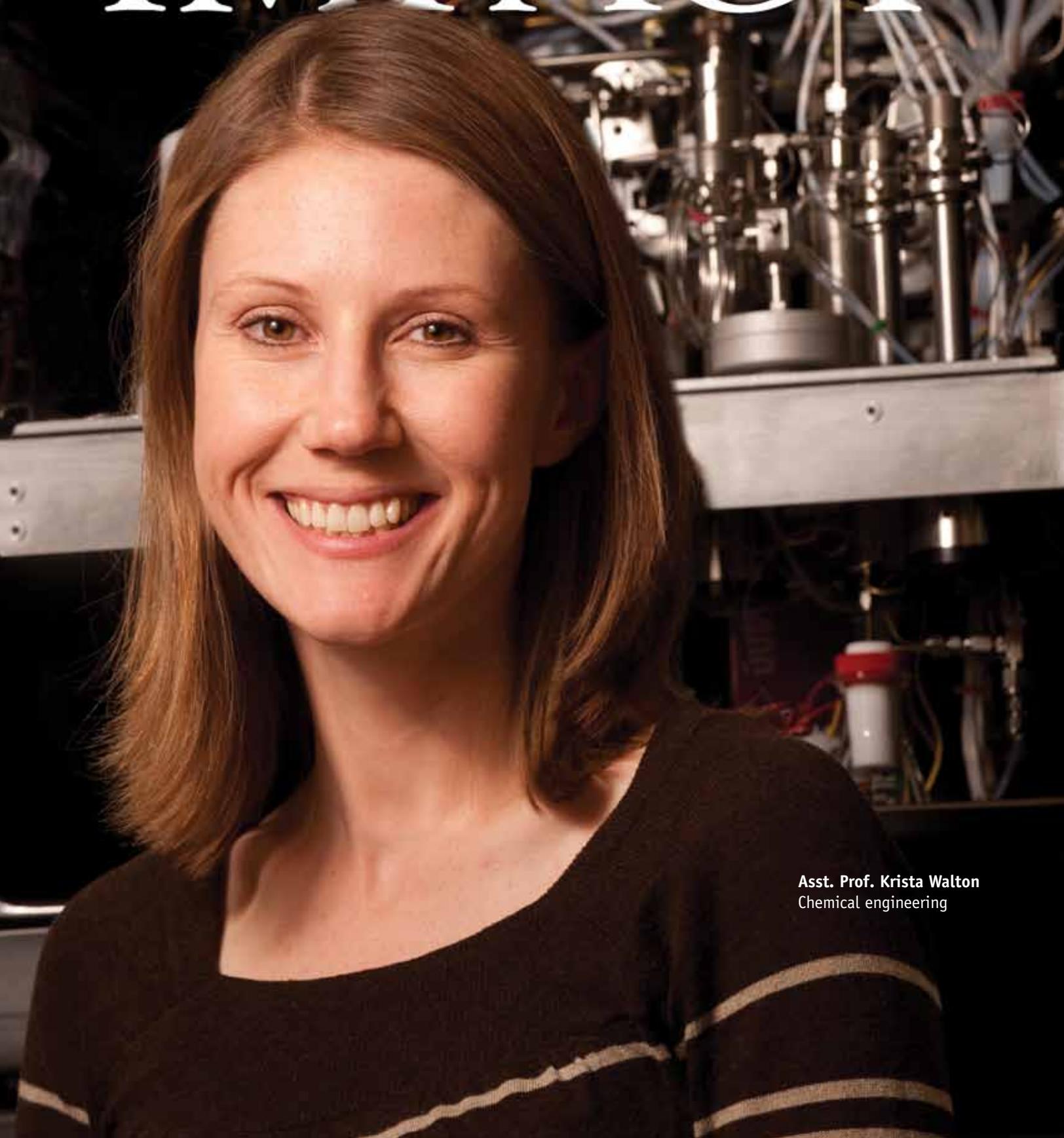


# IMPACT



Asst. Prof. Krista Walton  
Chemical engineering



“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can’t blow an uncertain trumpet.” Wise words from Theodore M. Hesburgh, president emeritus of the University of Notre Dame. Last fall, we polished up our “brass instrument,” if you will, and articulated a new vision for the college:

The Kansas State University College of Engineering will be a highly ranked college providing quality education within a research environment that develops engineering leaders to benefit society.

Now some 10 months down the road, in looking over the content of this spring’s *Impact*, I was struck by a need to revisit my thinking about our vision, in particular the implications of the final phrase about developing leaders who will benefit society.

What I realized is this—we’re not setting out to change anything with this vision but rather to maintain the direction our college is now and has been heading all along.

We will continue to cultivate a culture of engagement with a visionary leadership team—note the stories about Dick Hayter and Don Lenhert, who regrettably are leaving us through retirement, yet are being

replaced in their administrative and academic roles with the capable and skilled replacements of Gary Clark, Gurdip Singh, Joe Harner, Krista Walton, and others like them. We’re going to keep right on developing that environment where

engineering enterprise will succeed.

A second piece of evidence supporting my thoughts came in the wealth of alumni success stories in these pages—Jim Johnson, Carl Ice, Warren Staley, Doug Sterbenz, and our Hall of Fame and Professional Progress Awardees, who along with their fellow Seaton Society members compile a “who’s who in engineering success” that I would proudly hail among any of our competing institutions. If the accomplishments of these men and women don’t clearly “benefit society,” I don’t know what does.

In closing, I’ll leave you with a fitting quote from independent scholar and futurist Joel A. Barker: “Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.”

Watch out world—K-State engineers are on the move.

John R. English

Dean of the College of Engineering

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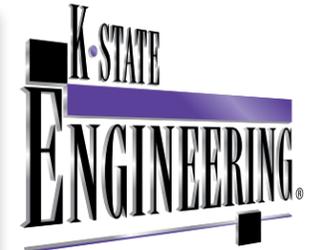
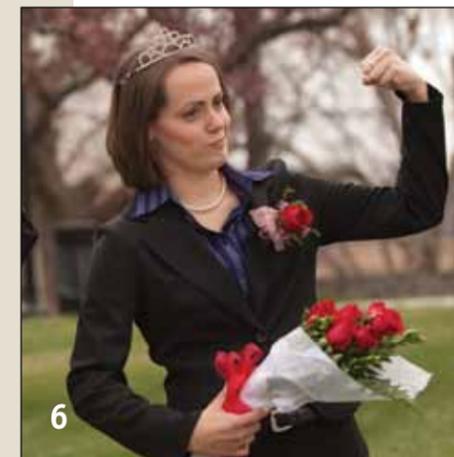
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**Spring 2009**

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# RETIREMENT

## Dick Hayter

### K-State always 'felt like home'

"Although I may be ending my professional career here, I'm really not leaving K-State. The university and the College of Engineering are so much a part of the fabric of our community that if you live here, you're part of the university."

So began the reflections of Richard B. Hayter, associate dean of engineering for external affairs, as he looked back over his more than 30-year career at K-State that will draw to a close with his retirement this summer.

"My first contact with K-State was in the late 1960s when I was serving in the Air Force," he said. "I had fully intended to make a career in the military but read an article about a laboratory at Kansas State University that completely changed my plans. The Institute for Environmental Research had been created only a few years earlier and matched exactly with my interests. I applied and was accepted as a graduate student and the rest is history."

Completing a B.S. in mechanical engineering from South Dakota State University in 1965, he went on to complete M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in mechanical engineering from Kansas State in 1973 and 1975, respectively, holding a fellowship from the National Institute of Health. He was a faculty member of mechanical engineering from 1974 to 1977.

"From my first day on campus in January 1970 when Phyllis McCarthy, then a secretary in mechanical engineering, greeted me, this university and community have felt like home," Hayter said. "I certainly had no intention at that point of spending most of the rest of my career here, but I was fortunate that I

could. From the most senior administrator in Anderson Hall to new faculty and staff, this is an extraordinary place to work."

Hayter left K-State briefly in the late 1970s to join an engineering consulting firm as its executive vice president.

The company provided engineering services in energy conservation and renewable energy applications in commercial and industrial buildings.

This turned out to be perfect training for his next job in 1980 when he returned to K-State as director of the Kansas Energy Extension Service, a new program jointly sponsored by the colleges of engineering and agriculture.

"I spent 22 years with a terrific team in Engineering Extension," Hayter said, "where at one point we were delivering programs to more than half the states in the nation."

In 2002, Hayter accepted the position of associate dean of engineering for external affairs. In this capacity, he has coordinated



outreach activities of the college, legislative affairs, international programs, and alumni and corporate relations.

During his career at Kansas State, he was named to the Kansas governor's cabinet as director of the Kansas Energy Office, was the K-State assistant to the president for government relations, and served as Manhattan city commissioner and mayor. He is a member of the board of the Boy Scout Coronado Area Council and the Manhattan Regional Airport Advisory Board, as well as a past member of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce Board, the KSU Theatre Development Board and the Friends of the KSU Library Board.

"I have always enjoyed serving as a volunteer—either as a representative of our College of Engineering or as a member of our community," Hayter said. "I intend to continue that work and perhaps at an increased level. Opportunities may lie ahead where I will be able to bring beneficial insight as a retired university administrator."

Often asked if he will re-enter the world of elected politics, he said, "I have no immediate plans to do so, but all good politicians never say 'never.'"

"Besides, I have a 'to-do' list that is overwhelming. Perhaps I can even complete the deck at my house that I started more than 25 years ago."

Active at both national and international levels of engineering-related organizations, Hayter served as president of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) with 54,000 members in 120 countries. A Fellow of ASHRAE and chair of the ASHRAE Foundation Board of Trustees, he is the past dean of the ASHRAE Learning Institute, an ASHRAE Distinguished Lecturer and recipient of the ASHRAE Distinguished Service Award. He received the American Society for Engineering Education-Dow Chemical Outstanding Young Faculty Award and was named Distinguished Engineer by South Dakota State University.

"Professionally," he said, "after retirement I will continue to consult with a local firm as well as with national organizations.

continued on page 8

## CHE professor honored in White House ceremony

—by Mary Rankin



Krista Walton

professionals at the outset of their independent scientific research careers.

Walton and 14 other scholars, nominated by the U.S. Department of Defense, were recognized in White House ceremonies Dec. 19, receiving their awards from President George W. Bush. In support of their basic research, recipients will each receive \$200,000 a year for five years.

"Krista Walton's receiving the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers recognizes her as one of the top young researchers in the United States in adsorption science and technology," said K-State Provost M. Duane Nellis. "In addition to her research expertise, she mentors students in her department and is a wonderful role model for them to emulate."

The award was established in 1996 to honor the most promising researchers in the nation within their fields. Nine federal departments and agencies annually nominate scientists and engineers who are at the start of their independent careers and whose work shows exceptional promise for leadership at the frontiers of scientific knowledge. Nominees for this award must first be recipients of the Young Investigator Award from the nominating agency. Walton's PECASE nomination was based on the Army Research Office Young Investigator Award which she received in 2007.

### Second top award

Walton also recently received the National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development award. This prestigious award, which Walton received to further her research in porous materials synthesis, supports junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through outstanding research, excellent

education, and the integration of education and research within the context of the mission of their organizations. Walton will receive approximately \$419,000 over five years in support of her research.

"In winning this award, Krista Walton has garnered significant recognition not only for herself and her research, but also for our department, the College of Engineering and Kansas State University," said Mary Rezac, department head of chemical engineering. "It is truly exciting to work with faculty of this caliber."

Walton earned a B.S.E. in chemical and materials engineering from the University of Alabama-Huntsville in 2000, and a Ph.D. in chemical engineering in 2005 from Vanderbilt University. She joined the chemical engineering faculty at K-State in 2006 as the Tim and Sharon Taylor Assistant Professor.

A recognized scientific contributor in adsorption science and technology, Walton

worked as an American Chemical Society Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Northwestern University, as well as a graduate research assistant and IBM Fellow at Vanderbilt University. As part of her NASA-sponsored graduate research, she designed a novel adsorption separation system for producing oxygen in the Mars in situ resource utilization project.

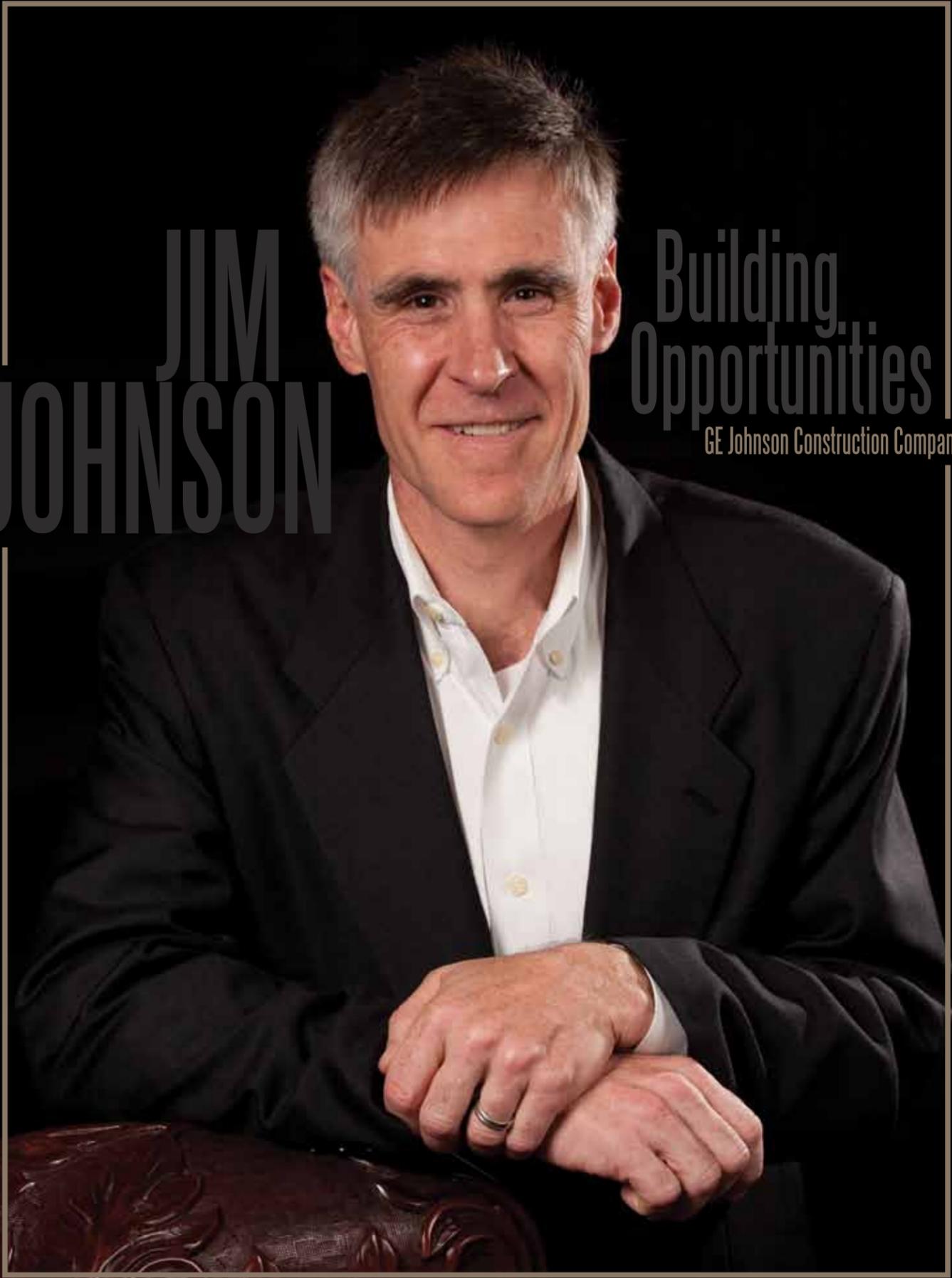
In the past four years, Walton has authored 20 publications in high-impact journals and has nearly 40 presentations to her credit, nearly one-third of which were presented to international audiences. A regular reviewer for publications for the leading journals in her field, she has also served on several scientific review panels.

She is a member of the International Adsorption Society, the Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, where she serves on the Area 2e Adsorption and Ion Exchange Committee.

## Talented 2009



Participating Feb. 8–12, 2009, callers from the College of Engineering garnered 2,125 pledges, including 49 first-time donors, for a total of \$247,498 in this year's annual K-State Telefund. The all-volunteer Telefund 2009 campaign reached nearly \$1.2 million in pledges university-wide to provide scholarships and educational benefits for K-State's nine academic colleges. **Above**, MNE senior Sam Brinton gets ready to place a call.

A portrait of Jim Johnson, a middle-aged man with short, graying hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white collared shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. His hands are clasped in front of him, resting on a dark, ornate chair. The background is dark and out of focus.

**JIM  
JOHNSON**

**Building  
Opportunities**  
GE Johnson Construction Company

When thinking about construction companies, an image that often comes to mind is buildings.

And GE Johnson Construction Company, headquartered in Colorado Springs with offices in Denver and Jackson, Wyo., certainly builds buildings. A commercial general contractor with annual sales volume in excess of \$300 million, its resume includes more than \$3 billion of completed projects.

Colorado Springs sites include the Olympic Training Center, World Arena, Pike's Peak Center, Alamo Corporate Center and Broadmoor Hotel, to name a few. In the 1970s, the company expanded into the Denver area and along the Front Range, building more prestigious resorts in the Rocky Mountains than any other contractor.

But according to Jim Johnson, president and CEO, it's not just about building buildings, but about building a great company, building opportunities for people to excel in construction careers, and building relationships with clients and project partners.

"We value our people," Johnson said, "and without them, we build nothing."

GE Johnson employs 450–500 people—225 full-time salaried employees and the rest, field workers whose numbers fluctuate. Admitting it's cliché, Johnson describes his management philosophy as treating people the way you want to be treated. The company Website reads: *As part of our family, no employee, no partner, will ever be treated like a number.*

"This company is not about Jim Johnson. It's about our greatest asset—our people. We're not a cut-throat, upper-crust focused business. If we're successful, it's not Jim's success; it's the success of our employees.

"A lot of that comes from providing proper training," Johnson said, "and not just task-related training, but other areas too, like leadership—so our people can carry on more effectively in other parts of their lives as well.

"I'm the most proud when people inside our company do something better than they've ever done it before—when they reach a goal—bring a project in under schedule or under budget. It means we've supported them in the correct way to make that person and that project succeed."

#### **The legacy**

Johnson's father, the late Gil Johnson, founded GE Johnson Construction in Colorado Springs in 1967 and over the next 30 years laid a foundation of value, commitment, honesty and integrity.

Gil grew up in Kansas preceded by two generations of contractors. Graduating from K-State in 1955 in civil engineering, he spent his early years working for other firms and learning the ropes.

Johnson's own transition was similar. The third of four children, he grew up in the family business as a laborer.

"I liked going to work every day where the environment changed and you could see what you had accomplished," he said.

After his own graduation from K-State in 1984 in construction science, he began his career in Texas.

"In order to grow, you need to work somewhere else outside the family business," Johnson said. "It exposes you to different leadership styles and makes you better prepared to come back."

He would also recommend the same experience for his son Jared, a sophomore in CNS at K-State.

"If he wants to come back to the family business one day, that's great. But I'm not going to push it. Family businesses can be tough—every meal, every gathering, the talk can and often does turn to the business. It's not for everybody.

"My leadership style—though still developing—is different from my father's and that's to be expected, and I'd expect the same to be true of Jared," he said.

Johnson took leadership of the company in 1997 when Gil stepped down from the presidency.

"Assessing my role in the company today, I'd say it's about one-third getting new work through access to the decision makers, our potential clients, within my networking contacts," he said.

"One-third is providing direction to upper management to make sure we're delivering to the level at which we sell. And one-third is dealing with the financial side—at the end of the day, I'm the one responsible for making money and protecting against loss."

One way he accomplishes this is by watching emerging markets and discerning whether something is a trend and whether or not it's sustainable. Johnson said he operates about 18 months ahead in finances and does this by talking to clients and architects, tracking general economic trends, and again, knowing the markets.

"You can impact your own destiny," he said, "but you can't control all aspects of it—you just have to focus on the areas you can control.

"Even in today's uncertain economy, we're staying true to who we are. We will not compromise our core values. Our ethics and integrity will never be for sale in any market."

That's a philosophy that certainly has not changed since 1967, and likely a strong contributing factor to why 85 percent of GE Johnson Construction work today is done for existing clients.

"My dad and I focused on making it all work once I'd decided to come back," Johnson said. "I count as one of my greatest accomplishments the transitioning of this business from the leadership of my dad, the founder and entrepreneur, to the second-generation employee-owned company it is today."

#### **The K-State connection**

Johnson said it also took awhile for him to come around to understanding another facet of his dad's experience.

"When I was younger, I didn't really appreciate my parents' love for Kansas and Kansas State University," he said. "I used to ask my dad why he supported a place that had the worst football team in the nation."

Admittedly not the "best student" upon arriving at K-State, Johnson said, "Even so my professors met me with open arms—taking care of me, guiding me and bringing out the best in me."

He has seen many changes on campus over the years—presidents, deans, professors and even football coaches have come and gone, but the quality of K-State remains.

"I've now lost both of my parents, but K-State's always been there and is still there for me—it's such a wonderful institution. I feel a part of a family whenever I come back."

Twenty-five of the company's current employees are K-State CNS graduates.

**"We will not compromise  
our core values. Our ethics  
and integrity will never be  
for sale in any market."**

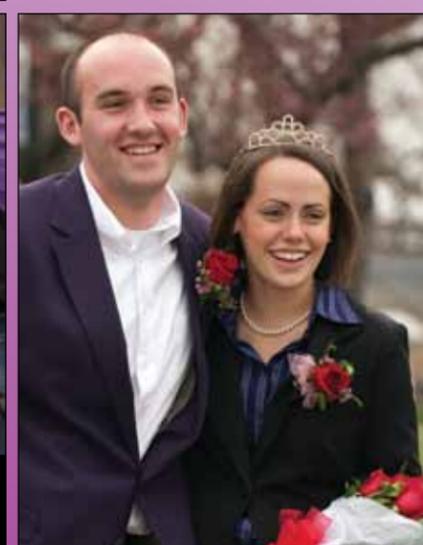
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# ENGINEERING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES



From rock stars to super heroes, comedy was the key word in the Yellow Brick skit competition during opening ceremonies on Friday on the Engineering Complex plaza; departmental participants, **clockwise from far left**, MNE, ARE, IMSE, CNS, CHE—winner of the Yellow Brick award, and BAE.



## DEPARTMENTAL SKITS

## STEEL RING RECEPTION



**Left**, alumni, faculty and students in Fiedler Library; **above left to right**, Dick Hayter, assoc. dean; Larry Strecker, IE '80; and Don Rathbone, former dean of engineering.

## STUDENT DISPLAYS



All ages enjoy visiting and participating in departmental and engineering program displays during Open House activities on Saturday morning.

## 2009 OPEN HOUSE AWARDS

- Outstanding Department Award—IMSE
- Yellow Brick—CHE
- Freshman/Sophomore Display—CNS
- Curriculum Display—IMSE
- Limited Class Display—IMSE
- Technical Class Display—MNE
- Open Class Display—CE

## ENGINEERING BANQUET AWARDS

- W. Leroy Culbertson/Steel Ring Leadership Scholarship—Adriann Sullivan, ECE
- Clair A. Mauch/Steel Ring Adviser of the Year—Todd Easton, assoc. prof., IMSE

**ST. PAT: JONATHAN DRAHEIM, ARE**  
**ST. PATRICIA: JEN BOLTON, IMSE**

# Career Fair



Nathan Spire, IE senior, **above left**, visits with a Lockheed Martin representative at the Engineering Career Fair Feb. 10. Students had the opportunity to meet with employers from more than 100 engineering and computer science companies offering full-time, internship and cooperative work/study positions.

## Building Opportunities

continued from page 5

“The College of Engineering listens to industry in terms of preparing students for the work force,” Johnson said. “We interview on about 11 campuses, but hire the most from three, and K-State is certainly one of those three.”

Johnson serves as a member of the Engineering Advisory Council and also the K-State Alumni Foundation Board of Trustees. He is a board member of the Penrose Hospital Community Board and chair of the Penrose Foundation Capital Campaign in Colorado Springs, the YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region, Wells Fargo Bank-Colorado Springs Community Board of Directors, Downtown Partnership Board of Directors and Associated General Contractors-Colorado board member.

“My dad taught me by example that it’s important to support and give back to the institutions that helped shape you and make you who you are,” he said. “I make an effort to give a lot back to my community and places like K-State—I take it as a personal and corporate responsibility to do so, but I don’t like to comment on details beyond that.”

### The future

Two years ago, CE Johnson Construction celebrated its 40th anniversary—quite a milestone in the world of family-owned businesses.

“You read a lot about failures of family construction businesses,” Johnson said. “Overall, only 25 percent of family businesses ever succeed, and construction businesses in particular are even a lower percentage than that—we’re right down there with restaurants.”

“I think some of the problems happen when you view the construction business as a transaction organization—I look at it instead as a service,” he said. “At our 50th anniversary, I want to be still focused on customer satisfaction and service.”

“And if that happens, it means we can allow our people to spend an entire career here and feel they have met all their personal goals, and succeeded beyond what they ever thought possible in the construction industry.”

—by Mary Rankin

## K-State always ‘felt like home’

continued from page 2

During my career, and particularly through ASHRAE, my wife Barb and I have been fortunate to have traveled to a variety of locations around the world. We typically could not take the time to ‘explore’ what was available in the local areas there, but we plan to correct that in retirement as well as spend more time with our kids and grandkids in Colorado and Washington.”

Hayter also reflected on changes he’s seen in engineering education over the span of his career.

“The advent of the personal computer may have caused the most significant change in engineering education in recent history,” he said. “Not only has it provided a tool for performing engineering calculations, it has changed how we teach, what we teach and what we expect of our students.”

A perhaps more subtle change has been the advancement of the teamwork approach.

“When I was an undergraduate, most of our academic work outside the classroom was done alone,” Hayter said. “We had a few engineering student teams who participated in regional com-

petitions and on rare occasion, we were given a class assignment that involved a small group of students, typically in a laboratory. Today, we have numerous highly successful student teams who compete nationally and internationally. Class assignments regularly require completion by a team. This approach is so important that the team study rooms in Fiedler Hall are regularly completely booked by students.”

Hayter also cited a similar transformation in the approach to research. Faculty have always worked together at a few major laboratories, but today it is common for teams of faculty from a variety of disciplines to work together on research projects. Not only do these teams cross academic college lines, but may also include researchers from multiple universities and involve multi-national teams.

“All of my past associates, and now the faculty and staff in the Dean’s office, have always made coming to work a privilege,” Hayter said. “One of the most significant things about working in a university is the enthusiasm and particularly the optimism that our students bring to campus. It affects virtually everything we do.”

“Even though it will be in a voluntary capacity, I intend to stay active at K-State.”

—by Mary Rankin



# SEATON SOCIETY



**Above**, 2009 Hall of Fame inductee Warren Kent Wray, CE '68, left, is congratulated by Dean John English. Wray, provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs and professor of civil engineering at Missouri University of Science and Technology at Rolla, Mo., was honored for his professional success and accomplishment, active involvement with and support of the College of Engineering, dedication to Kansas State University, and professional and public service.

**Left, top to bottom**, Professional Progress Awardees for 2009, recognized for success in the middle years of their professional careers and accomplishments, were honored at Seaton Society festivities: Laura L. Cranmer, IE '88, M.S. '89, vice president of operations, Airvana; Mounir G. El-Aasar, M.S. CE '88, Ph.D. '91, partner and vice president, BG Consultants Inc.; Cameron Epard, CHE '92, president and co-founder, Airstream Energy, LLC; David D. Haake, ARE '89, executive vice president, Henderson Engineers, Inc.; Chris A. Hess, CNS '88, vice president—operations, Lusardi Construction Co.; William E. Kennedy, Jr., NE '73, M.S. '75, executive vice president and corporate secretary, Dade Moeller & Associates; Marc Machin, EE '91, M.S. '06, vice president of information technology, LSI; and Murali Venkatrao, CS '91, principal software design engineer, Microsoft Corp. Not in attendance: Scott Aberle, ME '92, president, Premier Fabrication, Inc.; and Kenton L. Epard, EE '94, co-founder, Airstream Energy, LLC.

**Clockwise from top center**, Seaton Society attendees view video projections of program events; engineering students entertain with singing of the K-State Fight Song; Marlene and Ray Hightower take to the dance floor with enthusiasm; guests enjoy dessert and coffee at the end of dinner; and getting acquainted and renewing friendships were the order of the hour during the pre-dinner reception in the K-State Alumni Center foyer.

**Clark promoted to senior associate dean**

Gary A. Clark began the academic and administrative duties of senior associate dean of the College of Engineering in early January 2009, stepping down as head of the department of biological and agricultural engineering at that time.



Gary Clark

Clark joined the College of Engineering faculty at K-State in 1994. Prior to that he had held academic appointments at the University of Florida. He holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Florida, as well as a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, all in agricultural engineering.

Named to head K-State's biological and agricultural engineering department in 2005, Clark is a noted expert in irrigation system design and management, hydraulics of irrigation components and crop water management. He has published widely, conducted irrigation system design management workshops in the U.S., Mexico and Egypt, and is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Kansas.

"We are delighted that someone of Dr. Clark's caliber and depth of experience will be joining our administrative team as we move forward in our academic endeavors," said John English, dean of the College of

Engineering.

Clark replaces Richard Gallagher, associate dean of engineering, who began phased retirement in the spring 2009 semester.

**Singh takes helm as head of CIS**

Gurdip Singh, professor, has been named head of the department of computing and information sciences at Kansas State University. He will begin his duties July 1, 2009.

"We are extremely pleased to welcome Dr. Singh to our leadership team," said John



Gurdip Singh

English, dean of the College of Engineering. "His strong credentials and demonstrated skills in leadership, research and teaching will serve him well in this new capacity."

Singh joined computing and information sciences at Kansas State in 1991 and most recently, in addition to teaching and research, has been serving as the graduate program director for the department.

Singh received a B.Tech degree in computer science from Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi in 1986, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in computer science from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1989 and 1991, respectively.

His areas of research interest include model-driven design

and optimization, modular design of protocols, distributed algorithms and real-time embedded systems.

"I look forward to the challenge of this new position," Singh said, "though I know I will have 'big shoes to fill' in following Dr. Wallentine who has led our department so capably these past years."

Current department head, Virgil Wallentine, will return to his regular duties this summer.

**Harner named interim department head of BAE**

Joseph P. Harner was named interim department head of biological and agricultural engineering in late January. He replaces Gary Clark, who has assumed new duties as senior associate dean for the College of Engineering.

Harner came to K-State in 1983 as an assistant professor, having completed a Ph.D. in



Joseph Harner

environmental sciences and engineering from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and University. He also holds both B.S. and M.S. degrees in agricultural engineering from VPI. He became a full professor here in 1993.

"I'm very pleased that Professor Harner has accepted this opportunity," said John English, dean of the College of Engineering. "I'm highly confident he will do a good job of filling this ad-

ministrative post in the biological and agricultural engineering department."

Prior to the interim department head position, Harner had provided educational programming in the livestock and grain systems area through a 100 percent extension appointment.

**Staley honored for distinguished service**

Warren R. Staley received the 2009 College of Engineering Distinguished Service Award at graduation ceremonies May 16. He also served as commencement speaker for the class of 2009.

Staley retired as chairman of Cargill, Inc. on Sept. 11, 2007. He was elected chairman of the



Warren Staley

board in August 2000 and held the position of chief executive officer from June 1999 to May 2007, and the office of president and CEO from February 1998 to June 2000. He was elected to Cargill's board of directors in August 1995.

Beginning his career with Cargill as a trainee in 1969, he held various merchandising and administrative positions in corn milling in the United States and in Europe. He was head of Cargill in Argentina, president of Worldwide Feed, and president of North America and Latin America.

Staley received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Kansas State in 1965, and a master's degree in business administration from Cornell University in 1967.

He has served on the board of directors of U.S. Bancorp and Target Corporation, and served as a member of the President's Export Council and The Business Council. He was a member of the board of the Greater Twin Cities United Way and served as chairman of the board in 2004-05 and was co-chair with his wife, Mary Lynn, for the 2002 campaign.

The Staleys both served on the board of governors of Eleven Who Care, a Twin Cities program that recognizes significant contributions to the local community. Staley served on the board of Minnesota's Private Colleges Council for six years.

He currently serves on the board of PACCAR, Inc., is chairman of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation, and is a volunteer for Opportunity International and Habitat for Humanity.

Warren and Mary Lynn, a 1965 graduate of Kansas State University, live in Minneapolis, Minn.

**2009 Company and Leader of the Year**

Westar Energy was named the 2009 Company of the Year at the Tau Beta Pi Spring Awards Banquet, April 23. Doug Sterbenz, K-State alum and executive vice president and chief operating officer for Westar Energy, was named 2009 Leader of the Year.

As the largest electric energy provider in Kansas, serving more than half a million residents, Westar Energy is dedicated to operating the best electric utility in the Midwest and providing quality service at below average prices.

Headquartered in Topeka,

Westar Energy employs about 2,400 people and serves more than 679,000 customers in much of east and east-central Kansas. Its energy centers generate more than 6,800 megawatts of electricity, and the company operates and coordinates 35,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines.

Sterbenz began his career as an engineer in a large power plant for the Texas Utilities Company. He moved into supervision and held many



Doug Sterbenz

leadership positions in various power plants, then moved on to power marketing for Questar Energy Trading. He joined Westar Energy and served in several positions in power marketing before becoming a senior vice president, then chief operating officer in 2007.

He holds a B.S. in mechanical engineering from K-State, 1985, and an MBA from the University of Texas at Tyler, 1995.

A graduate of Leadership Topeka, Sterbenz serves on the board of directors for both the Kansas Capital Area American Red Cross and United Way of Greater Topeka, and is an EEI Energy Supply Executive Advisory Board member.

He and his wife, Connie, have three children and live in Topeka. As a family, they enjoy attending K-State football and basketball games.

**Proud to be a K-Stater**

The K-State Alumni Fellows Program believes the ultimate measure of a university is not its curricula, facilities or programs, but rather the quality of its alumni.

Since 1983, the program has brought successful alumni to campus to share their expertise with students and faculty. This year's honorees spent Feb. 26-27 as mentors, friends and counselors, singled out by their respective colleges for their distinguished careers.

Filling that role for the College of Engineering in 2009 is Carl Ice, IE '79, executive vice president and chief operations officer of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company. Ice leads the team responsible for operation of trains and maintenance of track, structures and rolling stock, as well as sourcing, safety and training. Under his leadership, BNSF has become recognized for its safety, on-time performance and productivity.

Ice, who was accompanied by his wife, Mary, KSU '80 and '88, spoke of the "wonderful, humbling and proud" experience of taking part in the event.

"What always strikes us when we return to K-State are the great people," Ice said.

"I spoke to two different classes and also had a lunch with students. I was so impressed with their thoughtful questions and their focus on learning."

Ice was equally impressed with the industrial engineering faculty and their keen interest in knowing what they should be considering and thinking about in preparing their students for the future.

"I came away from those two days believing that K-State students would measure up well against any students in the country," he said.

Ice serves on the Engineering Advisory Council, currently as chair elect, and is a member of the class of 2005 College of Engineering Hall of Fame.

"Mary and I try to stay active with our alma mater and believe the more we know about it, the better we can serve," he said. "We're proud of being K-Staters."

Ice's academic experience at K-State was integral in launching his career path with BNSF as he served as a summer intern at the Santa Fe Railway Co. in Topeka while an industrial engineering student here.

"In college," Ice said, "I was encouraged to look for oppor-



Carl Ice

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## RECOGNITIONS

1959

**Allen Hjelmfelt Jr.** (CE) received the 2008 Arid Lands Hydraulic Engineering Award from the Environmental Water Resources Institute of the American Society of Civil Engineers. A hydraulic engineer, he retired from the USDA Agricultural Research Service Cropping Systems and Water Quality Research Unit in 2002.

1973

**Chuck Grier** (CNS) recently accepted the first-place 2008 Design-Build National Project of the Year Award from the Design-Build Institute of America, on behalf of Utility Contractors, Inc., the Wichita company he serves as president and CEO. The national competition was for the water/wastewater projects under \$15 million category.

1979

**Kim Pearse** (CE), P.E., has been elected to the board of directors of GBA, Lenexa, Kan., an engineering and architectural firm with offices in St. Louis and Chicago as well. As senior associate and director of marketing for the firm, he oversees strategic marketing, business development and associated branding efforts. He had previously headed the structural engineering group at GBA for 18 years.

1984

**Jim Johnson** (CNS) was named Business Citizen of the Year for 2008 by the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, so recognized for his “outstanding community philanthropy and his dedication to the continual improvement of the quality of life in Colorado Springs.” He is the president and CEO of the GE Johnson Construction Company there.

1986

**Bob Wald** (EE) has been named chief operating officer for Osseo Imaging, Shawnee, Kan. The company deals in medical and dental imaging, modeling and diagnostics. Wald was a recipient of the College of Engineering Professional Progress Award in 2006 and is a former K-State football player.

## ALUMNI PROFILES

1990

**Sheila Hayter** (ME), P.E. and senior engineer with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Golden, Colo., has been named a Fellow of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers. The award recognizes distinction in the arts and sciences of environmental technology and is earned through achievement as a researcher, designer, educator or engineering executive.

2002

**Alan Keen** (ARE), P.E., with Mendenhall and Smith Structural Engineers, Las Vegas, Nev., did the structural engineering on a project that received the 2008 National Award of Excellence from the Post-Tensioning Institute, slab-on-ground category.

2005

**Gabrielle Guerre** (ME) was named one of the New Faces of Engineering 2009 by the National Engineers Week Foundation to celebrate Engineers Week, Feb. 15–21. The 14 honorees in this national program are the “best of the best”—young engineers who have been in the workplace five years or less and have shown outstanding abilities in projects that significantly impact public welfare or further professional development and growth. Guerre, nominated by the Society of Petroleum Engineers, is employed by ExxonMobil and is charged with optimizing oil and gas production from fields in Bakersfield, Calif.

## RETIREMENTS

1969

**Dan Huffman** (CHE) retired in January 2008 after 31 years in chemical manufacturing, most of that time spent in the nuclear fuel cycle, particularly in the conversion segment. He served in several different technical and production positions while working for Allied-Signal and Honeywell. He earned an MBA from the University of Kansas and a B.S. in history from Park College. He served in the U.S. Air Force for more than five years and in retirement is doing consulting work and teaching at a local community college. He and his wife, Sharon, a retired elementary school teacher, have three daughters and three grandchildren.

## DEATHS

**Charles K. Spillman** died April 22, 2009, in Manhattan, Kan. He served in the department of agricultural engineering at K-State for 34 years in various capacities including department head, professor and researcher before retiring in 2003. He is survived by his wife, Carolyn; son, Steven; and four grandchildren.

1952

**Ralph Otto Turnquist** (ME, M.S. '61) died Jan. 28, 2009, at Meadow lark Hills Retirement Community, Manhattan, Kan. He joined the K-State mechanical engineering faculty in 1965 after completing a Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University and retired as a full professor in 1993. He is survived by his wife, Verna; son, Gary; daughter, Amy; and two grandchildren.

1958

**Earl Hefling** (IE) died in June 2008. He had lived in Hutchinson, Kan., since his graduation from K-State.

1968

**William R. Klassen** (CE) died Oct. 25, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Margaret; son, William C. (EE '02); and daughter, Michelle. He was a civil engineer, retired from the FHWA.

## WANTED: YOUR UPDATES

We are interested in following the career paths and accomplishments of our alumni. It's a bit of a shift from the more traditional alumni news we've featured in the past as we now want to focus on your promotions, advancements, awards and honors, job changes, and of course, retirements, as well as death notices.

Please send your information in these categories to—

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Kansas State University  
133 Ward Hall  
Manhattan, KS 66506

E-mail: [impact@engg.ksu.edu](mailto:impact@engg.ksu.edu)

## LENHERT RETIRES

1956

**Don Lenhart** (EE '56) retired in May 2009 from more than 40 years of teaching in the department of electrical engineering at K-State. He received his M.S. in EE from Syracuse University in 1958, and his Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico in 1966. He returned to K-State that fall as an assistant professor in electrician engineering, was promoted to associate professor in 1969, and full professor in 1981.

Upon returning, he taught graduate courses in networks and communications. After the death of a colleague, he took over the first course in microprocessors half way through the semester and over the next 34 years developed more courses using microprocessors and kept the uni-



Don Lenhart

versity moving forward in this field. His research in the application of microprocessors allowed for sabbaticals with four companies where he concentrated on the testing of microprocessors and their systems. During the summers when he didn't have research grants, he worked for companies like NASA and Boeing, and spent 10 summers with Motorola. His efforts made embedded systems the most successful and popular area in computer engineering at K-State over the past 10 years.

In honor of his service, contributions can be made to either the Lenhart Scholarship Fund or the Electrical Engineering Advancement Fund through the Kansas State University Foundation.

## Proud to be a K-Stater

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tunities to use my education and apply it—not just memorize theories and facts to be memorizing them. That summer at Santa Fe I was given the challenge to figure out how many machines would be needed to complete a given task, and I was able to put those theories I'd learned into practice.

“I think the College of Engineering is doing that well today, too—students are encouraged to take what they're learning, write it up and present it—it's real-world teaching and I was struck by how relevant it is for their careers ahead.”

Ice began his tenure with Santa Fe Railway upon graduation from K-State in 1979. The company merged with the Burlington Northern Railway in 1995. Over the years he has held positions in operations, finance and information systems. He also served as BNSF's senior vice president-operations before assuming his current post of executive vice president and COO.

A subsidiary of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation, BNSF Railway Company, Ft. Worth, Texas, operates one of the largest North American rail networks, with nearly 32,000 route miles in 28 states and two Canadian provinces.

“Railroads are about a vast spectrum of things beyond just moving freight,” Ice said. “It's a network of customers and moving things through the system to a destination. It's dealing with rail crews and a central control system of operating the trains.”

BNSF is among the world's top transporters of intermodal traffic. It moves more grain than any other American railroad,

carries the components of many of the products Americans depend on daily, and hauls enough low-sulfur coal to generate about 10 percent of the electricity produced in the United States. BNSF is also an industry leader in Web-enabling a variety of customer transactions.

“Railroads have been around for more than 200 years—they play a key role in people's lives—from moving grain for food to delivering Christmas packages,” Ice said.

There's also the environmental component—trains burn less fuel, which generates fewer carbon emissions and keeps the air cleaner. Moving by rail means fewer trucks on the highway and less traffic congestion.

“I'm very proud of what we do at BNSF,” Ice said. “We maintain the complexity of our operational functions by dividing those functions into high-performance teams.”

Much of the operation involves outside activity across the country where situations requiring attention continually arise. Rail track and cars have about a 30-year life span, so a critical component is having a proper replacement strategy in play at all times.

“When thinking about the operation of a railroad, many people assume we function the same way we always have,” Ice said. “But you have to consider the element of change—finding new and better ways to do things. And this comes full circle back to the basics of a good engineering education—knowing how things work, knowing how to do things and knowing when to apply this knowledge.”

—by Mary Rankin

**K-State notice of nondiscrimination**

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# Renovation Celebration



In an effort to showcase the repairs and recognize those that helped with the emergency response efforts following the June 2008 tornado, the nuclear reactor staff and department of mechanical and nuclear engineering hosted a Renovation Celebration April 14 in Ward Hall. **Above**, Ken Shultis, MNE professor, addresses the attendees.

**Left**, an outdoor view of the newly replaced reactor walls constructed with an improved system of panels rated for 90 mph winds. The panels are fabricated with enamel-coated steel on internal and external surfaces, covering commercial insulation with an R value of 29, a major upgrade of the previous panels which had an insulation R value of 3. New trim and roof drains were also added to the dome structure. Indoor renovations to the reactor control room included additional storage capacity, carpeting and fresh paint.