

Vance Fiegel, B.S.

Co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer, Creative Water Solutions

"We strive to create things that are really needed in the lives of people who benefit from our work."
– Vance Fiegel

Vance Fiegel is the kind of scientist-cum-business-partner that any company involved in biological or medical research would readily welcome. His steadfast research and critical thinking have helped shape the many successful business ventures he's forged with David Knighton, M.D. Fiegel did research at the University of Minnesota for 15 years after earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology there. In the early years of his career, Fiegel's research focused on inflammation, infectious diseases and work related to wound healing.

Fiegel and Dr. Knighton met in the University's Department of Surgery and have been associated in one business enterprise or another since 1984, when they cofounded Curative Technologies, which was initially a research-driven endeavor begun to study chronic non-healing wounds. The two discovered that a patient's blood platelets contained healing agents that could lessen or resolve the chronic problems associated with such wounds. Eventually, they devised a chronic-wound-care program that became a national model for similar centers around the country, including such Twin Cities medical facilities as Fairview and HealthEast. Curative Technologies went public in 1991 and raised more than \$28 million.

"We were filling a big need in the market," Fiegel notes, "and for a time, these centers and our research were very well received." While that formative business helped establish Fiegel as a first-rate – and bankable – researcher, it also set the philosophical tone for subsequent ventures that he and Dr. Knighton would undertake. "We strive to create things that are really needed in the lives of people who benefit from our work," says the innovative biologist, whose research with wound healing led to studies of vein-harvesting techniques and the formation of Embro Corporation, then Embro Vascular, a company established to commercialize a tool and technique for harvesting veins in heart bypass surgery and orthopedics. Technology and patents from Embro Vascular were later sold to Guidant Corporation.

Fiegel's next area of scientific breakthrough and business opportunity came with the research into sphagnum moss for the SpaNaturally product developed for CWS. Ongoing research indicates that the moss appears to control the formation of biofilm, whether in northern Minnesota lakes and New Zealand bogs, or in a swimming pool or spa. It acts as a natural water conditioning agent, and it received its first patent in 2009, greatly benefiting the users of spas, swimming pools and other water environments by making consumers less dependent on the harsh chemicals currently required for water treatment. A native of Rochester, Minnesota, Fiegel has published extensively in his 30-year career in both medical publications and textbooks. Along with Knighton, he holds several patents for a vein-harvesting system and other medical technologies and one patent for moss-based water treatment devices.

Of his business partner and longtime friend and colleague, Dr. Knighton notes: "Mr. Fiegel is a first-rate researcher who is one of the most creative scientists I know. He can successfully determine the real scientific value of a project or process. He's ultimately the one who validates our business and intellectual property, and he does a terrific job."

Fiegel is currently President and COO of Embro Corporation, Vice President and Treasurer of Embro Vascular and a principal of ABV and CWS. He has held numerous board positions in a number of organizations, including Ducks Unlimited, and has 20 years of coaching youth sports. He is also an avid fly fisherman and outdoorsman.