



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

Catherine P. Foerster

Distinguished Mechanical Engineer, 2005

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, with
Highest Honors, 1977

Commissioner

Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

Cathy Foerster earned a BSME degree with highest honors from The University of Texas in 1977 and then joined Exxon Company USA in Houston, where she worked as a reservoir engineer for various Gulf Coast fields. She subsequently worked as a facilities engineer on gas transmission lines and compressor stations in South Texas.

In 1979 she left Exxon to work for ARCO as an operations engineer in various South Texas fields. She was promoted to Area Engineer in 1982. In 1987 she transferred to ARCO headquarters in Dallas, serving as liaison between the South Texas District and ARCO's executive management. In this role she advocated for approval of the district's major projects. In 1989 she transferred to ARCO's research center in Plano, where she managed several production engineering groups.

In 1992 Cathy moved to ARCO Alaska to take on new challenges, initially serving as operations superintendent for wellwork and drillsite maintenance at Prudhoe Bay, then the largest oil field in North America. In 1994 she switched to an Anchorage assignment, managing the engineers and geoscientists responsible for developing new field discoveries and optimizing production from Kuparuk, then the second largest oil field in North America. In 1998, seeking a different role, she was given the opportunity to work as a lobbyist for ARCO.

When ARCO was acquired by BP in 2000, Cathy became the project manager for the design and construction of the BP Energy Center, a highly innovative community center for non-profit organizations. Cathy left BP in 2002 to work as an engineering consultant.

In 2005, the governor of Alaska appointed Cathy to serve as the engineering commissioner for the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, an agency similar to the

oil and gas section of the Texas Railroad Commission. In that position she advocated for better federal compliance with Alaska regulations, updating and strengthening Alaska's hydraulic fracturing regulations, and determining appropriate reservoir management for major gas sales from the North Slope of Alaska.

In 2008, Cathy was named to the Athena Society, a national organization of business professionals who are recognized for mentoring young women. Also in 2008, she was named a Distinguished Graduate of The University of Texas College of Engineering.

Throughout her career, Cathy has kept strong ties to The University of Texas as a corporate recruiter of engineering graduates, a contributor to Friends of Alec since its creation, and one of the founders of the Texas Exes Alaska Chapter, where she currently serves as its president. She has led the Texas Exes in welcoming the cyclists of Texas4000 for Cancer Austin-to-Anchorage ride every year since the organization's creation in 2004.

Cathy maintains an active spiritual life and has devoted countless hours volunteering in support of positive youth development and helping the needy, mentoring students and promoting their interests in math, science, and engineering, and mentoring young engineers, especially women, in dealing with the unique challenges of the oil and gas industry. She has organized volunteer activities for her office, for the Texas Exes, and for her church. She is an avid reader, outdoorswoman, and swimmer.

Cathy married her college sweetheart, Keith, and they have two sons, Kenny and Nate. Kenny is a family practice physician in Washington and Nate is the marketing director for an Alaska furniture company. Both are Eagle Scouts.