



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

Billy Howard Amstead, Ph.D., P.E.

Mechanical Engineering Hall of Fame, 1995

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1941
MSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1949
Ph.D., ME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1955

Distinguished Faculty and Administrator
The University of Texas

Dr. Bill (Billy) Howard Amstead was a life-long University of Texas Longhorn; he received his Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D. degrees in mechanical engineering (ME) from The University of Texas at Austin. He served as an ME faculty member at UT Austin and held key leadership roles at the Austin and Permian Basin campuses as well as within the University of Texas System.

Born and raised in Austin, Billy graduated from Austin High School in 1938 and thereafter attended The University of Texas at Austin. After graduation, Billy volunteered for the Naval Reserve in 1942, was commissioned as an ensign, and served in the Pacific for three years as a torpedo officer. After World War II, he went to work for the Defense Research Laboratory (DRL) at UT Austin and also began his graduate studies. While at the DRL he met his future wife, Margaret Jane Bell; they were married in 1947 and were together for 56 years until her death.

While working on his MSME degree, Billy did some part-time teaching that so excited him that he spent the remainder of his professional career in academia within the UT System. He was named an instructor in 1946, and was promoted to assistant professor (1949), associate professor (1955) and professor (1960) while at UT Austin. Billy also served as assistant dean of the College of Engineering from 1959-69 and as acting dean for a brief period in 1969. Dr. Amstead was named the first president of The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (UTPB) in 1970. Billy led UTPB in its formative years, recruiting a strong faculty and guiding program development, serving as president from 1970 through 1974. He

remained at UTPB until 1980 when he returned to Austin as assistant to the chancellor of the UT System.

Dr. Amstead received numerous awards/honors while a faculty member and administrator within the UT System. During his teaching career, he authored 30+ technical papers and several textbooks, most notably *Manufacturing Processes*, widely used across the U.S. and abroad. After his retirement in July 1980, Billy continued his association with UT Austin and remained active technically, overseeing a consulting firm as well as taking on expert witness work. In 1995, he was named to the UT Austin ME Hall of Fame.

Dr. Amstead led an active life away from academia. He was a licensed instrument pilot, amateur radio operator, and was an avid fisherman, hunter and bird watcher. After retirement, he took up watercolor painting and learned to play both the guitar and violin. Billy was also an active contributor to the Austin community and to the churches he attended. He served on the Chamber of Commerce, Red Cross Board of Directors, Cerebral Palsy Board of Directors and other Austin civic organizations. He joined the Austin Exchange Club in 1950, served as national president, and was a member until he passed away.

Billy passed away in 2016, after a brief illness. His wife Margaret preceded him in death in 2003; he later married Grace (Kit) Tucker, who passed away in 2015. He is survived by two children, daughter Barbara Pennington and son William Amstead, and their families.