

# ALUMNI CIRCUIT

## NINE DECADES OF ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE

The 11th Annual NCE Salute to Engineering Excellence, which marked the 90th anniversary of the college's founding, honored its oldest alumnus, families that share a generational bond as alumni, exceptional faculty and

Although he couldn't be present, mechanical engineer Paul Peschell '32 was honored with the 2009 Technology Pioneer Award by university representatives who made a special visit to his New Jersey residence. Born in 1907, Paul had a long career with the Bell Telephone System as one of the engineers who implemented the 20th century's many innovations in telecommunications.

'02 (CoE), Joseph Neglia '62 (CE) and Michael Neglia '91 (CE).

Recipients of faculty and staff awards were Nirwan Ansari, Excellence in Teaching; Edwin Hou, Excellence in Advising; Laurent Simon, Saul K. Fenster Innovation in Engineering Education; Cynthia Wos, Outstanding Staff; Joseph Glaz, Dean's Service Award.

NCE students and future

## SIX OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

### 2009 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

*The presentation of Alumni Achievement Awards was, once again, a highlight of NJIT's annual reunion weekend. Sponsored by the NJIT Alumni Association, the 2009 awards ceremony in June honored individuals who went forward from their alma mater to distinguish themselves in architecture, education, diverse branches of engineering and service to society.*

#### FADI DEEK

*To gladly learn and gladly teach*

In the *Canterbury Tales*, one of the best known works of English literature, Geoffrey Chaucer describes an Oxford University student who would "gladly learn and gladly teach." Chaucer today would say the same of NJIT's Fadi Deek – an honored administrator and teacher as well as an alumnus.

Presently dean of the College of Science and Liberal Arts, Deek came to the United States from Lebanon in 1983 to continue working toward his undergraduate degree far from the sectarian strife then afflicting the country where he was born. However, he was not forging an entirely new link between his family and NJIT. Two cousins had attended NJIT, and his brother preceded him to study civil engineering there. While at NJIT, the brothers shared an apartment in Newark, and Deek completed his BS in



PHOTO: GINNY TWERSKY

*Among the NJIT families honored at the 2009 NCE Salute to Engineering Excellence were Mark Mellini '02 and his parents May Mellini '73 and Albert Mellini '73.*

staff, and current students who will proudly advance the NCE tradition of excellence in their careers.

The March event also acknowledged the outstanding partnership of John T. White of Leica Geosystems, who has regularly provided NJIT students with surveying equipment and software free of charge. NJIT's student chapter of the Society of Automotive Engineers garnered the society's Outstanding Student Organization Award.

John R. Heath '08 (ChE) received the Outstanding Alumnus Award. John's distinguished career in industry includes serving most recently as president and CEO of Arkwright, Inc.

For 2009, the Impact on Engineering Awards were a family affair. Honorees were siblings, spouses and children from three NCE families: Richard J. Dunn '53 (CE), Joseph M. Dunn '55 (ME), Thomas E. Dunn '76 (CE), Albert Mellini '73 (CE), May Mellini '73 (CE), Mark Mellini



*Paul Peschell '32, Technology Pioneer honoree*

alumni honored were Ashish Borgaonkar (CEE), Outstanding Graduate Student; Diego de Veyga (CEE), Outstanding Senior; Matthew De Zaio (ECE), Outstanding Senior; Tai Anh Duong (ME), Outstanding Senior; Darren Ferwerda (EnT), Outstanding Senior; Carlos Figueroa (CBPE), Outstanding Senior and NCE Outstanding Senior (Overall); Joseph Gonzales (IE), Outstanding Senior; Eric Mattessich (IE), Saul K. Fenster Innovation in Design; Jumanah Yasmin (BME), Outstanding Senior and Madame Mau Outstanding Female Engineering Student. ■

# ALUMNI CIRCUIT

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS, *continued*

computer science in 1985.

Lebanon's civil unrest was a significant factor in the brothers' decision to remain in the U.S. and pursue master's degrees at NJIT. A graduate assistantship also proved to be Deek's entre to teaching, an experience that confirmed his desire to build a career in higher education. Shortly after arriving here, Fadi met Maura McShane, already a graduate student in computer science. In addition to adding the MS in computer science to their credentials, life took another very positive turn for them at this time. Fadi and Maura married in 1988, and today Maura Deek teaches in the university's information technology program.

Firmly on his chosen career path, Deek became an associate professor in 1997 after completing his NJIT doctorate in computer and information science. The increasing administrative responsibilities he has been asked to assume since then attest to the recognition he has garnered for

his dedication to the university. This includes serving as director of undergraduate computer and information science programs, founding chair of the information technology program, and associate dean of the College of Computing Sciences.

A noted researcher, Deek is primarily interested in learning systems and collaborative technologies, especially their role in software engineering and computer science education. He is equally recognized for his talent as a teacher. NJIT's Robert W. Van Houten Award for Teaching Excellence, Master Teacher Award, and Excellence in Teaching Award are just a few of the honors he has received.

Reflecting on his close ties to NJIT, Deek says, "I'm very grateful for the educational and career opportunities that I have been given here. NJIT plays a very, very important part in the life that Maura and I have created together."

NJIT has also become an important part of life for younger

*"Work hard to learn something every day of your life. That's knowledge. Then apply what you learn to doing what's useful and good. That's wisdom."*

*— Eugene Dotter*

members of the Deek family.

His son, Matthew, is majoring in biology and physics at the university, with plans for a career in medicine. And son Andrew, now a high school senior, worked this past summer as an assistant with NJIT's pre-college program.

## **EUGENE V. DOTTER**

*A life of service and success*

Eugene Dotter has spent quite a bit of time in correctional facilities, and in countries like Haiti and Kenya. That's because he firmly believes in trying to help others by sharing both the experiences of his troubled youth and his skills as a structural engineer.

Growing up in the depths of the Depression, Dotter says he never expected to finish high school, let alone graduate from college. He might have also graduated from the petty robberies and assaults he committed with a gang of boys to far more serious criminal activity. A turning point came when he was finally diagnosed with a vision problem that made academic success nearly impossible. Later excelling in science and math at Hoboken High School, he won the scholarship that led to his 1941 bachelor's degree, with honors, from Newark College of Engineering.

Although granted an occupational deferment at the start of World War II, Dotter willingly surrendered it to serve his country as an Army combat engineer in Europe, beginning with the D-Day invasion. Discharged after the war, Dotter returned to school and earned a master's in civil engineering from MIT. He



*Mildred and Eugene Dotter*

subsequently launched his own consulting practice and worked on a PhD part-time at Carnegie Institute of Technology and the University of Pittsburgh.

When asked about his philosophy as a consultant in structural and civil engineering, Dotter is succinct: "I never turned down work, even a job as small as advising a homeowner about a cracked ceiling." But as willingly as Dotter took on such clients, the thousands of assignments handled by his highly successful firm also included a new school of engineering at the University of Pittsburgh and many preliminary structural designs for office towers of up to 80 stories. These preliminary office-tower designs were prepared for the use of United States Steel in various cities, among them Atlanta, Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

As demanding as his professional and educational commitments were, service to those less fortunate was another priority for Dotter. Mindful of how close he came to leading a very different life, Dotter volunteered to participate in the Gideons prison



*Andrew, Rebecca, Maura, Fadi and Matthew Deek*

ministry and the Prison Fellowship program, doing what he could to help offenders choose a better future. Today, retired in Florida, Dotter and his wife, Mildred, have brought the same message of hope to the boys and girls detained at the Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center.

The same spirit of service has long motivated Dotter to donate his engineering skills to better the lives of people in over 30 developing nations, where he has helped to build or renovate hospitals, schools, churches and other essential facilities. He recently traveled to Haiti to work on the expansion of a school. In recognition of all that he has done for others without concern for personal gain, Dotter received the national Volunteer Service Award from President George W. Bush in 2006.

What advice does Dotter offer to young men and women? “Strive to gain knowledge and wisdom,” he says. “Work hard to learn something every day of your life. That’s knowledge. Then apply what you learn to doing what’s useful and good. That’s wisdom.”

**PAUL ENG-WONG**  
*Mom knew best*

When asked how he came to be a student at NJIT, Paul Eng-Wong relates an experience from his childhood in Newark. At the age of five or six, he was walking with his mother past what was then the much smaller campus of Newark College of Engineering. Stopping in front of Eberhardt Hall, Eng-Wong’s mother told her son that he

would become an engineer, and that he would attend NCE. “I guess I was predestined to be an engineer, and that listening to my mother about where to study was the right thing to do,” he says in fondly remembering that day.

As Eng-Wong’s career and achievements demonstrate, the advice received from his mother was very sound. Upon considering his options, he did enroll at NCE, graduating in 1975 as a civil engineer. His first job was with Edwards and Kelcey, from which he moved on to the RBA Group. It was during this phase of his career that he became es-



Paul Eng-Wong

pecially interested in transportation and was awarded a master’s in 1980 by NJIT.

Although he became head of the Transportation Department at RBA, Eng-Wong started to think about striking out on his own – but not alone. At Edwards and Kelcey, he had met a kindred spirit in Martin Taub, whose career subsequently took him to Parsons Brinkerhoff. Staying in touch, Taub and Eng-Wong occasionally talked about going into

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Do you have news about your career, your family, an avocation? Share it in a class note for *NJIT Magazine*. And be sure to let us know if you have a new address.

**On the Web**, use the form at [www.njit.edu/alumni/classnotes](http://www.njit.edu/alumni/classnotes).

**By e-mail**, send news and photos with your graduation year(s) to [alumni-classnotes@njit.edu](mailto:alumni-classnotes@njit.edu).

**Via U.S. mail to:** Robert A. Boynton, Executive Director, Alumni Relations, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Eberhardt Hall NJIT Alumni Center, Room 218, 323 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Newark, NJ 07102-1982

business together. In 1988, they took that decisive step, starting Eng-Wong, Taub & Associates.

“Marty and I knew that there would be challenges, and that we still had much to learn about legal and business issues,” Eng-Wong says. “But we believed that our passion and energy would

of recent years – the JFK Airport Airtrain and the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail System.

Personal recognition for Eng-Wong has included being elected a Fellow of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, which he has served as the international vice president. In 2010, he will assume the post of international president of the institute, which has over 17,000 members in more than 90 countries.

Eng-Wong has also remained close to his alma mater. His firm employs a dozen NJIT graduates and sponsors one of the university’s corporate clubs. In a tribute to NJIT and his mother – and the advice she gave him in childhood – he has endowed the Norma Eng-Wong Memorial Scholarship. It provides financial assistance for civil engineering majors enrolled in Albert Dorman Honors College who are planning to join Eng-Wong as future colleagues in the transportation field.

lead to success.” This confidence, and the willingness to take a significant chance on the future, have been amply rewarded.

Today, with over 50 employees, Eng-Wong, Taub & Associates is the “go to” firm in the New York metropolitan area for transportation engineering. Working with most of the transportation agencies in the region, they’ve helped to advance numerous projects of major civic importance. Among these are two of the most significant rail projects

**EARL GRANVILLE JACKSON IV**  
*Inspired by Newark, New York and Siena*

Although architecture was a strong interest before college, Earl Granville Jackson got off to a tentative start toward his present position with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Due to some less than sage guidance, he says,

# ALUMNI CIRCUIT

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS, *continued*



Earl Granville Jackson (left, in the dark suit) at an urban worksite in India

"I was sidetracked by beginning as an engineering major at Rutgers, and when I decided that engineering wasn't for me, I had a less than polished transcript."

Fortunately, Jackson's talent for architecture was soon evident after he left Rutgers to become a part-time probationary student at NJIT in the early 1990s. Eventually accepted for full-time study, he graduated cum laude in 1999 from the university's five-year architecture program. A brief interlude at two small architectural firms was followed by graduate work at Columbia University, where he earned a master's in architecture and urban design. His academic experiences also included coursework in architecture and urban history at the Università di Siena in Italy.

Jackson says that studying in Newark and New York fostered his strong interest in the challenges and dynamics of urban life. Based in Siena during his undergraduate summer

abroad, he was able to sample the "post Berlin Wall" spirit of cities such as Prague as well. It gave him an even greater sense of how urban design can intersect with daily life in positive ways.

After graduating from Columbia, Jackson worked for The Hillier Group and with the noted architect Michael Graves. He then joined Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, one of the world's leaders in architecture, interior-design, engineering and urban-planning. Jackson advanced quickly at the firm, and today he is an associate and senior urban designer.

In just a few years, Jackson has applied his talents to projects that vary greatly in terms of purpose and geographic location, and which stand out for their boldness of concept. His projects in the United States have ranged from the Tysons Corner master plan in Fairfax County, Virginia, to ongoing work at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and the

*"We're shaping the development of an entirely new island – one that's being built from the seabed up."*

– Earl Granville Jackson

Columbia University campus at Manhattanville in New York City.

"It's sometimes hard to get one's mind around," he says of a current project outside the U.S. in Bahrain, "but we're shaping the development of an entirely new island – one that's being built from the seabed up." Jackson and his colleagues are responsible for a master plan encompassing more than 1.2 million feet of mixed-use space and a mile of waterfront on the island, which is off the northeastern shore of Bahrain's capital city, Manama. Other commissions that have made Jackson a frequent international traveler include projects for new cities in China and slum redevelopment and economic growth in India.

Widely diverse in location and scope, these projects are also engaging Jackson and his colleagues at the forefront of significant social issues through design and technology. As Jackson points out, it is increasingly the norm – from revitalizing U.S. cities to creating new communities in other countries – that the practice of architecture entails building a future which sustains the highest possible quality of life for people everywhere.

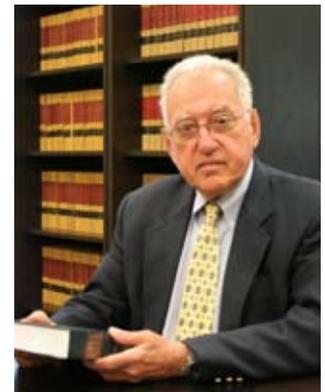
## LAWRENCE I. LERNER

*Dedicated to intellectual property and social equity*

Two themes have run strongly and concurrently through the life of attorney Lawrence Lerner. One has been his commitment to building a law practice preeminent in the field of intellectual property. The other is dedication to doing what he can to promote social justice – from combating

housing discrimination in the U.S. to working toward peace between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East.

Lerner became interested in studying law during his senior year at NCE, where he completed a BS in electrical engineering in 1956. Although he did exceptionally well on the law school admission test, his personal finances precluded taking the next step as a full-time law student. This led to looking for a job with a company that would send him to law school. The job turned out to be in Washington, D.C., in the patent department of Westinghouse. Lerner was able to enroll at Georgetown University's Law Center, from which he graduated



Lawrence Lerner

in 1961 after just three and a half years of study at night.

Ultimately dissatisfied with professional life at a large corporation, Lerner moved on to a small firm in Philadelphia that specialized in patent law. However, he realized that he wanted to be his own boss, and even without any clients he decided to return to New Jersey and start his own intellectual-property practice. "As surprising as it may

*McCann can look back on a career replete with very significant contributions to technology and the nation's well-being.*

sound, at the time there were few attorneys in New Jersey specializing in intellectual property,” he explains with respect to his choice of location. The firm that Lerner founded in 1964 has become the largest intellectual-property practice in New Jersey, with clients across the U.S. and around the world.

By virtue of strong personal conviction and the cultural climate of the 1960s, Lerner also became involved in civil rights issues, specifically housing discrimination. His Newark office was the hub of activity for a loosely knit group of like-minded attorneys who joined Lerner in taking cases to remedy racial discrimination in housing. Lerner, and those who joined him in the effort, were able to make a positive difference. Later, his pro bono commitments expanded to include a landmark New Jersey case that led to redrawing the state's election districts in accordance with the principle of “one man one vote” – a ruling that made legislative representation across the state more equitable. He also successfully sued to remove the liquor license of an organization that discriminated on the basis of race.

Since he retired from the active practice of law in 1996, Lerner has devoted much time and energy to international activities that reflect his unwavering concern for social justice. A frequent traveler to the Soviet Union in support of human rights, he has served as president of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, an organization that works with more than two dozen human-



*Joseph McCann*

rights groups in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Lerner has also been an outspoken advocate of a two-state solution for the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, taking a leadership role in this initiative as president of Meretz USA. In addition, he remains active in organizations dedicated to benefiting the people of his home state. Among the many groups Lerner has helped to support is the Garden State Cancer Center, which he has served as vice president.

#### **JOSEPH P. MCCANN** *Among the most historic*

It's patent number 3,607,487, *Waterproof Electrical Cable*, and it bears the name of NJIT alumnus Joseph P. McCann. It has also been listed among the most historic and valuable patents issued in the United States, covering a method for protecting communication cables buried in the ground from corrosion and failure due to water penetration.

The application for *Waterproof Electrical Cable* was filed in 1968, when McCann was an associate member of the technical staff at

Bell Laboratories in New Jersey. But the career that included participating in this technological accomplishment began very far from NJIT and Bell Labs, and in a distinctly different workplace.

Raised in Pennsylvania, McCann joined the army in the late 1940s after high school. He was assigned to the Army Security Agency, which was an offshoot of the Office of Strategic Services – a precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency. His aptitude for foreign languages earned him a spot in the Army's rigorous language school at Monterey, California, where he was in the first class to study Polish. “It was the start of the Cold War,” McCann recalls, “and I was eventually stationed in Europe, where I worked as a code breaker.”

Finishing his stint on the frontline of defense against Soviet expansion, McCann returned to civilian life and to school. He earned a BS in chemistry at the University of Maryland and accepted a position with the Air Reduction Company in New Jersey. Next came Bell Labs

from 1963 to 1970 and the MS in chemical engineering from NJIT that he completed in 1968.

Although working at Bell Labs and being awarded a patent valued at billions of dollars was a high point of McCann's career, he decided in 1970 to enter the public sector. That's when he embarked on two decades of service to the nation at the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA) and the U.S. Army's Communications and Electronics Command (CECOM).

In the course of his affiliation with the REA, McCann was responsible for some \$500 million in contracts covering rural telephone service, and for developing technical standards that are now used worldwide. At CECOM, which he joined in 1980, McCann was charged with administering thousands of standards for wire, cable connectors and engineering support that help to ensure the integrity of communications for our country's armed forces.

Today, retired in New Jersey, McCann can look back on a career replete with very significant contributions to technology and the nation's well-being. But now he also has time for other, more varied pursuits – including the interest in languages that placed him among the ranks of the first Cold Warriors. In addition to biking on Long Beach Island and involvement with community service groups, he is learning Gaelic. ■

# ALUMNI CIRCUIT

## IN THE WORKPLACE

### CAMPUS CHAMPIONS CONNECT WITH EMPLOYERS AND GRADS

NJIT Career Development Services (CDS) has close relationships with many potential employers for graduates as well as students seeking internships and co-op positions. But these relationships have a special character when alumni are involved.

Whether it's participating at a career fair, posting an open position, or meeting with students on campus, alumni interaction strikes a unique note. For example, Maria Corredera-Bachenski

students were subsequently hired. Says Maria, "Representing The McGraw-Hill Companies was a rewarding experience, and I'm very impressed with the caliber of the interns we hired. They have honored NJIT's reputation as a top technical university."

Maria is just one of a growing number of alumni who are staying connected to NJIT as a member of the Campus Champions Network. Campus Champions promote NJIT in their respective workplaces as a top tier entry-level recruitment school. Champions also offer their insights to students at college networking forums and other programs, participate on university advisory boards, take part in career panels and serve as mentors. ■



Paul Dreyer (far right) at work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Jason Pearson, summer intern at McGraw Hill, with alumna Maria Corredera-Bachenski

BS '97 (Arch), MS '02 (Management) connected with her alma mater when her employer, McGraw-Hill, was in need of summer information-technology interns. Through an information session followed by on-campus interviews, Maria identified qualified candidates, and five

To learn more about becoming an NJIT Campus Champion, contact CDS Executive Director Greg Mass at 973-596-5745 or [mass@njit.edu](mailto:mass@njit.edu).

Visit CDS on the Web at [www.njit.edu/cds](http://www.njit.edu/cds).

## FOUR DECADES, MORE THAN 50 COUNTRIES

His career has taken Paul Dreyer PE '64 to more than 50 countries since he graduated from Newark College of Engineering. Paul is an environmental engineer experienced in planning, managing and implementing infrastructure development programs for water resources and wastewater projects. In addition to the United States, he has worked in Central Asia, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, the Middle East and the Pacific Rim countries.

Projects in the last five years have included the development and implementation of a regional transboundary program for the U.S. Agency for International Development in the three

countries of the South Caucasus, and the design and coordination of a major remediation program in the desert and coastal areas of eastern Saudi Arabia necessitated by the 1991 Gulf War.

Currently, Paul is deputy program manager for the Woods Hole Group, Inc., an international environmental consulting firm. His responsibilities span a wide spectrum of water and ecological remediation initiatives, as well as capacity building and mentoring programs for the firm's local staff and for private and public sector clients in the Middle East. ■