



Kelso S. Baker

B.S., Civil Engineering, 1955

Kelso Baker, a Campbell County, Va., native, began his studies at Virginia Tech in 1947, graduating with a B.S. in Civil Engineering in 1951. He began his engineering career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a runway expansion project at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia.

Following a tour of duty with the U.S. Marine Corps, he took a job in Cambridge, Mass., with Badger Company, a world-wide firm involved in the design and construction of petroleum and chemical plants. Working initially as a project engineer and later as a construction superintendent, he was engaged primarily in projects in the eastern U.S. and Canada.

Mr. Baker moved to Pittsburgh, Pa., to accept a position as project engineer with Electromelt, a division of Magraw-Edison that designed, manufactured, and erected hot metal steel-making equipment. In 1963 he established his own firm — a manufacturer's agency — that he continues to operate with offices in Pittsburgh, Charleston, W. Va., and Cleveland, Ohio. Baker Process Equipment Company, Inc., represents a number of companies that manufacture heat-transfer equipment, vacuum jet equipment, and analytical gas analyzers.

A registered Professional Engineer in the state of Louisiana, Mr. Baker is an active member of several professional engineering organizations, including the Engineering Society of Western Pennsylvania and the Instrument Society of America.

Mr. Baker has been actively involved with Virginia Tech for many years. He is a member of the university's Ut Prosim Society and the College of Engineering's Committee of 100, and he has established a scholarship endowment within the college. A generous CEE alumnus, he has provided valuable service and advice to the department during his tenure on the CEE Alumni Board.

In 1999, Mr. Baker made it possible for CEE to host the premier facility in the mid-Atlantic region for hydraulics research. The Kelso S. Baker Environmental Hydraulics Laboratory, directed by CEE Professor Panos Diplas, enables researchers to study phenomena related to the movement of water, sediment, and pollutants through wetlands and waterways. The lab also provides the means for modeling the behavior of stream flow during floods, simulating ecological aspects of channel flows, and developing measures to control scour around bridge piers and other structures.

The Baker Hydraulics Lab increases opportunities for interdisciplinary research in the field of hydraulics. In addition, the lab helps CEE to recruit top-quality graduate students and provide training for undergraduates in the critical areas of environmental and fluvial hydraulics. "Our faculty and students will reap significant benefits from the generosity that the Bakers have shown to our department," CEE Department Head William Knocke said during the dedication of the facility.

Mr. Baker and his wife, Vera, reside in Sewickley, Pa., a suburb of Pittsburgh. They have a daughter, Deirdre Shannon Dunlop, and two grandsons, Dylan and Morgan.