weapons into the Soil Nail Launcher™. The device drives 20-foot “nails” at a speed of 250 miles per hour into the soil to stabilize a hill or mountainside.

Hobbies: Work — engineering and farming — are hobbies and entertainment

Favorite Professors: Herbert Weldon, Math and Physics; Orville Boge, Chemistry; Dean Phillips, Math, Engineering and Physics; Abbot Fay, History

Advice/Mantra: Be a servant leader.

ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS

Education lays foundation for alum’s leading geohazard mitigation company

When Al Ruckman started at Mesa Junior College in 1961, the college was smaller than the high school he had just graduated from Grand Junction High School. He feels Mesa’s size worked to his advantage.

“My education at Mesa was far superior to what I would have gotten at a larger school,” said Ruckman. “I was so impressed with the level of courses Mesa was teaching us as engineering freshmen.”

He insists he didn’t excel academically. “I was a goof off. I didn’t apply myself,” he said.

But he did apply himself in the same sport he loved in high school. If it hadn’t been for wrestling, he said, he probably wouldn’t have gone to high school or college. “It was a great experience to attend Mesa and participate in wrestling.”

“We traveled to meets in two station wagons. I hadn’t been very far from home before. We went to places like Salt Lake City and Phoenix,” Ruckman said.

“I thought it was great.” The small town boy later traveled the world in his work with the engineering firm he cofounded, GeoStabilization International.

The camaraderie of being a part of the team was another significant introduction for Ruckman. “Getting to know my teammates, getting to know people, who they are, where they are from, it was really neat,” he said. “Just to interact with folks from different places, all kinds of people. That’s what college is supposed to be about.”

For a goof-off who didn’t apply himself, Ruckman has made quite an impression in the world of geohazard mitigation. Using several tools and technologies Ruckman helped develop, GeoStabilization International specializes in landslide and rockfall mitigation, the design and construction of avalanche protective structures, bridge abutments and retaining walls. It’s no exaggeration to say this company holds back mountains. •

