

West Virginia Coal Hall of Fame 2021 Held on June 22, 2021

The Twenty Third Annual Induction Ceremony of the West Virginia Coal Hall of Fame was held in conjunction with the West Virginia Coal Association (WVCA)/West Virginia Coal Mining Institute (WVCMI) Meeting at the Marriott Morgantown at Waterfront Place, Morgantown, WV.

Chris Hamilton, President, WVCA, provided the welcome to the membership present at the ceremony and to the guests. "These West Virginians, pillars of the mining industry and communities throughout the state, are absolutely deserving of this honor," he said. "They are all trailblazers that have had an incredibly positive impact on the coal industry and the State of West Virginia."

"These four individuals have tirelessly served the State of West Virginia and their contributions to the modern coal mining industry have been recognized, not only on a national, but also on an international level," added Vlad Kecojevic, President, WVCMI. "Their hard work and dedication for the continuous improvement of the coal mining industry has been exemplary and their induction to the West Virginia Coal Hall of Fame is more than deserving."

Jim Dean, Secretary, WVCMI, gave his own welcome and outlined the criteria for selection into the Coal Hall of Fame, which clearly distinguishes the dedicated leaders, who have made a significant contribution to the West Virginia Coal Mining Industry. The criteria are:

1. Must have made a significant contribution to the growth and development of the coal industry of West Virginia.
2. Must have devoted a minimum of five years of his/her mining career directly related to the West Virginia coal industry.
3. Must have served as an operator, manager, owner, engineer, educator, or other major contributor, to the growth and development of the West Virginia coal industry.



WEST VIRGINIA COAL MINING INSTITUTE



WEST VIRGINIA COAL ASSOCIATION

James C. Justice, II



Vlad Kecojevic, Coach Don Nehlan, Gov. Jim Justice, Bill Raney, First Lady Cathy Justice, Chris Hamilton

Coach Don Nehlen, WVU, introduced the first inductee, Governor James C. Justice, II., Justice Energy Company. Prodigious job creator, public servant, and Humanitarian are just a few words to describe Jim Justice, West Virginia's current governor. He grew his family's business, Bluestone Coal, into one of the most productive coal operations in the region and he has employed hundreds of WV coal miners who have mined millions of tons of coal. Jim operated over 100 businesses, employing thousands of workers. These companies are today the largest farming entity east of the Mississippi River and he rescued the internationally acclaimed Greenbrier Resort from bankruptcy. Jim and his companies have donated millions of dollars to organizations helping youth across the region, he's coached the Greenbrier East High School girls' and boys' basket-ball teams.

Steven F. Leer



Jim Dean, Vlad Kecojevic, Steve Leer, Chris Hamilton

The second inductee was Steven F. Leer, retired Chairman and CEO, Arch Coal, Inc. who was introduced by Jim Dean, WVCMI. Leer retired in 2014, served in that position since 2006, and was also CEO of Arch Coal until 2012. He served in a variety of management positions with Arch's predecessor companies, Ashland Coal and Arch minerals. He is a director of Cenovus Energy, Norfolk Southern, and Parsons Corporation and previously served as a director of the Greater St. Louis Area Boy Scouts of America. During his tenure, Arch became one of the largest coal producers in the world. The Leer Mine in the App. met coal industry is named after him. Steve graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering from University of the Pacific and holds an MDA from Washington University.

2021 WVCMI/WVCA Joint Spring Meeting Draws Over 100

Michael J. Quillen



Mike Karmis, Vlad Kecojevic, Mike Quillen, Chris Hamilton

The third inductee was Mike Quillen, lead independent director, Alpha Metallurgical Resources who was introduced by Keith Hainer, WVCMI. Mike manages Quillen Properties LLC and MJQ LLC serving as an advisor on mining energy, economic development, and transportation issues. He founded Alpha Natural Resources in 2002 and served as Chairman. Earlier, he was Executive VP OF Operations of American Metals & Coal International (AMCI), President of Coal Sales at Pittston Coal Company, and President of Paramount Coal. He led the Running Right safety program at Alpha and is known for his treatment of people "You treat people how you want to be treated."

Chris Cline



Vlad Kecojevic, Candice Cline Kenan (daughter), Donnie Holcomb (lifelong friend & former CFO Cline Group), Tanner Cline (son), Calvin Kidd, Chris Hamilton

Next, was the late Chris Cline, Owner Cline Group, who was inducted by Calvin Kidd, WVCMI. Chris began working in the coal industry in 1980 and quickly earned a reputation for running low cost highly productive operations. Expanding his own operations in 1985, he formed the Cline Group eventually becoming one of the 20 largest coal producers in the United States. In 2006, Foresight Energy was founded in the Illinois Basin developing some of the largest and most productive mines in the region. Through the Cline Family Foundation, founded in 2009, Chris made a profound impact on Marshall University and WVU. The Foundation made a difference to numerous organizations including the Benjamin School from which his daughter, Kameron, graduated in 2015.

Chris Hamilton



Vlad Kecojevic, Chris Hamilton, Ben Statler

The last inductee was Chris Hamilton, who was inducted by Ben Statler, WVU. Chris began his mining career as an underground miner with Valley Camp Coal Co., earning his mine foreman papers and worked as section foreman/fire-boss, becoming a certified MSHA training instructor. He started his own mine training and safety company and joined the West Virginia Department of Mines as Deputy Director. In 1981, Chris joined the West Virginia Coal Association (WVCA) as Director of Health & Safety then in 1986 became VP of Mine Safety & Environmental Affairs. In 2001, he became Senior VP and President in 2021. For 40 years, Chris has been involved with every regulatory change to improve the long-term viability of the WV coal industry. He earned his degree and MBA from WVU.