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Tau Beta Pi Names Stephen D. Bechtel Jr., P.E., and Dr. Warren G. Schlinger as 2008 Distinguished Alumni

Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society, has named the 2008 winners of its Distinguished Alumnus Award. Now in its twelfth year, the award was established to recognize alumni who have demonstrated adherence to the ideals of Tau Beta Pi (integrity, breadth of interest, adaptability, and unselfish activity) and to fostering a spirit of liberal culture on local, national, and international scales.

Stephen D. Bechtel Jr., P.E., *Indiana Alpha '46*, chairman retired and a director of Bechtel Group Inc., and **Dr. Warren G. Schlinger**, *California Beta '44*, venerated industrial leader and philanthropist, are the *2008 Tau Beta Pi Distinguished Alumni* and will be honored on October 25, 2008, at the 103rd annual national Convention to be held in Sacramento, California. Tau Beta Pi President Dr. Larry A. Simonson, P.E., will present each with a commemorative plaque, and scholarships of \$2,000 will be given in their names to two deserving student members of Tau Beta Pi.

Stephen D. Bechtel Jr., P.E., is an outstanding model of adherence to the ideals of Tau Beta Pi. Viewed by many as one of the world's most accomplished and respected engineers, Bechtel has served his family, his profession, and his country to form a legacy deserving of honor.

Mr. Bechtel holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Purdue University and a master's degree in business administration from Stanford University. He also holds honorary doctorates from Purdue University and the University of Colorado, respectively.

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Mr. Bechtel served as the third-generation head of the worldwide engineering and construction business, Bechtel Group Inc., which began in 1898 as a small Western railroad construction firm. Mr. Bechtel was first employed by one of the family engineering-construction companies in 1941. After holding a variety of jobs in the field and at Bechtel Group Inc. headquarters, he was elected president in 1960.

Mr. Bechtel became known for his expertise in construction management. He led his company toward global prominence in constructing complex and “first-of-a-kind” projects. Under his leadership the company enjoyed an eightfold growth while tackling projects such as the San Onofre nuclear generating station, the James Bay hydroelectric project in Quebec, the industrial city of Jubail, Saudi Arabia, and Boston’s Central Artery.

As characterized by Dr. Charles M. Vest, president of the National Academy of Engineering, “Long before globalization became a widely recognized phenomenon, Stephen D. Bechtel Jr. was engaged in construction, mining, project management and other large-scale endeavors in every corner of the world.”

Mr. Bechtel has been a recipient of numerous awards, including the 1980 Herbert Hoover medal, an honorary fellow of the U.K. Institution of Chemical Engineers and Institution of Civil Engineers, the 1999 recipient of the National Academy of Engineering founders award, and the 2003 American Association of Engineering Societies’ Kenneth Andrew Roe award.

Mr. Bechtel served as a member of six national committees under three U.S. Presidents, and in 1991, President Bush awarded Mr. Bechtel the National Medal of Technology, the highest American honor bestowed for technical achievement, in recognition of his outstanding leadership in the engineering profession and for developing and applying advanced management techniques to world-class industrial projects.

Mr. Bechtel has served on numerous boards, such as General Motors Corporation, Remington Arms Co., Inc., and IBM Corporation. Today Mr. Bechtel remains active, even in retirement, as chairman emeritus and director of The Fremont Group, a company that operates in marketable securities, natural resources, and other selected investments. He is also chairman of the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation that supports well-managed non-profit organizations. Mr. Bechtel is known as an individual who, while being rewarded for his technical, business, and professional accomplishments, has recognized the importance of “giving back” to the profession.

Dr. Patricia D. Galloway, P.E., CEO, Pegasus Global Holdings, Inc. explains, “While Mr. Bechtel’s achievements are highlighted in his biography, they are only highlights to the vast number of additional activities for which I personally believe distinguishes him from other recognized members of the engineering community.”

Two areas in which Mr. Bechtel excels are in his dedication and devotion to engineering education and supporting women and minorities in engineering. He has personally volunteered thousands of hours and millions of dollars in efforts such as the K-12 Initiative to help teach our young of the challenges engineers will face in the 21st century. He has also supported the Extraordinary Women Engineer’s Project in funding and fundraising activities.

Dr. Warren G. Schlinger began his career with aspirations to learn more about engineering practice in order to be a more effective teacher. Today, as a result of his success as a pre-eminent engineer in the petrochemical industry, his philanthropic endeavors have given countless students the opportunity to explore engineering to achieve their own goals. Through his years of dedication to innovation, commitment to education, and philanthropic generosity, Dr. Schlinger has demonstrated the qualities that distinguish him as an exemplary Tau Beta Pi alumnus.

At the California Institute of Technology, Dr. Schlinger earned a bachelor's of science in applied chemistry (1944) and his master's degree (1946) and Ph.D. (1949) in chemical engineering. He spent the next five years as an instructor and research fellow at Caltech before joining Texaco Inc. in 1953. During his 35 years with the firm he performed pioneering work in coal gasification, coal desulfurization, and oil recovery, leading to more than 60 U.S. patents.

Dr. Schlinger's technical leadership was critical in the development and commercialization of the integrated gasification combined cycle plant in Barstow, CA, in 1982. The process involved a unique method of combining gasification technology with electrical power generation. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the cool water plant "established the early technical foundation for future...IGCC power plants."

Dr. Schlinger's recognition in the profession continued well after his retirement in 1987. His contributions have been recognized by the technical achievement award of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, by the chemical engineering practice award of the AIChE, by the KFA achievement award of the Electric Power Research Institute, a lifetime achievement award of the Gasification Technical Council, and, most significantly, by his election to the National Academy of Engineering in 1991.

In his retirement Dr. Schlinger was able to focus on lasting philanthropic activities with his wife, Katharine, establishing the Warren & Katharine Schlinger Foundation. The foundation has been able to support nearly 50 organizations, endow professional chairs at multiple universities, and provide the lead donation for the Warren and Katharine Schlinger Laboratory for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. The new building at Caltech will be completed in 2009.

The foundation also provides funding for scientific research and the liberal arts with continuing support of the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, the House of Ear Institute, the Pasadena Symphony, and many others. As a board member of the Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF), Dr. Schlinger is closely involved in preserving the past while supporting new frontiers in chemical engineering, including a recent donation of equipment to the CHF from his 1930s childhood home chemistry laboratory.

As noted by esteemed professor of chemical engineering at Caltech, Dr. Richard C. Flagan, "Dr. Schlinger has contributed to technologies that are used in the petroleum and chemical industries around the world. These contributions make him an outstanding candidate, particularly in this time when energy concerns are stimulating a renewed interest in his many contributions to the energy industries."

For these outstanding accomplishments, dedication, and leadership Tau Beta Pi recognizes Stephen D. Bechtel Jr., P.E. and Dr. Warren G. Schlinger as its 2008 Distinguished Alumni.

Tau Beta Pi, the world's largest engineering society, has initiated more than 500,000 members since it was founded in 1885. Headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, the Association has 234 active collegiate chapters and 16 active alumnus chapters throughout the country.