



The Distinguished Alumnus Award was established to recognize alumni who have demonstrated outstanding adherence to the ideals of Tau Beta Pi (integrity, breadth of interest, adaptability, and unselfish activity) and to fostering a spirit of liberal culture in our society. Recipients provide examples of excellence in both leadership and character to members of collegiate chapters.

2006 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

William A. Anders

FOR HIS OUTSTANDING lifetime achievements, **Major General William A. Anders, Ohio Eta '62**, is the Tau Beta Pi 2006 Distinguished Alumnus.

As a young man, Bill Anders seemed to have an inward force propelling him toward the highest realms of technical knowledge. As a student, he would master the known facts, then push relentlessly towards discovering what lay beyond them—a habit he called *finding out what's on the other side of the mountain*. In school, his eagerness for sharing knowledge with others became the genesis of several popular study groups.

Even as he busied himself with his classmates, his thoughts turned increasingly to future students who would one day follow them.

As a young officer-student at the Air Force Institute of Technology, he adopted a creed: "We always try to leave a community where we serve a little bit better than we found it." With this as his theme, Anders began personally soliciting funds from hundreds of other students to help to establish a new university. His single-minded efforts fueled the founding of Wright State University—its 17,000 students now sharing in the educational growth toward which he felt such passion.

After graduation from AFIT, he was selected to train as an astronaut. His capabilities and character shone through, and he was given the nod as the spacecraft systems engineer and pilot for *Apollo 8*. The assignment was to orbit the Moon and return, thereby testing the *Saturn V* rocket—the largest rocket ever flown—and the new lunar orbiter. While Neil Armstrong would later step onto the surface of the Moon, Anders and his crew mates were the first to examine its entirety, including an elusive dark side never before seen by human eyes.

After the flight of *Apollo 8*, the theoretical became proven. The mystique of the Moon would be unveiled by



the engineering to which Anders devoted himself. Ironically, he is often remembered for two personal acts on that December 1968 mission, neither one part of the protocol. Even as the world sat spellbound by photos of the Moon itself, he snapped a photograph now famously known as "Earthrise." His startling image of the pristine blue Earth—common now, but unthinkable then—was later called "the most influential environmental photograph ever taken." For Anders, it was another example of his lifelong impulse to glimpse "the other side of the mountain." His second unscripted act was to read a passage from the book of Genesis during a live transmission to Earth.

Even after leaving the Apollo program, his instinctive passion for bringing others along in his jour-

ney never diminished. He became one of the founding organizers of the Yosemite National Institute, which lets the disadvantaged and students experience the secrets of biology, chemistry, and earth science through visits to national parks. He has supported special learning materials to teach algebra to at-risk students. He never forgot his *alma mater*, helping to enlarge and improve the Glen Warner Soccer Facility at the U.S. Naval Academy.

He served as ambassador to Norway, executive secretary of the National Aeronautics & Space Council, and chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. In industry, he held key positions including vice president of General Electric, executive vice president for operations at Textron, and chairman and CEO of General Dynamics Corp. He was named the National Security Industrial Association's CEO of the year in 1993. Honored as a distinguished alumnus of AFIT in 1990 and the U.S. Naval Academy in 2000, he serves as a trustee of the USNA foundation. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1984 and was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 2004.