



## Paul Hameister OAM receives Leadership Award

By Tessa Shaw

From being immersed in big nature to making big decisions in the business world, Paul Hameister has conquered them all.

The adventurer and businessman is being recognized for his outstanding leadership as part of the Faculty of Business and Economics Alumni of Distinction Awards 2021.

In particular, the award acknowledges the impact of his award-winning property development company, Hamton Property Group, established in 2005 and with over \$3.5 billion of completed and current projects in Melbourne, and his role as Founding President of the Financial Management Association of Australia (FMAA) in 1990. Now the largest Commerce student society in Australia, Paul has demonstrated ongoing commitment over the past 30 years in his continuing role as Co-Chairman of the National Board.

Paul (BCom, 1990; LLB, 1992) doesn't feel he is a conventional corporate leader. In the decade pre-COVID, he was taking 3-5 months off each year to travel. Paul now holds the title of the first Australian to have climbed the Seven Summits, which includes Everest, and complete the Polar Hat-Trick (including setting a new route from the Antarctic coast to the South Pole). He has been a member of four expeditions sponsored by the Australian Geographic Society, including a 1,000km expedition through unexplored Amazon jungle. His expeditions have also been captured in TV documentaries on Discovery Channel and National Geographic Channel globally.

So, what does it take to be an unconventional yet outstanding leader?

### An explorer of life...

The citation on Paul's OAM recognises his service to exploration (and business).



Paul (left) and fellow expedition member on the summit of Mount Everest, at 8848M, on 11 MAY 2011

Paul describes himself as an explorer of what it means to live a full life – with the courage to risk, even embrace, the prospect of failure in the pursuit of self-awareness and a burning desire to better understand what truly matters.

Paul says he feels most alive when tackling audacious projects where the outcomes are uncertain. "I really enjoy the process of periodically voluntarily placing myself into situations that involve hard work, perseverance, suffering, a high risk of failure and ideally immersing myself in big nature," he explains.

"As my first high-altitude climb, in 2008 I decided to tackle Mount Aconcagua, in the Andes, at 7,000m," he explains. "I was

pretty naïve; I borrowed or rented all my gear and had no real experience. In fact, summit day was the first time I'd ever worn crampons."

“Racing an incoming storm, only 3 out of our group of 11 made the summit, a climber in the group in front of us died, and one of the guys I summited with fell so badly on our descent that he knocked himself unconscious; we had to get him down to Camp 2 so he could be airlifted out.”

*“It’s about making myself feel small, breaking myself into pieces and then putting myself back together again with a heightened sense of humility and gratitude.”*

### Setting up for success

For Paul, as a Commerce-Law student, realising that he was spending most of his time on campus at the Commerce faculty very quickly showed him where his heart was.

After completing his law articles at Freehills to ‘round out his law degree’, Paul decided to join Macquarie in Melbourne, turning down many other offers, including one in New York.

“It was my long-term plan to live and work in Australia, so I wanted to learn how to do business locally and build a network here,” Paul rationalises. “Your network is a huge asset on your personal balance sheet and isn’t built through cocktail parties and LinkedIn, but rather by working on projects together in a mutually respectful way.”

Paul also emphasises the significance of a strong mentor. “I always sought to make this a condition of acceptance of any employment offer and it was more important than remuneration to me.”



Paul (right), receiving one of a number of UDIA Excellence Awards for Excellence in 2013

“The wisdom of my mentors over the years has helped shape who I am and how I approach life. Bob Mansfield, for example, has been there for me as a sounding board almost my entire working life.”

*“These days, it is me doing the mentoring, which I really enjoy – it is a privilege to offer counsel to those that will one day be leaders in our society.”*

### Making decisions

Paul acknowledges that he has a knack for making decisions but is quick to add that this confidence has come from experiencing a lot of setbacks and disappointments and knowing that life goes on. He stresses that there are no right or wrong decisions, just different journeys.

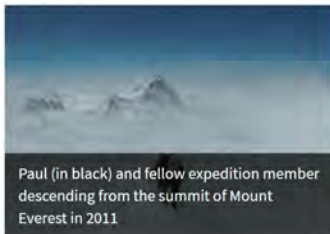
So, what does saying yes in business decision-making look like? “Being true to your values. At Hamton, we only take on projects where we will be proud of the finished product and the process to get there, including trying to achieve planning outcomes through collaboration rather than confrontation,” Paul says.

And on saying no, Paul says that he is fiercely protective of his time and energy while being respectful of other people’s. “I have no interest in spending any time in airports, planes or hotels unless I am on holidays, so we stick to our ‘patch’ of inner and middle ring suburbs of Melbourne. If we aren’t happy to get in a car to drive to a site, then we won’t buy it.”

“Hamton’s partnerships with industry superannuation funds have been based on a business model that demands the highest levels of integrity, accountability and transparency, and a by-product of this has been that Hamton has become a counterparty of choice for institutional land-owners, including Moonee Valley Racing Club, Epworth and Deakin University, looking for a trustworthy development partner,” Paul proudly tells us.



Paul on completion of a new route from the Coast of Antarctica to the South Pole with daughter, Jade, in January 2018



Paul (in black) and fellow expedition member descending from the summit of Mount Everest in 2011



Paul (left) with son, Kane, and Matses Tribesman on a 1000KM expedition through unexplored Amazon jungle in June 2018

### Words of wisdom

Never stop exploring in search of your unique gifts, personal values, passions and purpose, then live them courageously and authentically, is Paul’s advice.

“Put yourself out there, take risks and seek richness, not from money or status but from experience and personal growth in this one precious journey.”

“Go risk being yourself and have fun along the way, because we are all going to die,” he adds cheekily.