



Mechanical Engineering  
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

## **J. Mike Walker, Ph.D.**

*Distinguished Mechanical Engineer, 2009*

BSME, Texas A&M University, 1966

MSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1968

Ph.D., ME, Texas A&M University, 1974

*Chairman, President and CEO (Retired)*

Dril-Quip

J. Mike Walker was born on May 22, 1943 in a two-room log cabin east of Huntington, Texas. He attended school at Huntington, where he graduated in 1961 as the class valedictorian, played on two UIL state championship basketball teams, set a county scoring record, and played in the UIL state all-star game. Upon graduation, he attended Kilgore College on a basketball scholarship, but quit sports after one semester to concentrate on engineering. He then attended Stephen F. Austin State University and later Texas A&M University, where he graduated with a BSME degree, and was ranked number 1 in the ME graduating class. After A&M, he attended UT on a NSF fellowship, graduating with an MSME degree.

Mike then took a job with Exxon Refining, and after four years of work requested a leave to return to A&M and pursue a Ph.D. degree in ME. While attending A&M for three years as a full-time student, Walker also taught engineering mechanics in the ME Department. He earned his Ph.D. in ME, graduating in 1974 with a 4.0 GPA. Walker then returned to Exxon, working at Exxon Production Research Company in the Offshore Department as a subsea engineer. He subsequently worked for McEvoy and Vetco Offshore before partnering with two Vetco vice presidents (Larry E. Reimert and Gary D. Smith) to form a private company, Dril-Quip, in April 1981. The three co-founders and co-CEOs began developing innovative products, grew the company and took it public on the NYSE under the

ticker symbol DRQ with an IPO on October 23, 1997.

The IPO was a huge success with the offered stock being 30 times oversubscribed, resulting in Dril-Quip being the largest price percentage (%) gainer on the NYSE that day. With the influx of capital, Dril-Quip increased its growth rate and became a major player in the subsea drilling and production arena. Dril-Quip established a reputation for designing, manufacturing and marketing innovative subsea equipment for offshore deepwater and high-pressure applications. Dril-Quip also developed a Forge & Heat Treat Division, making it the only totally vertically integrated offshore service company.

Work at Dril-Quip was Walker's dream job until losing both of his partners and very good friends, one to a heart attack and the other to cancer in 2009 and 2010. Walker then decided it was time to retire, go home to his wife, Donna, and three children – work was simply no longer “fun”. At the time, Mike was chairman, president and CEO of Dril-Quip, as well as the largest shareholder of the publicly-traded company, which now had a market cap in excess of 4 billion dollars and some 2200 employees at its various manufacturing, sales and service centers around the world. Along the way, Walker had been inducted into the Distinguished Mechanical Engineering Academies at both The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University, as well as the Huntington Red Devil Basketball Hall of Fame.