



Mechanical Engineering  
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

## **James E. Nugent**

*Mechanical Engineering Hall of Fame, 2006*

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1946  
Bachelor of Laws, Jurisprudence, The University of  
Texas at Austin, 1949

*Attorney, Texas State Representative, Texas  
Railroad Commissioner (Retired)*

Just “Jim” to more friends than you can count with a couple of computers, the Honorable James E. Nugent is a former Texas State Representative (Speaker ProTem 1977 - 1979) and Texas Railroad Commissioner (1979 - 1995) with more than 45 years of public service to Kerr County, the State of Texas and the United States.

Jim was born and raised in San Angelo. After graduating from high school in San Angelo, he attended Schreiner Institute in Kerrville for two years, before transferring to the University of Texas at Austin. Jim earned his BS in mechanical engineering in 1946, where he had received the coveted T.U. Taylor Scholarship for working students while at UT. After university, Jim served as a pilot with the Navy Air Corps, during World War II. After the war he worked for North American Aviation as an experimental plastics designer, and later for Packard in their experimental marine division.

Jim returned to UT Law School and received his LLB degree in 1949. He was a member of the UT Cowboys, an honorary service group. Immediately after leaving UT, Jim opened his law office in Kerrville. He continued to practice law, although he was called to public service. He was elected for three terms as Kerr County Attorney, before launching a successful bid in 1960 for the Texas House of Representatives. Jim served as the representative for Districts 78 and later 55, from 1960 - 1979. In 1977 he served as Speaker Pro-Tern of the Texas House of Representatives. In 1979 he was elected Texas Railroad Commissioner, where he continued until 1995. During his years of public service he also found time to serve as a foreign correspondent in Vietnam.

Jim retired from public service, and died peacefully July 17, 2016, at his residence.