

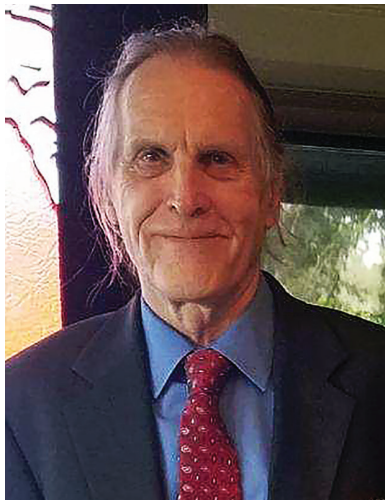
# Don Forslund

## *NJ Alpha '60*

*The Donald C. Forslund Endowment for the New Jersey Alpha Chapter at Stevens Institute of Technology.*

Don Forslund developed a global perspective early on which influenced a lifetime's worth of career and personal choices. He and his identical twin brother hale from Boston. As eight-year-olds, their father pursued an opportunity within the military to work in Bermuda and the family lived there for years. Don recalls attending a private British school, saluting the British flag, and singing "God Save The King."

As high schoolers and back in the States, their father bought them a saw and they performed odd jobs around the neighborhood as tree trimmers. Don recalls that he seemed to be a budding aviation engineer as he cut logs into pieces of wood resembling wings, covering them with paper, and attempting to fly, unsuccessfully. One of their customers had a friend who was a professor at Stevens Institute of Technology. Following a family introduction and the offer of substantial scholarships from Stevens and the International Nickel Company, the boys chose to pursue studies in engineering. Don notes that it was an all-men's school at the time and they were the first class given the opportunity to choose a specific discipline of engineering as their major. Don chose mechanical engineering, and aided by a National Science Foundation Fellowship, went on to pursue a master's degree in electrical engineering. He graduated from Stevens with a bachelor's degree (historically called mechanical engineer) in 1960, and in 1962, received a master's degree. Upon graduation, Don accepted a job with Mitre Corporation in Bedford, MA. Mitre contracted with the U.S. Air Force to rework a SAGE prototype computer for psychologists studying human responses to the use of certain kinds of equipment. A few years later, IBM approached Don with an offer. Thinking he would work there for a year and then move on, he stayed for almost 30 years working in a number of departments and positions requiring creativity. IBM awarded



him four levels of Invention Achievement Awards for inventions related to manufacturing developments. Don appreciated working within a company that offered numerous opportunities for work and advancement. However, he said there was a time when he was considering quitting his current job. After returning from lunch one day, six different departments approached him with offers. One was in the field of patent engineering. Don decided he wasn't interested in supporting individuals through the patent process but wanted to come up with the inventions himself, resulting in six patents. Don's specialty was in the field of manufacturing line semiconductor inspection. Ultimately, IBM shut down their development program and Don was in the process of taking early leave when a layoff occurred. As part of his package, Don was offered educational classes and used this benefit to take and pass the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office bar exam. He performed patent agent work on his own helping a friend on the side who was working for the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company.

Don jokes, "Engineering isn't just a piston going up and down. The

students of today are going to be tackling global problems and need to think in broad terms as they confront change — to the environment, how they do their work — and the financial implications that are part of the decision-making process."

Don encourages students to travel throughout their lives to become familiar with different cultures and become true global citizens. He recalls an encounter with a peer from upstate New York who had never been to New York City or even next door to Connecticut. Don has followed an interest, developed as a teenager, in reaching out to those beyond his immediate community as an amateur radio operator.

While at Stevens, Don became interested in aviation and eventually earned his pilot's license. In later years, he was licensed to teach and sign off on logbooks. He also designed, built, and flew his own single-seater airplane with a Volkswagen Beetle engine. Other interests and activities included design and construction of a home and furniture, lobbying for domestic relations law reform, founding a statewide self-help group, volunteering as a local court mediator, and traveling the world becoming a perpetual student of Asian travel, language, and culture. In retirement, Don makes a daily ride on his bicycle across the highway to the University of South Florida where he studies Chinese language and culture taught by professors from Nankai University through the Confucius Institute of PR China.

Don made his Chapter Endowment Initiative gift in support of New Jersey Alpha at Stevens Institute of Technology because he finds value in seeing joy on the faces of those around him and has already begun to see the benefits to students.

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