



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

David E. Leigh

Mechanical Engineering Hall of Fame, 2012

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1968
MS, Operations Research and Industrial
Engineering, The University of Texas at Austin, 1972

(Retired)

IBM

CFO

Harvest Technologies, Inc.

David E. Leigh was born in Temple, Texas, in 1945 to Rush and Virginia Leigh of Pendleton. David grew up on a farm with his older brother Harold and attended public school in Troy, Texas. He followed his brother to The University of Texas at Austin to study engineering in the 1960s, and went on to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering in 1968. When Harold was asked why he wanted to major in engineering, he stated, "We grew up on a farm near the railroad. I always looked out at those trains and thought, 'Now that's the job for me.' So, during my study hall, I started doing some research on 'Engineer' and found that I didn't really understand what an engineer was. But, since I was good at math and science, I still thought being an engineer might be something I'd like to do."

Upon graduation, David was offered a job at IBM as they started operations in Austin. But his plans for employment were delayed by a couple of years as he served in the military at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. While there, he completed an MS degree in Administration with specialization in Management Engineering. With his commitment

to the military fulfilled, he returned to Austin to start a family and a new career at IBM. He went on to complete a MS in ME with an operations research specialization. David's career focused on advancements in manufacturing and took him from the production of typewriters in the late '60s to servers in the 1990s. He retired from IBM after 24 years in 1992.

In 1995, David (along with his son) founded Harvest Technologies, Inc., which utilizes the laser sintering process developed in the Department of Mechanical Engineering in the 1980s. He has been instrumental in guiding the growth of the company as the CFO and has helped develop a new era in digital manufacturing.

His legacy continues with both of his sons as well as his grandchildren. His son, David, is a graduate of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at UT Austin, and his son James is a business graduate of Texas Tech University and works at the corporate office of Southwest Airlines in Dallas.