2002 Award Recipient

Robert H. Beckett ’57
Robert Beckett, entrepreneur, visionary and philanthropist, today we honor your lifetime devotion to your alma mater. Whether serving the Class of ’57 or chairing a Board of Trustees committee with distinction, you have helped shape this institution you love.

Leadership was a skill you honed early in your undergraduate years at WPI. A guard on the undefeated 1954 football team, you competed as well in swimming and tennis. Excelling in both athletics and the arts and humanities, your literary achievements were recognized in your election to Phi Delta Epsilon, the journalism honor society. These accomplishments—along with serving four years in the Tech Senate, as president in your senior year—enhanced the undergraduate experience at WPI for many of your classmates.

Your integrity, thoughtful manner and understated leadership style have served you well, both as a corporate executive and as a WPI trustee for the past 15 years. During this time you have continuously lent your expertise to the Development, Executive, Audit and Trusteeship committees. Moreover, you have helped lead two of the university’s most ambitious fund-raising efforts in the last quarter century: the $52M Campaign for Excellence, which closed 21 percent over goal in 1991, and the current $150M Campaign for WPI.

In both of these efforts you have led by example. A charter member of the Alden Society and a lifetime member of the President’s Advisory Council, your personal and financial commitment to your alma mater have been inspirational to myriad others.

You once remarked that receiving a scholarship to WPI was the defining factor in your professional success. And it was your engineering skills, hard work and business acumen that made Robec, a company you co-founded in 1978, a national leader in the worldwide distribution of microcomputers, peripherals and software. The fruits of that labor led to the endowed Beckett Scholarship Fund, which you and your wife, Pat, established in 1991, and which have enabled nearly 20 young men and women to attend WPI. Indeed, that fund will be the lasting legacy of your foresight and extraordinary generosity.

Bob Beckett, it is with great pride and admiration for your exceptional service to your alma mater that we present to you the Herbert F. Taylor Alumni Award for Distinguished Service to WPI.