In recognition of outstanding lifetime achievements, Dr. Warren G. Schlinger, California Beta '44, is a 2008 Tau Beta Pi Distinguished Alumnus. He is a venerated industrial leader and a philanthropist.

Dr. Schlinger began his career with aspirations to learn more about engineering practice in order to become 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 numerous students the opportunity to explore engineering to achieve their own goals. Through his years of dedication to innovation, commitment to education, and 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 remained for 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 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 were noted by the technical achievement award of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, the chemical engineering practice award of the AIChe, the KFA achievement award of the Electric Power Research Institute, a lifetime achievement award of the Gasification Technical Council, and by his election to the National Academy of Engineering in 1991.

During his retirement Dr. Schlinger has been able to focus on lasting philanthropic activities with his wife, Katharine, establishing the Warren & Katharine Schlinger Foundation. The foundation has supported nearly 50 organizations, endowed professional chairs at multiple universities, and provided 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 summarized 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.”