2001 Award Recipient

Donald L. Poggi '51

Don Poggi, in the words of Thomas Edison, legendary inventor and employer of your grandfather, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." In 1981, opportunity presented itself in the familiar surroundings of your father-in-law's machine prototyping and short-run production company. You and your life partner, Shirley, became business partners, calling your new enterprise Model and Instrument Development Corp.

In 1983, opportunity knocked again when M+IND was asked to help develop a new kind of prosthetic foot. While still working full time for Boeing, where you'd spent 32 years in structures and materials development, electronic product development, business risk analysis, and development and application of system engineering processes for development projects, you took on the challenge and succeeded spectacularly, creating a lifelike, "dynamic response" foot that affords amputees better movement, and better physical condition. Your Seattle Foot© was nothing short of revolutionary, forever changing the world of prosthetic limbs. In 1985 it earned you one of the first Presidential Awards for Design Excellence, which was presented to you by President Ronald Reagan in ceremonies held in the Oval Office.

Under your leadership as chairman of the board, which you assumed full-time in 1987, M+IND grew and prospered. In 1990 the Seattle Lightfoot©, which weighs a third less than the original Seattle Foot©, received Washington State's Governor's Award for New Products.

You extended your leadership and innovation skills beyond the factory floor to the scientific and regional community, serving as Region 11 president and vice president of the American Orthotics and Prosthetics Association. You were founding president of WAMOPA (Western and Midwestern Orthotic Prosthetic Association) and have served as a member of the International Standards Organization (ISO) Technical Committee for Prosthetic Limb Standards and the U.S. Technical Advisory Group. You also serve on the University of Washington Engineered Biomaterials Industrial Advisory Board, which secured and oversees a National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center grant of $11 million.

Don Poggi, it is with great pride and admiration that we recognize your distinguished professional achievements and your significant contribution to enabling amputees throughout the world to lead more able and fulfilling lives by presenting you with the Robert H. Goddard Alumni Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement.