Pat Flaherty, WPI pioneer and dedicated champion for new opportunities for women students and athletes, a full account of your accomplishments and your service to your alma mater would fill many pages.

Like your brothers, David ’76, Gary ’77, and Alan ’79, you were drawn to a school in the midst of two historic changes: enrolling women for the first time (you were a member of WPI’s fourth co-ed class) and rolling out the WPI Plan (yours was the first class to have the option to study under this pioneering academic program). You thrived academically, earning membership in Skull and Tau Beta Pi and winning the coveted Two Towers Prize, and earned the respect of your classmates, who elected you class president in your sophomore year. The first woman to hold that office, you remained class president until graduation.

Finding that WPI had no formal sports program for women, you took the initiative to launch club teams in basketball, softball, and field hockey, and participated as team member, captain, and coach. Later, you were instrumental in the drive to elevate women's sports to the varsity level. In recognition of your tireless advocacy for women's athletics, the university, in 1978, established the Patricia A. Graham Sportsmanship Award, which honors outstanding senior woman athletes; in 1993, you were inducted into the WPI Athletic Hall of Fame.

As an alumni leader, you chaired numerous committees and task forces to advance WPI’s mission, and you served as an officer in the Worcester County Regional Club and president of the Poly Club. You reached out to WPI students by spearheading the formation of the Student Alumni Society and by speaking at Career Day panels. The Alumni Association recognized your achievements in 1985 with the John Boynton Young Alumni Award for Service to WPI; in 1999, you made history as the first woman to serve as the association’s president.

Hard work and dedication have also been the hallmarks of your career. After receiving a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and a master’s in civil engineering from WPI, you taught high school and college math, worked as a systems analyst for Cincinnati Milacron / Heald Machine Co., served WPI as information systems project manager, then started your own successful business, Graham Flaherty Information Management Consulting.

Pat Flaherty, in recognition of your many years of unselfish devotion to your alma mater, your tireless service as a loyal volunteer for the Alumni Association, and your pioneering efforts to further the cause of women’s athletics at WPI, it is our great pleasure to present you with the Herbert F. Taylor Award for Distinguished Service to WPI.