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**Alumni Profiles - Dr. Roddy Tempest '74**

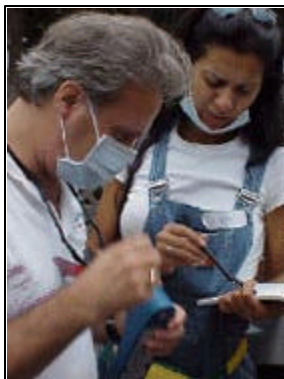
**A Tempest With Pure Intentions**

At Camp Hope, an American-built camp set up for 20,000 Kosovar refugees in Albania last summer, there surely were greater worries than clean water on the minds of those displaced from their homes. Safe haven from ethnic cleansing, anxiety over loved ones still trapped in Kosovo, all seemed greater and heavier burdens to bear. But Dr. Roddy Tempest '74, who has made safe water his career, understood that a hidden threat could be endangering their lives even without the immediate presence of bloodshed, and he moved quickly to make sure that didn't happen.

"In Kosovo the well water was [biologically] contaminated because Slobodan Milosevic left Kosovo in destruction," he said. "He had remains of human bodies cut up and body parts put in wells."

As Tempest has done for the past seven years whenever a natural or man-made disaster has required his assistance, he and the other employees of his company, Tempest Environmental Systems, mobilized within 24 hours to tackle Kosovo's problems. He is on constant standby, ready to travel anywhere to put his water purification systems into action. With a disaster-ridden 1999, that meant everything from nuclear, biological and chemical contamination, and one very busy year for the Durham-based Tar Heel.

"Disasters happen more frequently now," Tempest said. "It is a good thing I have a lot of energy, because it doesn't look like I'll get much rest in the years to come."



Tempest, who received an MBA from Duke in 1980 and SciD in 1994, also has aided disasters in Japan, Rwanda, Albania, Mexico and Taiwan. But the most difficult situations he's ever encountered were the earthquakes that rocked Turkey in August. The overwhelming number of casualties presented a huge challenge to the water supply. "The stench of decaying bodies was everywhere," he said. "When it started to rain, we became very concerned because of the bacteria going into the water supply. Not only was there primary contamination but also secondary contamination from the bacteria of the decaying bodies."

To prevent diseases from spreading through the contaminated water, Tempest and his team worked non-stop for 72 hours, then continued with 18-hour workdays until the situation was stable.

"The yardstick of our success is that we had no disease outbreak" among the population, he said. "It is rewarding to see the success, to see that we can make an impact on people's lives in only 24 hours."

Tempest's expertise is valued at home as well. U.S. Commerce Secretary William M. Daley appointed him to the Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee, a group focused on the international competitiveness of the U.S. environmental industry.

The disaster-relief history of Tempest Environmental Systems goes back to Hurricane Andrew's destructive sweep through Florida in 1992. "The National Guard had to carry in water," Tempest said. "Three days later, they used fire axes to break open the bottles that had bloated because of bacteria. The whole effort was for nothing. I saw a need for developing advanced, mobile water purification systems for disaster relief."

Tempest said his company developed water purification systems that could take water from any source. "Disasters happen anywhere, and they are all different," he said.

When a tragedy strikes, Tempest and his company try to find the best entrance to the affected area. Ambassadors or ministers often coordinate their efforts. In Turkey, Tempest was put in touch with the top command of the Turkish army and given a private helicopter transport with which to survey the 125-mile long, three-mile wide area affected by the earthquake.

Tempest and his colleagues determine the damage, locate a water source, test the water and transport it to where needed. They usually are involved for the first two weeks of the relief efforts to do the initial work and then pass the baton to non-governmental organizations, which look after the project until the local or national government is able to take over the rebuilding process.

Even after Tempest's part of the work is done, he keeps in touch with the people from the area. Although disasters happen in the blink of an eye, he said, the recovery time is longer and often more painful. "You stay in the minds of people during the whole recovering process," he said. "You get personally involved every time."

The personal involvement is the best, and the worst, part of the job, Tempest said. "The worst is seeing people's anguish in their eyes. The survivors of disasters look like deer in the road with oncoming headlights.

"Disasters have devastating effects on people both financially, physically and emotionally; they lose everything, and a lot cannot be replaced. What is so rewarding is that we develop personal relationships with people and help them get their lives back to normal by giving them water," Tempest said. "I wouldn't want to do anything else."