

## Chef teaches skills to a new generation of hosts



Photos by Arza Barnett, The Courier-Journal

**Name:** Tom Hickey Sr.

**Age:** 62.

**Title:** Director, National Center for Hospitality Studies.

**Company:** Sullivan University, 3101 Bardstown Road, Louisville.

**Online:** [www.sullivan.edu](http://www.sullivan.edu)

**Phone:** (502) 456-6504, Ext. 8687.

**Education:** Kennett Consolidated High School, Kennett Square, Pa.; Army food service training throughout 22-year military career; Sullivan University, associate of science degree in culinary arts management.

**The job is:** "Directing all of the programs under the National Center for Hospitality Studies, which includes culinary arts, baking and pastry arts, hotel/restaurant management and tourism and event planning. It includes working with the various department chairs to ensure that the curriculum is up to date and relevant to industry standards."

**People are surprised I:** "Enjoy being in the kitchens with the students more than just handling administration."

**I got into this line of work:** "When I was still in the military and returning to the States from a tour in Izmir, Turkey. The Army posted me to an instructor position at the Quartermaster Training School in Fort Lee, Va. At first, I was apprehensive about speaking to an audience but soon found out that teaching gave me the opportunity to pass on the knowledge I had gained throughout my career to individuals who had the same love of cooking and service that I had."

**Far from the mess tent:** "Prior to retirement, I did President Reagan's last inaugural (in Washington, D.C.). ... We fed about 17,000 people on inaugural day. ... Everybody from police on horseback to people scheduled to march in the parade to various military personnel and

civilian groups. ... I coordinated it. It was a logistics nightmare, trying to get everybody fed at various places. ... At 2 in the morning (officials) canceled the parade and moved everything to Capital Center because it was too cold outside."

**Double duty:** "After retirement from the service (as Chief Food Service Warrant Officer), I was hired at Baltimore's International Culinary School. One day (while working there) I received a call from (Sullivan University co-founder) A.R. Sullivan asking if I would like to join him in starting up the National Center for Hospitality Studies at Sullivan University. The rest is history. ... I spent 22 years in the military and I've been with Sullivan coming up on 22 years."

**No end in sight:** "As long as I'm having fun, I'm probably gonna stay with it. ... I had fun, got to see the world. ... I've been to Korea, twice. I've been to Japan, Germany, little jaunts off to Greece, Portugal, The Azores, Spain, France, Holland, about a dozen countries. ... I think I'd need dynamite to blast my wife out of here. She's an ex-military wife, so we moved so many times (but have lived here since 1987). In the military we move about every three years."

**In the beginning:** "I was born in a small town in Pennsylvania -- Kennett Square. It was at one time known as the mushroom capital of the world. ... I came from a family of cooks. My mother's side of my family were all butchers. ... My mom and my grandmother were excellent cooks, they had a little diner at one time. ... I got in the military and I was wanting to be a butcher, but there weren't any openings. They told me my second best bet was to get into the kitchen, so I tried that."

**What I love most about this job:** "Is the fact that it never gets boring. Having new students arrive for training every three months keeps you energized. ... Since Sullivan University is a privately owned institution, we have the freedom to move quickly on new programs and projects and assure that our students have the practical, hands-on training they need to be successful in the industry. ... One thing about Chancellor Sullivan -- he keeps you involved and keeps it interesting."

**The best advice anyone ever gave me about work:** "Try to learn something new every day and to always give eight hours' work for eight hours' pay."

-- Paula Burba