Klotz views engineering as a 'license to change the world.'

Houston civil engineer D. Wayne Klotz (1976 MSCE) has added another feather in his cap. The University of Houston alumnus recently became the fourth recipient of an Outstanding Practitioner in Water Resources Engineering Award from the American Academy of Water Resources Engineers (AAWRE), a subsidiary of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

The award, established in 2014, recognizes engineers who hold a Diplomate, Water Resources Engineer (D.WRE) certification, an honor Klotz achieved in 2007, for a significant contribution to the engineering practice based on either a single outstanding achievement or a body of work related to the practice of environmental or water resources engineering.

"The engineering profession is a license to change the world. We build an improved quality of life using scientific knowledge and natural resources to construct civilization," Klotz wrote in his LinkedIn profile. "Where else can you so significantly impact the lives of tens of thousands of people you will never meet?"

Klotz, who is now president of Klotz Strategies, a consulting service that helps other engineering firms, businesses and public entities achieve their goals, has made more than a lifetime's-worth of achievements and
contributions in his 45-year career.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University in 1974 and a master’s degree in civil engineering from the UH Cullen College of Engineering in 1976, he founded the Klotz Associates civil engineering firm in 1985. It became RPS in 2017.

“The most satisfying part of my career has been the knowledge that the projects we designed and built improved the quality of life for our community,” Klotz shared.

His career success led him to establish the Klotz Associates Endowed Scholarship in Civil Engineering at both universities.

Klotz’s other UH involvement includes being a part of the UH Distinguished Engineering Alumni, the UH Civil and Environmental Engineering Academy and the Engineering Leadership Board.

In 2011, Houston’s then-mayor Annise D. Parker appointed Klotz to the Coastal Water Authority’s board of directors, where he continues to serves as board president today. He was co-chair for public works on Parker’s transition team and went on to chair Mayor Sylvester Turner’s transition committee as well.

He also co-founded the Transportation Advocacy Group Houston Region (TAG), the largest transportation education and policy group in the Houston area.

On the national level, Klotz was a member of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Community Resilience Task Force.

Klotz served as both an officer and as national president of ASCE. In addition, he has also served on the Harris County Flood Control Task Force, the C Club, and the UH and A&M Civil Engineering Advisory Boards.

In 2010, Klotz led ASCE to cofound the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI) and served as Chair of the institute in 2013. Since then he’s been a board member and helped shepherd the institute’s education of civil engineers in sustainable design, certification of thousands nationwide and recognition of the first Gold Award for sustainable infrastructure.

About 350 projects are estimated to be using ISI’s Envision guidelines for sustainable infrastructure, and nearly 5,000 engineering professionals have earned their Envision Sustainability Professional (ENV SP) designation.

Other accolades earned by Klotz include: ASCE’s 2005 Edmund Friedman Professional Recognition Award, the 2011 Texas Engineer of the Year Award, and the 2011 Houston Engineer of the Year Award. A&M named him a distinguished graduate in 2004, and ASCE’s Texas Section and its Houston Branch have recognized his contributions with several awards. The Ricardo Palma University in Lima, Peru awarded him an honorary professorship in 2008. The American Water Works Association honored him with lifetime membership for his dedication to the association and the water profession.

Klotz offered some advice to students aiming for an engineering career. “First, be a person of integrity. Second, do not sacrifice your family for your career. Think big thoughts and enjoy the journey,” he said.

He married Karen Wilson in 1974 and they have four children and grandchildren. Klotz and his wife are active in ministries at Tallowood Baptist Church.

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