



Mechanical Engineering  
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

## **R. Don Foster**

*Mechanical Engineering Hall of Fame, 2012*

BS, Physics, West Texas State Normal College  
(now West Texas A&M)

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1948

*Inventor (Retired)*

Foster Consulting Engineering, Inc.

Don Foster enjoyed the hobby of building scaled replica engines in his garage metal shop. Averaging 10 hours a week for over 40 years, Don has portrayed the history of engines as far back as 80 A.D. Steam engines, internal combustion engines, external combustion engines, and a working steam tractor show every detail to scale. Don has gifted these beautiful, historical engines to The University of Texas Mechanical Engineering Department for display.

Don was born in Canyon, Texas, in 1922, where in his early youth, his “tinkering” habits were formed while watching the local blacksmiths. Growing up in Boy Scouts, Don enjoyed camping and exploring Palo Dura Canyon on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout. Working in his father’s garage, Don’s “tinkering” led him to become the town’s bicycle repairman. Completing a Physics degree from West Texas State Normal College (now West Texas A&M), Don

became an active duty meteorologist for the United States Army Air Corps. After the war, Don acquired a second degree in mechanical engineering from The University of Texas at Austin in 1948 on the GI Bill. Don is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the Society of Industrial Archeology, Tau Bet Pi, and Pi Tau Sigma.

Professionally, Don worked for CRC (Crutcher, Rolfs and Cummings) in Houston, Texas, as Chief Engineer for 6 years. He then worked for Sterling Packing & Gaskets prior to starting his own consulting business in 1956. His business, Foster Consulting Engineering, was heavy in design for pipeline equipment, oil fields, metallic buildings, as well as other projects presented by clients. Over the years, Don has developed close to 30 patents, some on behalf of his clients and others his own. Later, Don provided expert witness testimony for legal cases as a part time business.