

***A RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE***

**Professor Robert L. Norton  
October 9, 2024**

We, the faculty of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, note with sorrow and a great sense of loss the passing of our friend and colleague, Professor Robert L. Norton, who passed away June 22, 2024.

Professor Norton received a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Technology from Northeastern University in 1967 and his M.S. in Engineering Design from Tufts University in 1970. For 25 years prior to joining WPI, Bob worked for Polaroid, Jet Spray Cooler, Tufts University Medical Center, and taught at Northeastern and Tufts. He was a registered Professional Engineer and holds thirteen patents.

Robert joined Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1981 as the Milton Prince Higgins II Distinguished Professor and taught undergraduate and graduate courses for another 31 years focusing on engineering and machine design. He continued as an engineering consultant to numerous manufacturing companies, most notably the Gillette Company, throughout his career. Professor Norton used this practical experience as the cornerstone of his teaching, sharing his many experiences with students as they prepared to enter their own careers in industry.

In 1982, he founded WPI's first microcomputer laboratory and opened the Gillette Project Center in 1997. In 2005, he received the WPI Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching; the citation states: "Students, alumni, and colleagues alike regard Professor Norton as a highly gifted and caring teacher who brings his industrial experience, deep technical knowledge, and love of engineering design to the classroom and projects."

Professor Norton was a prolific writer, authoring numerous technical papers, journal articles and eleven books, including "Kinematics and Dynamics of Machinery" and "Machine Design: An Integrated Approach" which dominate the educational market in North America, Asia, and Europe.

Norton's research work on cam design facilitated industrial clients to tune machinery for optimum running speeds while reducing scrap and increasing production rates. Norton also made notable contributions to the fields of linkage design and acoustics.

His contributions were recognized globally as a Fellow and Life Member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and a member of the Society of Automotive

Engineers. In 2007, Robert received the U.S. Professor of the Year Award for Massachusetts from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. In 2012, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in recognition of his dedication to teaching and advancements in engineering design methodologies.

When not teaching or working on his books, Bob enjoyed driving fast cars, riding motorcycles, sailing on Buzzard's Bay from his summer home in Mattapoisett, witty bantering in the faculty dining room, and a good glass of scotch. Those of us, who knew Bob well, can reflect upon our own lives and clearly recognize the influence that Bob had upon us as a colleague, mentor and friend.

Therefore, let it be resolved that we, the members of the Faculty of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, recognize and express our gratitude and admiration to Professor Robert L. Norton as an excellent teacher, advisor, and education innovator. Let it also be resolved that this resolution be inscribed in the permanent records of this faculty as a memorial to our beloved colleague, and that a copy of this resolution be delivered to his family.

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Robert Hyers, Department Head,  
Mechanical and Materials Engineering

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Mark Claypool, Secretary of the Faculty

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Andrew Sears, Provost  
& Senior Vice President

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Grace Wang, President