

Immediate Release

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George A. Smith Awarded First Distinguished Alumni Award by the Chicago Engineers' Foundation

Building Engineers for the Future

CHICAGO —Mr. George A. Smith (Class of 1971) was awarded the first [Chicago Engineers' Foundation](#) (CEF) Distinguished Alumni Award due to his career accomplishments, launching the [National Society of Black Engineers](#) with his colleagues, and encouraging aspiring engineers. Mr. Smith's honor was a highlight during the 50th Anniversary Incentive Awards Dinner at the Chicago Union League Club of Chicago (ULCC) on June 13, 2019. CEF is one of three foundations of the ULCC.



The Distinguished Alumni Award was established by the CEF Board of Directors this year to honor past award recipients for their professional achievements and dedication to future engineers. CEF President and award alum (Class of 1996) Erik Cempel, P.E., presented the honor to Mr. Smith during the evening festivities.

Mr. Smith received his CEF scholarship award as a Lindblom High School graduate. He attended Purdue University, pursuing a degree in electrical engineering. While at Purdue, George Smith was one of six undergraduate students who established a first-of-its-kind professional and mentoring society for minority engineering students called the Society of Black Engineers. Its mission was to help minority students adapt to the college environment, adjust to the academic rigors of engineering, and develop the professional skills required in the workplace. In 1975, with the support of Purdue University, Professor Arthur Bond, and corporate sponsors, the six undergraduates established the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).

Today, NSBE has grown from six founding members to more than 17,000 members, with over 500 chapters worldwide. During Mr. Smith's remarks, he recognized all of the NSBE co-founders, including Brian Harris, who also attended the celebration. Mr. Smith emphasized to the over 200 attendees that evening that "engineering is a team sport," an idea that he and his colleagues put into practice by helping other engineers: their success is evident from NSBE's growth.

Mr. Smith joined General Electric after completing his studies in electrical engineering from Purdue University. In 1978 he joined Hewlett Packard. At HP he won the President's Club Award which was presented by the company's founders, Bill Hewlett, and Dave Packard. In 1992 he authored two books on business improvement,

which were published by the American Society for Quality when with his consulting firm. In 2015 he retired. He is active with NSBE Jr., NSBE Professionals, Project Syncere, Men of Color Connected for Higher Achievement, PTA Men of Brookdale, and Calvary Christian Church.

CEF presented over \$116,000 in student awards during the evening. The Class of 2019 comprises 24 Chicago high schools. Thirty-five percent of awardees are first-generation college students. The average non-weighted student GPA is 3.58. CEF has awarded over \$600,000 to students over the past five years. For a list of the student award winners, visit [here](#).

Special thanks to the event sponsors: [HNTB](#), [Focus Group Holdings](#), [CBC Meetings +](#), [Golden Square](#), and the [University of Illinois at Chicago](#). The leadership of CEF extends congratulations to the Class of 2019 and is grateful for the generous support of this year's awards celebration.

The [Chicago Engineers' Foundation](#) (CEF) of the [Union League Club of Chicago](#) (ULCC) contributes to the civic and economic advancement of its community and country by encouraging and promoting the vital profession of engineering. CEF advances its mission primarily through its Incentive Awards, which grants educational scholarships to college-bound high school graduates of Chicago high schools or currently enrolled undergraduate college students who are pursuing engineering degrees at an accredited four-year university. For more details, visit www.chicagoengineersfoundation.org

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