



Mechanical Engineering  
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

## **Harovel G. Wheat, Ph.D., P.E.**

*Mechanical Engineering Hall of Fame, 2015*

BA, Chemistry, University of Colorado, 1969  
MS, Metallurgy, University of Denver, 1974  
Ph.D., ME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1985

*Associate Professor (Retired)*  
Department of Mechanical Engineering,  
The University of Texas at Austin

Harovel Grays Wheat grew up in Sulphur Springs and Tyler, Texas as the only child of Harrison and Velma Grays. After graduating cum laude with a BA in Chemistry from the University of Colorado in 1969, she worked for Marathon Oil Company as a technical information specialist. She married Dan Wheat in 1970 and was married until 1990. She received her MS in metallurgy from the University of Denver in 1974 and worked as a research associate in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Colorado State University until 1975. Her first child, Danelle, was born in 1977. Her second child, Daniel, was born in 1984, shortly before she received her Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from The University of Texas at Austin in 1985. After graduating, she became a research associate in the department and joined the faculty as an assistant professor in 1986.

Her research interests focused on the corrosion of structural materials, particularly steel-reinforced concrete, metal and polymer matrix composites, corrosion diagnostics, smart coatings, and corrosion issues associated with clean energy technologies. In her first five years as a faculty member, she was awarded the Office of Naval Research Young Investigator Award (1989), the Mechanical Engineering Teaching Award (1991), and the Banks McLaurin Fellowship in Engineering (1991). She was promoted to associate professor in 1992.

Over the years, Harovel graduated 26 MS and Ph.D. students, served on scores of doctoral committees, supervised more than 20 undergraduate research assistants, and served as the faculty advisor for more than 50 senior design projects. She served as the departmental associate chair for academic affairs for 14 years (2001-2015) and as the undergraduate faculty advisor for 11 years (2004-2015). She was also a Faculty Fellow at NASA Langley Research Center and had a Faculty Sabbatical at NASA Kennedy Space Center in the summer and fall of 2004, respectively.

In addition to her other duties, Harovel served as the Faculty Advisor for the Society of Women Engineers, the National Society of Black Engineers, Pi Sigma Pi, the Texas Society of Professional Engineers, and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. She participated in many mentoring programs and served as a faculty fellow in Kinsolving, Littlefield, and Jester residence halls for more than 15 years. Outside of work, Harovel is an active member of Ebenezer Baptist Church and enjoys music, gardening, and traveling.

Harovel retired in August of 2015, and has remained active in corrosion issues and undergraduate/graduate engineering education.