



FOR RELEASE
August 8, 2017

CONTACT: Dylan Lane
865/546-4578

Tau Beta Pi Names Lilia Abron, Ph.D., P.E., Terry Olberding, Tom Scholz, & Charles Sukup, P.E., as 2017 Distinguished Alumni

Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society, has named the 2017 recipients of its Distinguished Alumnus Award. Now in its 21st year, the award recognizes alumni who have demonstrated adherence to the ideals of Tau Beta Pi (integrity, breadth of interest, adaptability, and unselfish activity) and to fostering a spirit of liberal culture on local, national, and international scales.

Lilia A. Abron, Ph.D., P.E., *District of Columbia Alpha '68*; **Terry D. Olberding**, *Tennessee Alpha '78*; **Tom Scholz**, *Massachusetts Beta '69*; and **Charles E. Sukup**, P.E., *Iowa Alpha '76*, are the 2017 Tau Beta Pi Distinguished Alumni and will be honored on October 14, 2017, at the 112th annual Convention in Michigan. Tau Beta Pi President Norman Pih will present a commemorative plaque, and a \$2,000 scholarship will be given in the name of each alumnus to a deserving student member of Tau Beta Pi.

Dr. Abron is the CEO and founder of PEER Consultants and former assistant professor at Howard University. **Mrs. Olberding** is a management consulting contractor with Eagle Research Group and past nuclear safety specialist for the Department of Energy's National Security Administration. **Mr. Scholz** is co-founder of the band Boston and previously worked as a senior product design engineer at Polaroid Corporation. **Mr. Sukup** is president of Sukup Manufacturing Company and was the first vice president at Sukup Manufacturing.

The selection of these four eminent engineers as Distinguished Alumni recognizes their lifetime achievements and commitment to engineering education. Each has played a role in developing young minds, inspiring the next generation of engineers, and contributing to the advancement of the engineering profession. A short summary including biographical details, achievements, and work follows.

(more)

Dr. Abron became the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in chemical engineering in 1972 from the University of Iowa. Her bachelor's degree was earned in chemistry from Le Moyne College and her master's degree in sanitary engineering from Washington University in St. Louis. She then served as an assistant professor of civil engineering at Tennessee State University with a joint appointment as an assistant professor of environmental engineering at Vanderbilt University.

Before founding PEER Consultants in 1978, Dr. Abron joined the faculty at Howard University. She is the first African American to start an engineering consulting firm that focused on environmental issues. In 1995, she co-founded PEER Africa to establish innovative best practice solutions for environmentally sound and sustainable projects in the built environment that contribute to the eradication of poverty, and promote local economic development in the communities of South Africa. PEER Africa won the American Academy of Environmental Engineers & Scientists 2012 Superior Achievement Award.

Through her consulting firm, Dr. Abron had contracts to work on the Boston Harbor cleanup, with the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy through its Hazardous Waste Remedial Actions Program.

She is active in the community through previously serving as president of the Washington, DC, chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., and as a board member for the Baptist Home for Children. She also promotes science education to K-12 students, serves as a mentor for several students each year, and is active on the lecture circuit for engineering students.

As an educator, engineering consultant, and trailblazer, Dr. Abron has nurtured and encouraged liberal culture. Her work and influence continue to make a difference and promote integrity and excellence in engineering.

Mrs. Olberding received an Administrator's Gold Medal, in 2010, for her 32 years of government service. Many of those years were spent as a manager at the National Nuclear Security Administration working for the Department of Energy (DOE) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

She received her bachelor's degree in engineering sciences and mechanics from the University of Tennessee (UT) and is an active member of the TBP Great Smoky Mountains Alumni Chapter. Terry is a sought after consultant, but makes time to support a plethora of community activities.

Most notably is her involvement as a breast cancer awareness advocate. She is a cancer survivor but lost her twin sister, Sherry, to breast cancer in 2013. Today, Terry serves as the leader of the Knoxville Jazzercise Race for the Cure Team, hosts fundraising events, and raises money and awareness of breast cancer in the local community and for national research.

Mrs. Olberding is an annual judge at UT's Engineers Day and at the Science Bowl in Oak Ridge. She also participates in "Introduce a Girl to Engineering" events. She volunteers with Tau Beta Pi, the Society of Women Engineers, and in DOE-sponsored events.

In addition, she is an avid quilter and donates her work to charity for silent auctions. She is active in her local church, supports the East Tennessee Children's Hospital, and assisted the organization that made renovations to the historic Tennessee Theatre.

For her prolific efforts as a volunteer, leadership roles and commitment to the nuclear facilities at Y-12, and her strength in supporting the fight against breast cancer, Terry Olberding is an inspiration to others and has greatly contributed to the future of others in engineering and beyond.

Tom Scholz is more than a musician, an engineer with bachelor and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), an inventor with nearly three dozen patents, and a philanthropist establishing a foundation called the Third Stage.

While working as a senior product design engineer at Polaroid, he invested his money in a basement recording studio playing all of the instruments himself and gradually teaching himself audio engineering and music production.

Scholz began recording demos of songs written by himself and Brad Delp and the two signed a contract with CBS/Epic Records in 1976. It did not take long for Boston to become a hit and their first album has sold more than 17 million copies to date.

His success as the founder of the musical group Boston, allowed him to create Third Stage, which has had an enormous positive impact on society: from assisting in marketing efforts for Earth Island Institute leading to an agreement by major tuna canners to stop selling tuna caught in dolphin ensnaring nets; to funding a public awareness campaign against the inhumane treatment of veal calves.

He has been recognized for his charitable work with the Mahatma Gandhi Award by Action for Life (1987) and the PETA Humanitarian Award (1990). In addition, Scholz started his own company to produce the specialized audio equipment he invented.

With dedication and hard work he has touched the lives of many people through his music. He also paved the way freeing artists from unreasonable demands from record companies. His many accomplishments and inventions have shaped the music industry and made him an exemplar engineer and entertainer.

Mr. Sukup is president of Sukup Manufacturing Company and was the family-owned business' first degreed engineer. He earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in agricultural engineering from Iowa State University (ISU).

After becoming president in 1995, Sukup Mfg. Co. added portable grain dryers, grain bins for farm and commercial storage, and pre-engineered steel buildings to the products the company designed. This has grown the company to ten times its size from when he took over.

Sukup has also made substantial philanthropic contributions at local and international levels. He has an interest in the world's food supply and has made several trips to Africa, most recently for the ASABE conference on Global Food Security. His nomination stated, "Sukup Safe T Homes® in Haiti have become globally known for providing safe and secure shelter during several natural disasters."

He has received numerous awards, most notably the 2016 Cyrus Hall McCormick Jerome Increase Case Gold Medal award from the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) and the 2013 Engineer of the Year award by the Iowa chapter of the ASABE.

Sukup is also a supporter of musical programs and Iowa State University. He contributed to the ISU Music Department for the Charles and Mary Sukup Endowed Artist in Organ position. The Sukup family also made a leadership gift towards the construction of Sukup Hall at ISU for the research and teaching facility in the agricultural and biosystems engineering department.

A well-respected engineer and business leader, Sukup has demonstrated his commitment to creating a better world through designing and producing products that increase the world's food supply and giving back through participation in a variety of civic activities.

The Association hereby recognizes Dr. Abron, Mrs. Olberding, Mr. Scholz, and Mr. Sukup, as the 2017 Tau Beta Pi Distinguished Alumni.