

Kate Gleason College of Engineering Alumni Newsletter



Summer 2005

Dean's Corner



This historic 175th Anniversary year has been noteworthy with respect to initiatives undertaken to foster student success.

For the past several years, the Institute has targeted student retention as a key priority. Although the quality of RIT's freshman class has steadily improved each year, the retention rate of students at RIT consistently has been below average relative to its peer institutions, with engineering lagging the Institute average by several percentage points. To address this issue, the College four years ago initiated a multifaceted program to minimize the impediments to student success, including stronger advising support, early intervention for at-risk students, and a series of co-curricular elements to create a strong sense of community among the students within the College. This year, we celebrate the full impact of these initiatives, as the students entering the College in fall 2003 returned to RIT in fall 2004 at the historically high rate of 91.6%, exceeding 90% for the first time in the College's history. Of the eight RIT colleges, only Imaging Arts & Science (CIAS) had a higher retention rate (92.1%). Since fall 2000, the first-to-second year attrition for those entering the College has been cut nearly in half; the largest degree of improvement of any college at RIT over this time period.

At the Institute level, to improve freshmen retention rates, the concept of learning communities was piloted with first-year students this past fall, and the KGCOE has enthusiastically embraced this initiative. A learning community is comprised of ~ 25 students who take the majority of their courses together, with their instructors meeting regularly to coordinate course content to

continued on page 8

Meet Distinguished Alum Allen Casey

When Allen Casey (EE, '73), KGCOE's Distinguished Alum for 2004, addressed KGCOE graduates, he shared his memories of RIT and what his education has meant to him:

"I credit much of my success to my time at RIT and my co-op experiences. First, I got a great technical education. That education included two years of calculus every morning at 8:00 a.m. - something I will never forget, as hard as I have tried. But just as important as the technical course work, maybe even *more* important, was the thought process that was ingrained in me at RIT - the logical, problem solving methodology, combined with the necessary time management skills, that got me through a very demanding engineering curriculum. It was instilled in me 30 years ago and is still part of me today."



Like many students today, the co-op experience drew Al to RIT in the first place. He thought that co-op made perfect sense - for financial reasons and for the learning process. Like many of the companies that recruit our graduates every year, Al feels that the co-op experience gives students a leg up, not only on technical skills, but on communication skills and understanding the politics of the world of work.

Al leveraged his KGCOE education into professional successes at many companies. He eventually

continued on page 6

Allen Casey

continued from page 1

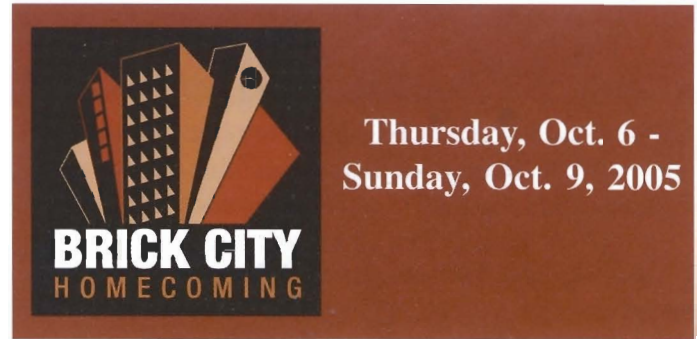
partnered with Joe Straub and two other RIT graduates, Bill Liberto ('82) and Ron Mead ('81) to form a highly successful engineering company – M/E Engineering – in 1991. The company has experienced phenomenal growth in these few short years and now has 125 employees, including 24 RIT alums (see photo below), in offices in Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse and Albany.

Several years ago M/E established a scholarship fund to honor RIT and show their appreciation of the great graduates the company hires. The M/E Engineering Scholarship is awarded to mechanical or electrical engineering students in the KGCOE or the College of Applied Science and Technology.

Al's professional accomplishments, his appreciation for his education, and his commitment to RIT, and the larger community clearly demonstrate the best of RIT and we are delighted to honor Al Casey as the 2004 KGCOE Distinguished Alum of the Year.

The difference between theory and practice is that in theory there is no difference between theory and practice, but in practice there is.

Anonymous



In addition to all the other activities and entertainment of Brick City Homecoming, the Kate Gleason College of Engineering will present several lectures and host a college reception on Saturday morning, with other activities scheduled throughout the day.

Drs. Mustafa Abushagur and Alan Raisanen will highlight the recent advances in nanotechnology and the exciting possibilities for enhancing the quality of life through the development of microsystem-based products. Dr. Kevin Kochersberger will talk about his experience in the recreation of the Wright Brothers' flight at Kittyhawk.

Watch your mailbox for the *Brick City* brochure and make your plans to visit campus in October.

If you haven't been here in a while, you'll be delighted by all the changes and the beautiful landscaping surrounding the academic areas.

**Call your friends and invite them
to join you in the celebration!
We'd love to see you all there!**



RIT Alumni at M/E Engineering, P.C.

From left to right: 1st Row: John A. Dredger (BS '93), William P. Liberto (BS '82), Bernard C. Fischer (BS '79), Allen G. Casey (BS '73), James D. Pascarella (BS '70); 2nd Row: Ronald C. Mead (BT '81), Kerry A. Fikes (BS '02), Charles T. Sidoti (BS '86), Darren J. Pieters (BS '02), Norman A. Johnson (BS '89), Robert C. Zingo (BT '84), Tracy L. Strong (BS '01), Muchineripi M. Chirenje (AAS '94), Craig E. Mott (BS '04), James P. Chatelle (BT '85), Jonathan R. Eastman (BS '78); 3rd Row: Douglas A. Rose (BS '97), Chad E. Fikes (BS '97), Richard F. Gostling (BS '01), David N. Wylie (BS '91), Kristofer A. Johnson (BS '01), James P. Barnum (BS '00)
Not present in photograph: Calvin J. Puffer (BS '76), Kurt P. Kubli (BT '82)