2004 Award Recipient

Richard M. Gross ’69

Rich Gross, it is with sincere pleasure that WPI recognizes your considerable professional achievements. A lifelong employee of Dow Chemical Company, you have led the company and the field. Your rich experience in research and development, coupled with your business acumen, has set an example for your industry. Most specifically, you have met and continue to work toward the challenge you spelled out for the chemical industry in your 1999 editorial in *Chemical & Engineering News,* “The critical task for future business success in the chemical industry [is] transforming new knowledge from chemical R&D into solutions for the marketplace.”

Your abilities were recognized by your would-be employer long before you were available for hire. In the summer of 1968 you were one of 184 college students and faculty members in the nation chosen to work in the Summer College Program of Dow Chemical. You graduated from WPI with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and went on to receive both your master's and Ph.D. from the University of Utah.

In 1974 you rejoined Dow, working in the hydrocarbons and energy R&D area. Five years later you transferred to the Louisiana Division, and spent several years in coal gasification research. After returning to Midland in 1985, you held increasingly responsible R&D management positions before being named R&D director for North America Chemicals and Metals/Hydrocarbons in 1992. Your success continued: in 1995 you were vice president and director of Global Core Technologies Research and Development; in 1997, you became vice president and director of Michigan Operations and global vice president of Core Technologies Research & Development, and in 1998 you were named to your current position of corporate vice president and director of research and development.

Dow has rewarded your leadership abilities. In 1996 you received the Dow Genesis Award for Excellence in People Development, which recognizes those who excel at motivating co-workers, acting as role models, and creating environments where staff members take more responsibility.

Your professional experience transcends your work at Dow into the larger community of chemistry. You served as chair of the Council for Chemical Research Governing Board and as a member of the *Chemical & Engineering News* Advisory Board. Your state has called you to serve on the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor Board. Your nation has named you to such positions as the National Institute of Standards & Technology Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology and the Advisory Board of the National Science Resources Center. In 2001 you kicked off the 50th anniversary celebration of the National Science Foundation, representing anniversary sponsor Dow Chemical.
Institutions in addition to Dow have enlisted you. You currently serve as member of the Michigan Molecular Institute Board; the Advisory Board for the College of Chemistry at the University of California-Berkeley; the Engineering National Advisory Council for the University of Utah; the College of Engineering National Advisory Committee for the University of Michigan; and, of most importance to your alma mater, on the Chemical Engineering Advisory Board at WPI.

Rich Gross, we salute your success and are grateful for the recognition your leadership role in the chemical industry brings to WPI. It is an honor to present you with the Robert H. Goddard Alumni Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement.