Health and medicine are at the center of some of the most pressing challenges we face today. Joseph Laptewicz, your leadership in these industries is already having a positive impact on many lives.

A chemical engineering major at WPI, you went on to earn a master’s degree at Cornell University and an MBA at the University of New Haven. You began your career at Pfizer, the world’s leading biopharmaceutical company, as a process engineer in 1971. Over the next 23 years, you earned 11 biomedical patents related to stents, catheters, and prostheses. Your knowledge and talent did not go unnoticed, as you were promoted in various divisions of Pfizer to project leader, assistant director of finance and technology, director of corporate research and development, vice president and general manager, and executive vice president. You concluded your tenure as president and chief executive officer of Schneider USA Inc., a Pfizer subsidiary and manufacturer of products for interventional medicine.

In 1994, you became president of Empi, Inc., a manufacturer and provider of non-invasive medical products for pain management and physical rehabilitation, incontinence therapies, and transdermal iontophoretic products, which use electricity to draw medicines through the skin. You have served as chief executive officer, chairman, and a member of the board of directors at Empi. As technical advisor to the company, you provided essential technical support on project development and new technologies, industry expertise, and assistance with operational and integration issues.

You are a trusted expert among your peers, and your industry looks to you regularly for leadership. You have provided guidance as a board member for Advanced Neuromodulation Systems, Inc., Angiodynamics, Inc., and Cyberonics, Inc. You are a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the American Society for Artificial Internal Organs.

WPI prides itself on educating engineers and scientists with the wisdom and knowledge to become leaders in their fields. Joseph Laptewicz, you exemplify these ideals and serve as a role model for our students. We honor you today with the Robert H. Goddard Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement.