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## **Tau Beta Pi Announces Dr. Thomas E. Wade as 2009 McDonald Mentor**

Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society, has named its fourth McDonald Mentor. The award was created to celebrate excellence in mentoring and advising among Tau Beta Pi educators and engineers who have consistently supported the personal and professional development of their students and colleagues. While the primary goal of Tau Beta Pi is to recognize students of superior scholarship and exemplary character and to honor eminent practicing engineers, the Association also lauds excellence in engineering education and in the ethical practice of engineering.

**Dr. Thomas E. Wade**, *Florida Alpha '67*, is a retired professor of electrical engineering at the University of South Florida (USF), where he was Chief Advisor of the Florida Gamma Chapter. He is the *2009 Tau Beta Pi-McDonald Mentor*. He will be honored on October 17, 2009, at the 104th annual national Convention to be held in East Brunswick, New Jersey. Tau Beta Pi President Dr. Larry A. Simonson, P.E., will present \$1,000 and a commemorative plaque to Dr. Wade. Another \$1,000 grant will be presented to the USF engineering college's discretionary fund.

Established in 2005 by Marion and Capers W. McDonald and the Association, the McDonald Mentor award recognizes engineering educators or professionals in industry, government, or service organizations that have shown true concern for the individual, supporting an environment for developing talents, and who have earned respect and recognition for their contributions to their field and to the greater community.

A dedicated and inspirational instructor, Dr. Wade was cited by students and peers for his devotion to teaching, mentoring, and outreach, reaching far beyond the classroom. His unmatched work at encouraging students to reach their full potential, has established him as an invigorating role model for students, faculty, and advisory peers.

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Dr. Wade has been an active member and officer of Tau Beta Pi for more than 40 years. Initiated at the University of Florida, where he received all of his electrical engineering degrees, Dr. Wade led the Florida Alpha Chapter to three consecutive Tau Beta Pi Outstanding Chapter awards from '69-'71.

After nine years at Mississippi State University, Dr. Wade became Chief Advisor of Florida Gamma in 1986, after being named the associate dean for research at the USF college of engineering. Professionally, he has published more than 200 articles, research reports, and conference papers. His research focused on solid-state microelectronics, VLSI/ULSI multilevel interconnection systems, electric noise in semiconductors and solid-state devices, and fabrication and characterization of solid-state devices.

During his 22 years at USF, Dr. Wade acted as an “irreplaceable liaison” between the chapter and the college, obtaining student eligibility lists and completing essential mailings. His access to the dean allowed him to maintain a high profile for the chapter and to promote Tau Beta Pi and its members for inclusion in meaningful projects and to recruit the best students.

Dr. Wade not only mentors students with his time and energy, he also supports them with his pocketbook. With personal funds, backed by cash-prize awards and college matching amounts, he has established scholarships that helped Tau Bates and many others. He also served as a faculty advisor for Eta Kappa Nu, USF Rotaract Club, the IEEE student branch, the college of engineering student council, and the Baptist Student Center.

While a senior faculty member, he often mentored young faculty members new to the teaching and research environment. He chaired several key departmental groups, including the ABET accreditation committee, and has served on the board of directors of ASEE. A true believer in the values of Tau Beta Pi, Dr. Wade had his class ring inscribed with the letters ‘TBP,’ and for several years his personalized car tag read “USF TBP.”

He has been recognized widely for his teaching and mentoring abilities, including four collegiate “Outstanding” teacher awards and the 1998 State of Florida teaching incentive program award. Dr. Wade also received the *2007 Tau Beta Pi Outstanding Advisor* award. In his role as a seasoned mentor, he has proved that involvement with students outside of class has a big impact on their performance in class, and that a little humor can sustain attention, as well as prevent boredom.

In his nomination for this award, Florida Gamma students stated, “We as students have grown not only scholastically as a direct result of his instruction, but also have grown personally as professionals, leaders, and most importantly as people. Dr. Wade draws out the best of our leadership abilities within our chapter of Tau Beta Pi, as well as in students in other organizations who are honored to have his guidance and involvement.”

Dr. Wade’s work on several campuses, as a leader and advisor, and his respect and support of students, the university, and fellow faculty embodies the ideal of a professor as mentor. For his contributions to the personal growth of students and student groups, fellow faculty, and engineering education, Dr. Thomas E. Wade is the 2009 Tau Beta Pi-McDonald Mentor.

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**Tau Beta Pi, the world’s largest engineering society, has initiated more than 508,000 members since it was founded in 1885. Headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, the Association has 234 active collegiate chapters and 17 active alumnus chapters throughout the country.**