Richard Thomas

Retired

What is your favorite Madison/campus memory?
All of the activities and academic challenges available on the Madison campus.

What has helped you achieve success in your career?
An excellent theoretical background in engineering and mathematics and the ability to apply the basic principles and theories. I believe the department’s primary focus should be on the theoretical aspects of engineering.

Outside of class, what experiences did you find most meaningful?
The opportunity to work in Farrington Daniel’s Solar Energy Lab as an undergraduate student.

What excites you about the future of Engineering?
The United States maintaining its position of engineering excellence by developing an enduring STEM interest in the nation’s youth.

Besides engineering, do you have another passion you have pursued or would have liked to pursue given the time?
General business activities and corporate management. I am also interested in economics.

Who was an influential peer/professor from your time at UW-Madison?
During 1959, Professor Jean Van Bladel and others revamped the EE curriculum. We were the first class that used the new curriculum and were therefore fortunate to have professors teach essentially all of our classes (very few TAs). Professor Novotny was my Ph.D advisor, and Arthur Tiedemann was my M.S. advisor. Both of these men were great teachers and mentors.

What are you most proud of in life? What is your greatest achievement?
Assisting my business partner, Carl Marschke create MARQUIP, Inc. from a very small operation to a worldwide organization with 1500 staff members. Marquip was a company specializing in designing and manufacturing automatic machinery for the corrugating industry.

What would be your advice to current students? What do you wish you had known?
There is so much to learn in so little time, focus on the basics and the theoretical aspects. Plan on learning the practical side “on the job” after your formal education.