

## 2001 Engineer of Distinction



### Leighton E. Sissom

B.S. Industrial Arts, Middle Tennessee State College, 1956

B.S. Mechanical Engineering, TPI, 1962

M.S. Mechanical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, 1964

Ph.D. Mechanical Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, 1965

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Cookeville, Tennessee

### Citation

Leighton E. Sissom is a native of Manchester, Tennessee. He holds bachelor's degrees in Industrial Arts from Middle Tennessee State College and Mechanical Engineering from Tennessee Polytechnic Institute. Additionally, he holds both a master's degree and doctorate from Georgia Institute of Technology.

After receiving his initial degree from Middle Tennessee State college, Dr. Sissom gained one-year experience as a Mechanical Designer at ARO, Inc. on Arnold Air Force Station near Tullahoma, Tennessee. Dr. Sissom then came to TTU (then Tennessee Polytechnic Institute) as an instructor in Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Science. While fully occupied with this instruction, he simultaneously achieved his bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering at TTU. Subsequent to this he attended Georgia Institute of Technology and received both his Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Mechanical Engineering.

Returning to TTU as a faculty member in the Mechanical Engineering Department, Dr. Sissom quickly rose to the rank of Professor and was installed as Chairman of the Mechanical Engineering Department. When James Seay Brown retired as Dean of the College of Engineering in 1979, Dr. Sissom was selected to assume the responsibilities of the office. During his tenure as Dean of the College of Engineering, Dr. Sissom continued the enhancement of the College's reputation for excellence and soon had Tennessee Technological University's College of Engineering recognized nationally as well as internationally.

A tireless worker, Dr. Sissom leads by example and expects the best from those with him. His long list of accomplishments and honors include: A Fellow of ABET, ASEE, ASME, and NAFE (National Academy of Forensic Engineers); the international 1989 American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Scrivner Award for the best non-ASSE safety paper published in world literature; a national 1993 ASEE Centennial Medallion for contributions to engineering education; the national 1994 Leighton Collins Award from ASEE for impact

on engineering education; and the international 1994 UPADI Gold Vector Award from the Pan-American Federation of Engineering Societies for notable contributions to the creation of global engineering standards.

His service includes tenure on the governing boards of ABET, ASEE, AAES, ASME, JETS, Tau Beta Pi, and the Order of the Engineer. He served on ABET's Engineering Accreditation Commission, has been director and treasurer of ABET, chair of ABET's Related Accreditation Commission, was director and president of ASEE, has chaired ASEE's Engineering Dean's Council, been governor and senior vice president of education for ASME, served on SAE's Engineering Education Board, vice president of Tau Beta Pi, and governor and national Chair of the Order of the Engineer. He is also a member of NSPE, TSPE and an honorary member of Pi Tau Sigma.

A registered Professional Engineer and Certified Diplomate Forensic Engineer, Dr. Sissom has served as a consultant to over 700 clients in over 40 states and 11 foreign countries, including evaluation of engineering in 92 U.S. universities and 23 universities in 9 foreign countries. He has written over 100 papers, more than 2,000 proprietary reports, contributed to the Encyclopedia Britannica and to the Wiley Encyclopedia of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and co-authored 4 books.

In addition to his professional life, Dr. Sissom and his wife, Evelyn, have three successful children, two sons and a daughter. Dr. Sissom is very active in his church and has been an elder at Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ in Cookeville for over 20 years.



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