Vince Kotmel | Recipient of the 2016 Individual Excellence Award

Vince Kotmel has had a lifelong interest in tinkering with gadgets — taking things apart, seeing how they work, putting them back together, and praying there were no parts left over. That love for tinkering, combined with a dedication to student learning and pride in helping others, has kept him at Cornell for 32 years.

It has also earned him a 2016 Individual Excellence Award.

Vince began his career on campus in November 1984 as the assistant building manager at Rockefeller Hall, prior to moving into his current role as building manager. The facility is home to the physics department, and is the base for Vince’s work. His responsibilities include setting up the department’s undergraduate labs, as well as creating and repairing apparatus with professors; working alongside faculty members to innovate and update their spaces. As Vince describes it, “I get to do what I love and assist in creating learning opportunities for our students.”

Vince's colleagues have seen his dedication and love for his job, and have high praise for him. As one said, “His sincere interest in undergraduate education and his support for over 40 professors and senior lecturers sets him apart.”
Vince takes great pride in keeping the building occupants happy, and does his best to keep students and staff safe and dry, and engaged in learning. He says, "My position has allowed me to meet many wonderful people and establish great relationships with colleagues throughout Rockefeller Hall, Clark Hall and the Physical Sciences Building. It’s been the best experience I could have asked for."

The admiration and respect Vince has for his colleagues is mutual, as one colleague said, “Picture the happiest, kindest person you have ever met; and that person who will always stop whatever they are doing and eagerly help others. That person is Vince.” His outreach efforts extend beyond his day to day work, to involvement with Expanding Your Horizons (a math and science program for girls in grades seven to nine), Mad Scientists Week at Ithaca Child Care Center Camp, and Cornell’s Bring Your Child to Work Day.

ON WINNING THIS AWARD:
“I was surprised. I really was. I feel very humbled by being awarded this distinction.”
- Vince Kotmel

Vince and his wife Nancy have four children, six grandchildren, and a dog, Romi. When not at work, Vince enjoys hosting parties for friends and family, working on projects in their house and landscaping their yard.

When asked about his interests, Vince spoke about his passion for music. "I have always loved music, and throughout the past number of years have enjoyed being a part of a fun chorus called Mostly Motown! led by local musician Jan Nigro. We perform 2 times a year."

Vince is a frequent blood donor, having surpassed the 14 gallon mark; which is quite impressive when you think about the fact that the average adult only has about 1.2 - 1.5 gallons of blood in their body.

We at Cornell are eternally grateful for your service and outreach. Congratulations, Vince!