



Mechanical Engineering  
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

## **Steven Nichols, PhD**

*Distinguished Mechanical Engineer, 2020*

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1972  
MSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1973  
PhD, The University of Texas at Austin, 1975  
JD, The University of Texas at Austin, 1983

*Professor of Mechanical Engineering (Retired)*  
*Director, MSE in Engineering Management*  
The University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Steven P. Nichols is a Professor (retired) in the Walker Department of Mechanical Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin. He is a professional engineer and licensed attorney.

Dr. Nichols initially joined the Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1976 as an Assistant Professor. In 1978 he formed an engineering consulting firm, and from 1978 until 1985, he gained broad industrial experience in consulting for industrial clients and other organizations, such as Florida Power and Light, Smith Industries, Plastics Manufacturing Company, Iowa Power and Light, Electric Power Research Institute, and the U.S. Department of Energy. He earned his law degree in 1983 and has been involved in litigation involving product liability and intellectual property. Dr. Nichols rejoined the Department of Mechanical Engineering in September of 1985, with his research interests including topics in technology entrepreneurship, engineering design and manufacturing, internal combustion engines, and engineering professional responsibility. He has taught continuing education/professional development courses across the United States as well as on every continent (except Antarctica).

Dr. Nichols has developed engineering design courses in cooperation with faculty in electrical and computer engineering, chemical engineering,

aerospace engineering, management, and art. He has also developed a cross-disciplinary course in technology entrepreneurship in cooperation with the College of Engineering, the College of Natural Sciences, the McCombs School of Business, the School of Law, and the IC2 Institute.

Dr. Nichols has served as the Associate Vice President for Research at the University, the Associate Chair for the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Resources (formerly the Center for Energy Studies), Director of the Murchison Chair of Free Enterprise, Acting Director of the Center for Electromechanics, and as Director of the Option III Engineering Management program in the Cockrell School of Engineering. In 2009, Dr. Nichols received the Joe J. King Professorship Award from the Cockrell School of Engineering for Faculty Excellence. He was selected as a Master of the Bench of the American Inn of Court (Intellectual Property) in 2010. In 2011, Dr. Nichols was named the Annis and Jack Bowen Endowed Professor in Engineering and was recognized as the Entrepreneurship Educator of the Year by USASBE. He was recognized as a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation in 2012.