2001 Award Recipient

Edmund T. Cranch

ED CRANCH, it is an honor to have you once again among us. More than a dear friend of the university, more than president emeritus, you are an esteemed educator, farseeing and wise, whose leadership launched a new era in higher education. You came to WPI in the 1970s, when the 21st century was still the stuff of science fiction. Even then, you foresaw a time when engineering and technology would take their place at the forefront of education. You knew that in this new millennium, the skills learned at WPI would be essential for leadership in a rapidly changing world. You had no way of knowing then that the WPI Plan, still in its infancy, would be studied and emulated, as it is today, as the model for preparing students for exceptional outcomes. Yet, your confidence in the value of WPI's tradition of "Lehr und Kunst" has never wavered. Your inaugural address expressed that glowing vision. You said, "I see nothing but opportunity for persons educated in a program having a liberal spirit with a technological base."

As its twelfth president, you broadened the university's academic resources and opportunities, both on campus and abroad. You improved and restored the physical facilities, increased financial aid and salaries, expanded athletic programs, and nearly doubled WPI's endowment. Miraculously, you did all this—and balanced the budget—even in times of economic recession. WPI recognized your wisdom with an honorary doctorate the year you left for a new venture. Your career has encompassed some of the country's most distinguished educational institutions, and you continue to distinguish yourself in academia as an author and speaker. Whether in an academic, public interest or corporate setting, you continue to advocate for excellence in higher education. Edmund Cranch, it is with the utmost gratitude and respect that we present you today the WPI Award for Distinguished Service.