Joe Williams

Dr. Joseph D. Williams – Joe – is a 1950 College of Pharmacy alumnus who credits most of his success in the pharmaceutical industry to his education at the University of Nebraska and to his love of his work.

He became fascinated by pharmacy as a young boy while visiting and later working in his granddad’s Pawnee City, Nebraska, drugstore.

Working from the ground up, Williams rose through the ranks of the pharmaceutical company Parke-Davis to become president and COO. Following a merger, he was eventually president, then chairman and CEO of Warner-Lambert.

Williams served in the U.S. Submarine Service in World War II and attended Nebraska on the GI Bill.

Upon his graduation from the College of Pharmacy, Williams started as a Parke-Davis salesman, based in Beatrice, Nebraska. He said his advantage over the competition, as a salesman and as CEO, was his training as a pharmacist.

He served on numerous major and national boards, including Exxon, AT&T, J.C. Penney and Columbia University. He was the 1980 recipient of the Remington Honor Medal, the American Pharmacists Association’s highest honor.

A longtime supporter of the College of Pharmacy, Williams is the namesake of the College of Pharmacy’s former building on the UNMC campus — the Joseph D. & Millie E. Williams Science Hall — and its Joseph D. Williams Auditorium. The auditoriums in the new College of Pharmacy building also are named for Williams and his wife — the Joseph D. & Millie E. Williams Auditoriums.

“The new College of Pharmacy (building) will serve to perpetuate and enrich state-of-the-art education, which is critical to the advancement of health care,” he said.