

## Meet Scott Robeson, Northwood University Entrepreneur in Residence



**Editor's Introduction:** *Northwood University can arguably claim the title, "Entrepreneur U." Indeed, a Northwood survey of our alumni found that 25 percent—one out of every four graduates—became part or full owner of their own business within ten years of graduation.*

As part of its ongoing commitment to the vocation of entrepreneurship, the Alden B. Dow Center for Creativity & Enterprise welcomed [Scott Robeson](#) as Northwood's first ever Entrepreneur in Residence on September 8, 2010.

**Who is Scott Robeson?** Robeson's career aspirations began at the age of 12 in 1957. The launch of the Russian satellite "Sputnik" became a driving force as he dreamed of being part of the U.S. Space Program.

Graduating from Northwood in 1972, Robeson's career goals came true. As an employee of Honeywell Aerospace in Clearwater, Fla., Robeson was assigned to work on the Viking Mars Lander and the newly conceived Space Shuttle. Above average performance earned him two transfers in a short span of time. While a compliment to his abilities, these transfers were also indicators of his lack of control in his own career and would later prove to be an indicator of his entrepreneurial aspirations.

Although his love for the space program remained strong, Robeson's adventurous and creative spirit carried him to two more successful stints with large, well known companies: Bausch and Lomb and SmithKlineFrench (now GlaxoSmithKline). Over time, Robeson realized the large corporate environment was personally unfulfilling.

Utilizing the tremendous knowledge and experience gained from his corporate experiences, Robeson purchased a construction-related franchise in the late 1970s. The franchisor offered little or no support for the business operation. Undeterred, Robeson knew that it was up to him to exercise the sales and marketing expertise he learned earlier in his career, so he did just that and grew the company over the next 16 years.

As it often happens with entrepreneurs, this business opened the door to two other ventures for Robeson: one related to his original franchise and one in the real estate industry. Experience came from all directions and would prove to be extremely beneficial in future endeavors.

In 1996, after 16 years of operation, Robeson sold his businesses and went to work for a former supplier. Three years later, in 1999, he was approached by a soon-to-be partner about an exciting product that the latter developed and manufactured for his personal business needs. Utilizing Robeson's entrepreneurial skills and experience, the pair formed Ram Jack Systems Distribution and took the one-time personal-use product international.

During his time with Ram Jack, Robeson was responsible for building and expanding the distribution of the Ram Jack product line. Distributed originally in small markets in Texas and Oklahoma, Robeson grew the company's market presence and today the Ram Jack product line is sold throughout the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, and Panama.

In 2007, under Robeson's guidance, Ram Jack became the first company in the foundation repair industry to launch a franchisee operation. In 2008, the firm grew its brand through the acquisition of a revolutionary and economical seawall repair product. The company, now known as Ram Jack Seawall Repair, started selling its expanded product line later that year.

In 2009, Robeson sold his interest in Ram Jack to his partners.

In addition to his duties as Entrepreneur in Residence at Northwood University, Robeson is currently a board member of the Huron County (Canada) Small Business Enterprise Center. ■ [Georgia Abbott and Michael Curry](#)



Northwood Entrepreneur in Residence Scott Robeson meets with Northwood students

Northwood University's Entrepreneur in Residence Scott Robeson, offers student entrepreneurs an extraordinary opportunity to benefit from his experience. He provides a willing, enthusiastic, and open attitude coupled with one-on-one availability to help our students turn their dreams into realities.

The Alden B. Dow Center for Creativity & Enterprise has been working hard to enhance our students' experiences and reward their efforts by adding new programming, events, and networking opportunities. The goal of the center is to hone students' skills and help them make valuable business connections. The Entrepreneur in Residence program marks one of the highest contributions we have made to the success of our collegiate entrepreneurs.

A snapshot of Fall programming for entrepreneurially minded students:

- EnGen Regional Intercollegiate Incuba8
- Concept Crafting Workshop
- Pitch Training for NU Business Start-up Competition
- EnGen Intercollegiate Entrepreneurial Summit – 13 Michigan universities & colleges will compete & share best practices
- Global Entrepreneurship Week
  - Book Signing: Dr. Lorne (Todd) Thomas will sign copies of the latest edition of *Walking with the Wise Entrepreneur*
  - Entrepreneurship Roundtable – students & under-30 entrepreneurs
  - One Northwood Business Plan Start-Up Competition
  - Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour
  - Incuba8 Concept Crafting