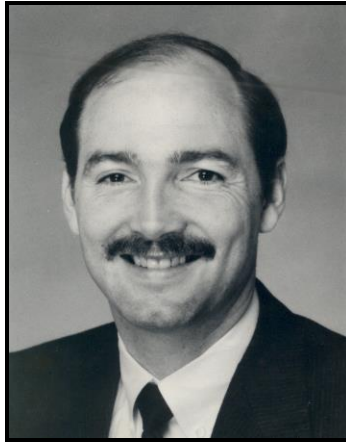


## 1989 Engineer of Distinction



### C. Stephen Lynn

B.S. Industrial Engineering, TTU, 1970

M.S. Business Administration, University of Louisville, 1973

President, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board  
Sonic Industries  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

### Citation

C. Stephen Lynn, a 1970 industrial engineering graduate of Tennessee Technological University, has always been driven by a single goal—to run a company. In 1983, he realized that goal when he was named president and chief executive officer of Sonic Industries, the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> largest fast food franchiser with corporate headquarters in Oklahoma City.

As a young child, Lynn set in motion his plans to become a company head. A tennis scholarship provided the means for Lynn to attend TTU. During his undergraduate days, Lynn's prowess on the tennis court earned him the Tennessee Intercollegiate Tennis Champion title. He was listed in "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities" and in "Outstanding College Athletes of America."

Following his December 1970 graduation, Lynn immediately began working with Brown and Williams Corporation as an industrial engineer with responsibilities for the raw materials processing and recycling departments.

Lynn was awarded an MBA with honors in 1973 and began his food industry career with the Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation. During his five-year tenure with the company he was twice promoted and had responsibility for the over \$100 million distribution division. Departing from the food industry in 1978, Lynn became vice president for Century 21 Real Estate at their corporate headquarters in Irvine, California. During his three years with the company, Lynn served as supervisor of the product control and service division and as president and chief executive officer of Marquest, Inc., a marketing support subsidiary of Century 21 Real Estate Corporation.

In 1980, Lynn returned to the food industry as executive vice president, chief operating officer and director of the Burston Corporation, a privately-held west coast chain of theme restaurants called the "Warehouse." His responsibilities included implementing the franchise program, handling financial and legal matters, managing the corporate pension and profit-sharing funds, arranging purchasing and financing for a new corporate facility and supervising a 350-member staff.

In November 1983, Lynn was hired to lead the 1950's-style Sonic Drive-In restaurant chain. Since joining the nearly 1,000-unit chain with restaurants in 21 southwest and Sunbelt states, Lynn has implemented a number of "first-ever" programs. Some of those programs include redesigning and updating the then 25-year-old restaurant chain's "look," and organizing the formation of 51 advertising and purchasing cooperatives. The success of these and other programs is evidenced by the chain-wide increase in sales, from \$265 million to over \$360 million during Lynn's five years as CEO. In 1986, he successfully headed an investment group that completed a leveraged buy-out of Sonic Industries.

In addition to his responsibilities at Sonic Industries, Lynn lends his talents to numerous local, state and national organizations. Some of his activities include board memberships for the University of Oklahoma School of Business, Baptist Medical Center, Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Salvation Army and International Franchise Association. Lynn is an executive committee member of the Young President's Association, International Franchise Association, and is a member of the National Restaurant Association, Oklahoma Restaurant Association, Institute of Industrial Engineers, Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club. He is currently serving a four-year appointment to the Oklahoma City Municipal Improvement Authority, a three-year term of the Board of trustees for the Oklahoma Art Center, and is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

In 1987 Lynn was nominated for *Venture Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" and was featured in the *Wall Street Journal's* "Who's News" section.



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