



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

David K. Leigh

Outstanding Young Mechanical Engineer, 2007

BSME, University of Texas at Austin, 1991
MSME, University of Texas at Austin, 2011

Founder
Harvest Technologies, Inc.

David K. Leigh is a third generation University of Texas at Austin alumnus. David was born in Austin at a time when his father, David E. Leigh, was wrapping up his undergraduate studies in UT Austin's Department of Mechanical Engineering. He grew up on a farm near Temple, TX and graduated with 35 other classmates from Troy High School in 1986. He grew up around technology, with his father working at IBM in Austin, and was introduced to manufacturing and computers in the 1970s. His father brought home their family's first IBM PC in 1981, and since there were no internet or computer stores, David had to learn to program in Basic just to be able to use the computer.

While in college, David took advantage of the engineering cooperative education program, and had an opportunity to work in polymer processing at Dow Chemical and manufacturing at Texas Instruments. As he was preparing for his 3rd semester of 'co-oping' in 1990, he was introduced to a new high-tech startup in Austin- DTM Corporation. DTM was working to commercialize Selective Laser Sintering (SLS), a new 3D Printing technology that was developed by UT Ph.D. student Carl Deckard and his professor Dr. Joseph Beaman. This introduction ended up channeling David's career in the emerging technology of rapid prototyping and additive manufacturing. He married his wife Janet and achieved his BS and MS in mechanical engineering from UT while working in this new technology field.

David has been a champion for the SLS process throughout his career, serving on SME's Rapid Technologies and Additive Manufacturing (RTAM) Steering Committee and ASTM's F42 Standards Committee for Additive Manufacturing. He worked at DTM Corporation in Austin as part of the original team that commercialized laser sintering in the early 90s. He left DTM and started Harvest Technologies in 1995, continued to partner with UT in the field of additive manufacturing, and was a co-founder of several other 3D Printing-related companies that were eventually acquired during the consolidation in the industry between 2010 and 2015. Much of his work led to the adoption and qualification of the 3D Printing process in aerospace to produce end-use parts.

In addition to his work in additive manufacturing, David has been active in his local community of Belton, Texas, serving on local boards and commissions, participating in the Chamber of Commerce and other local service organizations, serving as a councilmember for the City of Belton, and being active in his local church. David and his wife Janet love serving in their community, spending time with family, attending UT sporting events, and travel. They have continued to support the university through such endeavors as establishing the Leigh Family Endowed Excellence Fund in Engineering for Student Projects, and the Engineering Education and Research Center.