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Lamar Dunn receives 2015 Alumni Award

by Jerry Renshaw

February 9, 2015

Lamar Dunn, a 1964 graduate of Tennessee Tech University's civil engineering program, received the 2015 Alumni Award at a banquet on February 6, 2015. Dunn was also named as Engineer of Distinction in 2014.



Dunn spent much of his career with LDA Engineering in Chattanooga, a company he established in 1982. LDA Engineering, which specializes in designing and building water and wastewater systems, grew to become an international firm, with projects in the Middle East, Asia, Canada and elsewhere. Among LDA's recent projects are industrial waste treatment facilities in Korea, and a 19-kilometer highway bypass, landfills, water storage facilities and two major pumping stations, all in Iraq.

In his 50 years in the engineering field, Dunn has seen a lot of things change.

"I was out of school for nine years before I saw a hand-held calculator," said Dunn. "I mean, come over here today and ask students about a slide rule, but we made a lot of money using slide rules, didn't we? I remember our guy who was in charge of plans saying that the industry would never go over to 100% CAD, that there would always be room for someone to do drawings. Now nobody knows how to even start to hand-draw anything...in my day, we were doing technical drawings with ink on linen. You make a mistake there, you've got a real problem!"

After he graduated from Tech, Dunn went to work with the Tennessee Department of Public Health, Division of Sanitary Engineering. The division's main mission was municipal wastewater and public water supplies, and in 1967 Dunn opened an office in Knoxville, the Department of Public Health's first one outside of Nashville. Today, the division has three more field offices, and is engaged in air pollution control and many other duties.

After nine years with the Department of Public Health, Dunn was employed with Russell and Axon, where he advanced to the position of executive vice president. His time at Russell and Axon took him to destinations such as Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Geneva, Saudi Arabia, Greece and Italy, although he was ostensibly in charge of domestic operations.

Today, Dunn is settling happily into retirement.

"For starters, you get to spend a lot more time at home," said Dunn. "It's been a great run, but I was spending more time on airplanes than I wanted to be. I wanted to be able to drive to City Council meetings and spend my nights sleeping in my own bed."

Last edited 2015.03.17 by unknown.