



For Immediate Release
August 13, 2019

Tau Beta Pi Names 2019 Distinguished Alumni Wayne T. Davis, David L. Ford Jr., William E. Jennings, Abdallah H. Yabroudi

Knoxville, TN — Tau Beta Pi, the Engineering Honor Society, has named the 2019 recipients of its Distinguished Alumnus Award. Now in its 23rd year, the award recognizes alumni who have demonstrated adherence to the ideals of Tau Beta Pi and to fostering a spirit of liberal culture on local, national, and international scales.

Wayne T. Davis, Ph.D., *Tennessee Alpha '73*; **David L. Ford Jr., Ph.D.**, *Iowa Alpha '67*; **William E. Jennings**, *Georgia Alpha '85*; **Abdallah H. Yabroudi**, *New York Beta '78*, are the 2019 Tau Beta Pi Distinguished Alumni and will be honored on October 12, 2019, at the 114th annual Convention in Columbus, Ohio. TBPi President Wayne B. Paugh, LL.M., JD, *Florida Gamma '93*, 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 TBPi.

Dr. Davis is recognized for contributions in teaching, research, industry, and leadership roles at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. **Dr. Ford** fosters a spirit of liberal culture through his civic, education, and professional contributions. **Mr. Jennings** helped invent, create, or led a team to bring computing solutions to the world. **Mr. Yabroudi** forges connections with students at his alma mater to create future engineering leaders.

A short summary including biographical details, achievements, and work follows:



Wayne T. Davis, Ph.D., made a lifelong commitment to teaching, research, and leadership as a first-generation college student. He holds degrees from Pfeiffer College (now Pfeiffer University), B.A. physics, 1969; Clemson University, M.S. physics, 1971; University of Tennessee, Knoxville, M.S. environmental engineering, 1973, and Ph.D., civil

engineering, 1975.

Dr. Davis began teaching at UT as an instructor of environmental engineering. His senior level classes focused on air quality/pollution control and waste/hazardous waste management.

Over a span of 40 years, Dr. Davis was cited in 216 publications with four invited presentations and 88 refereed publications, including books and chapters in books, and completed 70 consulting projects for government agencies and private companies. His research led to three patents pertaining to air pollution and filtration.

Dr. Davis served on several boards and was appointed by two governors to the Tennessee State Air Pollution Control Board for three terms and served as the board's vice-chair for three years.

In 2018, Dr. Davis was asked to serve as Interim Chancellor at UTK, having previously been UTK's Dean of the College of Engineering. Under his guidance as Dean of Engineering since 2009, undergraduate enrollment grew 60%, graduate enrollment grew 36% with a 116% growth in Ph.D. students, new faculty positions increased by 42, and opened and designed new engineering facilities on campus.



David L. Ford Jr., Ph.D., graduated in 1962 as valedictorian of a segregated high school serving students of color from the Fort Worth area.

More than 50 years later, his accomplishments in diversity, productivity, and leadership extend beyond that of an aerospace industrial engineer to roles as an educator and consultant.

He holds degrees from Iowa State University and University of Wisconsin, Madison, taught at Purdue University, and was a visiting research scholar at UCLA and Yale. He retired from the University of Texas at Dallas in 2017. Currently, he is Emeritus Professor of Organizational Studies and has a management consulting firm.

Dr. Ford is the founder of the Management Faculty of Color Association, focused on professional development of under-represented minorities in management faculty; mentors students at Dallas' Hamilton Park Pacesetter Middle School; advocates for patients for Dallas Alzheimer's Association; facilitates for the Central Eurasia Leadership Alliance and the Middle East Leadership Academy.

Upon his retirement, the *North Dallas Gazette* wrote, "For 20 years, Dr. Ford was the only African-American professor at the UT Dallas business school... He worked diligently to recruit more African-American professors and students." Two educational organizations credit Ford's 25 years of leadership and participation as the reason behind the growth of Ph.D. business degrees for African-Americans and other minorities.

Tau Beta Pi Names 2019 Distinguished Alumni...



William E. (Bill) Jennings, a graduate of Georgia Tech, has spent more than three decades dedicated toward developing stronger communications capabilities for the world by developing the backbone of the Internet, GPS, and cellular technology.

Today in a world of machine learning, A.I., and autonomous vehicles, we often forget the technology and leading engineers who built the core foundation to make all these and future technologies possible. Bill Jennings is such an engineer.

If you use Windows, surf the Internet, use a cell phone, navigate by GPS, or have your computer time set automatically, you benefit from innovations that Mr. Jennings helped invent, create, or, in some cases, led a team to bring these solutions to you. Today, 80% of Internet traffic depends on products that Mr. Jennings conceived and led teams to build.

Mr. Jennings invented the first Network Processor that combined the processing capabilities of a microprocessor with the high-speed communication required to process the data needed that makes the high-speed Internet a reality.

Mr. Jennings is an active member of the Anita Borg Institute, a community that works with women technologists in over 50 countries and partners with leading academic institutions and Fortune 500 companies. He serves as speaker/panelist, mentors university students, and nominates people for recognition at their annual banquet. He joined the Silicon Valley Engineering Council's Hall of Fame in 2018.

Mr. Jennings is also an active Assistant Scoutmaster of Troup 581 in Saratoga and was given the Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Eagle Scout Award for 2019.

For more than three decades, Mr. Jennings professional endeavors enabled a stronger capability for communications for the world, by developing the backbone of the Internet, GPS, and cellular communications. As Chief Technology Officer for FarmX, he is developing advancements in water conservation and increasing profit for commercial farmers in California by developing sensors, networks, and algorithms to reduce expenses and increase yields. His water saving technology is scalable to meet the world's needs as the company he helped found expands internationally.



Abdallah H. Yabroudi, CEO and Managing Director, Dubai Contracting Company, uses his company's success and experience to engage and encourage current students at his alma mater, Syracuse University.

Mr. Yabroudi graduated from Syracuse University with a B.S. in Civil Engineering, 1978, and an M.S. in Industrial Engineering, 1979.

After graduation, he returned to Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Middle East, to work for the construction company founded by his father in 1962, Dubai Contracting Company (DCC).

Under his leadership as CEO and Managing Director, DCC has experienced unprecedented growth, is recognized as one of the leading contracting companies in the UAE and the Gulf Cooperation Council, and has received numerous honors. The Rolex Tower, constructed by DCC, was recognized as a finalist in the "2011 Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat Program" and DCC was named "Construction Company of the Year 2008" at the Arabian Business Achievement Awards ceremony.

In October 2018, Syracuse named Mr. Yabroudi as one of the George Arents Award winners. This award is the university's highest alumni honor and recognizes alumni who have excelled and made outstanding contributions to their fields.

His professional achievements, while significant in their own right, are magnified by the far-reaching benefits of the implementation in May 2008 of the DCC Syracuse University Lebanese American University Internship Program. The internship program embodies Mr. Yabroudi's and DCC's commitment to education through supporting students as they grow to become future leaders in the construction sector.

By investing in engineering students at an early stage, DCC can contribute to the construction industry in the UAE for years to come. The internship is designed to educate and inform students on the operations and physical realities of one of the leading construction firms in the UAE. The program also encourages cultural understanding between the groups of students. More than 100 students have graduated from this program which offers a global perspective on engineering.

Tau Beta Pi is The Engineering Honor Society, founded at Lehigh University in 1885. As the world's largest engineering society, TBP has collegiate chapters in 248 engineering colleges in the United States and active alumni chapters in 45 cities, and has initiated more than 601,000 members in its 134-year history.

More info at <https://www.tbp.org/>