

IMPACT

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Featured article:
JACK GRAHAM

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2022 Hall of Fame

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JACK H. GRAHAM

Jack H. Graham is the owner of Graham and Associates Professional Consulting Engineers in Yukon, Oklahoma. In 1959 he graduated from Oklahoma State University with a bachelor of science in electrical engineering. Graham entered engineering at a time of major advancement in aerospace technology and worked on numerous ground-breaking projects in the middle of the U.S.-Soviet Union space race.

Graham was born on March 16, 1937, and raised on a dairy farm just outside of

Oklahoma City, Okla., as the youngest of four brothers. His oldest brother attended Oklahoma A&M and graduated with an electrical engineering degree after serving in World War II. Each of the brothers followed in his footsteps and all achieved at least a master's degree, with Graham receiving a master's in business administration.

"When my brother was attending college, he didn't have to milk cows, and that looked promising," Graham said. "So, all of us went to OSU and achieved, at least, a master's degree and I haven't had to milk a cow since!"

Graham attended OSU while married with two children. He worked for the university's physical plant as an electrician's helper and finished his required 148 hours needed to complete a bachelor's in electrical engineering in only 3 and half years.

After graduating, Graham went to work for the Sperry Gyroscope Company in New York City, N.Y., where he participated in the development of electronic countermeasures designed to render the B52 bomber invisible to Soviet radar systems.

"This technology was brand new, and I was on the front line of its design," Graham said. "We didn't know a lot about transistors or solid-state electronics back in those days, but when I went to New York that's all we were doing; the very latest solid-state electronics."

After working for the Sperry Gyroscope Company for four years the company sent Graham to Salt Lake City, Utah, to work on a surface-to-surface missile system called Sergeant. The Sergeant was the first operational solid propellant, inertial guided missile system.

"I was involved in the Army acceptance and compliance testing performed at Aberdeen, Maryland and at Camp Hale in Colorado," Graham said. "We also fired several missiles at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico."

After leaving the Sperry Gyroscope Company, Graham went to work for Boeing at Red Stone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. While working with German rocket scientist, Wernher von Braun, Graham contributed to the development of the first stage of the Saturn 5 rocket system that would later put a man on the moon.

"I was a little cog in a great big wheel that put a man on the moon, one of the thousands of people involved in the project," Graham said. "That was the single most extensive effort of mankind. It had more people and more money invested in it than any other effort in history. It was very exciting."

Once the Saturn 5 system was running, Graham left Boeing to work for Ling-Temco-Vought in Grand Prairie, Texas. The project that company was focused on was creating a satellite system intended to shoot down Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles. It didn't work.

Having registered as a professional engineer during his time in Alabama, Graham moved back to Oklahoma City and began working for a mechanical and electrical engineering consulting firm. Graham bought this firm from its founders in 1974 and changed its name to Graham and Associates Professional Consulting Engineers.

Graham is a past president of the Oklahoma Society of Professional Engineers, a Fellow of the National Society of Professional Engineers, a benefactor of the CEAT Dean's Club, a member of the Proud and Immortal Society, a Maxwellian Member of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), a member of the ECE Industrial Advisory Board and a sponsor of the Jack H. Graham Endowed Fellowship presently held by Professor John O'Hara in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Graham credits his success in engineering to his education.

"It was essential," Graham said. "Everything I've done as a professional engineer was based on my education in the engineering department at OSU. I received as good, if not better, education than many of the engineers whom I worked with when I first joined Sperry. I'm very proud of the education I received at OSU. An engineering degree is an outstanding degree. It enables you to go out and, through technology, help build your society."

Graham encourages current students not to take their education for granted, "Pay attention to your professors. You're there for a purpose, and that purpose is to get educated. Don't waste that opportunity."