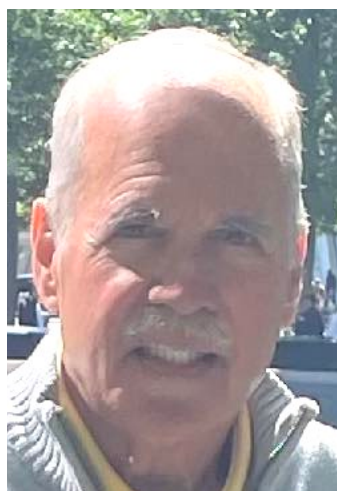


November Man of the Month:

GEORGE H. MIHALAKOS



George spent his early years in the Naugatuck Valley region of Connecticut, graduating from Chesire High School. He played a variety of varsity sports, including football, basketball, and track. George went on to further his education at Waynesburg University in Pennsylvania. There, he participated in theater and played the role of Bassanio in the university's production of "*The Merchant of Venice*." After graduation, he returned to Connecticut to earn a law degree from the University of Bridgeport School of Law. Coming from a family that was involved in the restaurant business, while attending law school in the evenings, George worked as a short order cook in a 24-hour diner. He continues to enjoy cooking and entertaining today.

George began his professional career at the University of Bridgeport in 1977 serving first as Planned Giving Officer, then In-House Counsel, and later as Vice President for Institutional Advancement. He also worked for the Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court on its administrative side. As Vice President for Institutional Advancement, he established a contemporary composers festival that brought successful composers like Steven Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein to campus for student interaction and lectures.

When one of the university's benefactors asked George to serve as her executor, the university's general counsel cleared this role of any conflict of interest. The estate was able to reclaim four Gustav Klimt paintings owned by the decedent's family. The paintings had been confiscated by the Nazis in 1938. Later, when Austria sought to join the European Union, a requirement for entry was that its archives be opened. The estate then sent an art historian to Austria, who was successful in tracing and identifying the Klimt paintings. The most valuable was *Water Serpents II*, painted in 1907. The painting had been owned by a Nazi filmmaker, who had pulled the painting from auction and purchased it. After he died, his widow failed to respond to the estate's letters documenting their claim. Eventually, the widow contacted the estate, stating she had a buyer and offering to share one half of the proceeds. If the estate didn't agree, the painting would be donated to a private foundation. The estate agreed, and it was sold in 2012 for \$112 million. All proceeds from the reclaimed paintings were liquidated and distributed to three non-profits.

For 35 years, George was partnered with Bernard Roy Schillinger. He lovingly acted as Bernard's sole caretaker before Bernard passed away at the age of 100 in 2021.