

# James Fee '65

WILLIAM R. GROGAN AWARD FOR SUPPORT OF THE MISSION OF WPI

Innovative, generous, spirited, loyal, and supportive. These are among the most common words used to describe Jim Fee. However, he may be best remembered as an entrepreneur and a cheerleader for others striving to make their dreams a reality.

Jim was a U.S. Navy veteran, an engineer, and a small business consultant. He majored in electrical engineering at WPI and was a member of Phi Kappa Theta. He was an active alumnus, serving as a Class Agent and on the Alumni Association Board of Directors. He is best known

in the WPI community as the co-founder of the WPI Venture Forum, which provides educational programs to entrepreneurs working to commercialize their ideas and inventions.

The seeds of the Venture Forum were planted at a chance meeting with classmate Jim Dunn at an MIT Enterprise Forum event in 1990. Both wanted to start something similar at WPI. With encouragement from Dean Emeritus Bill Grogan and adjunct professor Bill Gasko, the WPI Venture Forum was born. The forum began offering

programming in 1991 and now delivers 10 programs each year on all aspects of how to start and grow a successful venture. Nurtured by Jim year after year, the WPI Venture Forum now boasts a membership of several hundred and recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. Jim, of course, orchestrated the anniversary celebration.

Always generous with his time and talent, he also assisted with WPI's Collaborative for Entrepreneurship and Innovation as a mentor to students and a guest speaker at a wide variety of events. He also served as a

judge for the Robert H. Grant Invention Award competitions in WPI's electrical and computer engineering design classes.

His greatest contribution, however, may be as a trusted friend upon whom many relied for valued advice and insights that challenged conventional wisdom and always inspired the entrepreneurial spirit. Jim Fee passed away on October 4, 2010, but his legacy will live on to benefit future generations. We honor his memory today with the William R. Grogan Award for Support of the Mission of WPI.

