Teer endows nuclear engineering scholarship at Texas A & M University

Texas A&M University

Bill R. Teer of Fairfax, Va., will endow the second scholarship in the Robert G. Cochran Scholars Program for nuclear engineering undergraduates at Texas A&M University.

“The nuclear renaissance is real and will result in the design, construction and operation of many nuclear power plants over the next decade. There will be an increased demand for highly trained nuclear engineers, and this scholarship will help Texas A&M meet the demand,” said Teer, who retired as senior vice president of JAI Corporation in 2006 after more than a half-century in the nuclear industry.

His gift of $25,000, funded through the Texas A&M Foundation, will establish the Bill R. Teer ’55 Scholarship. Matching funds from Ray Rothrock of Portola Valley, Calif., will increase the endowment to $50,000. Recipients will be juniors or seniors with a preference for students pursuing studies in a power-related area.

“Nuclear engineering academic programs are very competitive these days, as universities anticipate a new wave of reactor orders and the nuclear industry experiences a revival. Bill Teer’s generous gift, along with Ray Rothrock’s matching amount, will help us in a major way to attract the most gifted and talented students to Texas A&M,” said Ray Juzaitis, nuclear engineering department head and holder of the Sallie and Don Davis ’61 Professorship in Engineering.

The Cochran Scholars Program honors the first Texas A&M nuclear engineering department head. Cochran served 22 years, and under his leadership the discipline’s first undergraduate program emerged as did Texas A&M’s signature specialties in reactor physics and analysis, reactor safety and thermal hydraulics, health physics and computational methods.

Born in Alto, Texas, Teer grew up in Dallas and graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School.

“I was the first on either side of my family to go to A&M, which I chose because of its great engineering reputation,” said Teer, who graduated in 1955 with a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering.

As a freshman he was part of the elite Fish Drill Team in the Corps of Cadets and regularly took 20 to 21 credit hours during his entire college career. A strong interest in nuclear power surfaced by his junior year.

“I took all available courses, which at that time consisted of Introduction to Nuclear Engineering in the chemE department and Atomic Physics in the physics

department," he said. "My first job was with Westinghouse Atomic Power Division at Bettis Laboratory in Pittsburgh, Penn., working on reactor designs for the nuclear powered submarines and surface ships in the U.S. Navy."

He changed from military to civilian nuclear power in 1964, working a decade for United Nuclear Corp. in White Plains, N.Y., before moving to Transnuclear Inc. in Elmsford, N.Y., as vice president focused on the transportation and storage of radioactive materials.

In 1991 Teer moved to Virginia and became vice president of JAI's transportation department. The company had contracted with the U.S. Department of Energy to design a transportation system for moving spent fuel from reactors to a proposed Nevada repository.

His long association with nuclear oversight included serving on the national advisory panel for transportation of hazardous materials and more than 50 years as a member of the American Nuclear Society.

Teer is a member of the National Capitol A&M Club, where he served on the board of directors for six years. At Texas A&M he is a 24-year, gold-level member of the Association of Former Students' Century Club. He and his wife, Patricia, frequently return to campus for class reunion activities.

The couple will celebrate their 52nd anniversary this year, according to Teer: "I married Patricia McFarland in 1958 in Mars, Penn. My Texas family was aghast that I married a Yankee, but they quickly accepted her."

The couple has traveled widely in retirement, adding 18 countries and numerous Caribbean islands to the dozen nations Teer had visited while working. They enjoy competitive duplicate bridge, and Teer attends classes at George Mason University to "get a better perspective on the world outside of the engineering profession."

"Mr. Teer's generous gift is a testament to his appreciation for the education he received at Texas A&M. This most recent gift further demonstrates his desire to help Aggie students for many generations to come, and we are all deeply grateful," said Andrew Acker, director of development for engineering with the Texas A&M Foundation.

The Department of Nuclear Engineering is one of 12 departments in the Dwight Look College of Engineering at Texas A&M. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks the department second in undergraduate and third in graduate programs among the nation's public universities.

The Texas A&M Foundation *[1] is a non-profit organization that receives major gifts and manages endowments for the sole benefit of Texas A&M University.*

Written by Exa York [2]

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