2004 Award Recipient

James S. Tyler '59

Jim Tyler, able engineer, visionary and businessman, you embody the concept of an entrepreneurial technologist. You have demonstrated an ability to identify a niche technology and align that technology with the marketplace. Your career has brought you great success and satisfaction. Along the way, you have emerged as a role model for our students and graduates and, through your successes, you have added significantly to WPI's national reputation.

Your entrepreneurial career might be said to have begun when you accepted a risk and transferred from the United States Coast Guard Academy to WPI, earning your bachelor of science degree at WPI in electrical engineering in 1959. That set the stage for you to go on to Yale University, where you earned both your master's and Ph.D.

Following your formal education you moved west to Silicon Valley, where your entrepreneurial instincts emerged as you became involved with a number of different companies over the years. Your career began at Ford Aerospace; you became a partner in Corporate Technology in 1985; and, in a fortuitous move, you joined Optivision Inc. of Palo Alto in 1988, a company that manufactures video and data compression systems specializing in photonics research. In 1989 you were named president of the company and in 1998 you retired as president, shortly after spinning off the company's optical networking technology to Optical Networks Inc.

You have been an involved alumnus and have shared your thrill of entrepreneurial ventures as, in 2000, when you helped WPI initiate the Silicon Valley Project Center, today one of WPI's most successful centers, affording students annually the opportunity to experience firsthand the excitement of Silicon Valley's entrepreneurial culture.

Jim Tyler, distinguished alumnus, successful entrepreneur and world-class sailor, WPI salutes you today with the Robert H. Goddard Alumni Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement.