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## Alumnus Establishes Scholarship Fund for Mechanical Engineering

**Mike Nash creates endowment to memorialize former department chair James R. MacDonald**

JUNE 29, 2017 BY EDWIN SMITH

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Mechanical engineering alumnus Mike Nash of Maryland made the initial donation to establish the James R. MacDonald Scholarship Fund. Submitted photo

As an undergraduate mechanical engineering student at the University of Mississippi, Jonathon M. "Mike" Nash greatly admired and appreciated James R. MacDonald, then chair and professor of the department.

Recently, Nash established the Dr. James R. MacDonald Scholarship Fund at his alma mater as a lasting tribute to his mentor and lifelong friend.

"Much of the valuable guidance I received was based on his industrial experience," said Nash, who lives in Frederick, Maryland. "Dr. MacDonald would often emphasize that real-world engineering challenges were rarely solved by one person.

"At the end of the day, your professional knowledge and contributions would only be as effective as your ability to coordinate with others."

Recipients will be full-time students majoring in mechanical engineering as selected by the School of Engineering Scholarship Committee.

"I express my great appreciation to Dr. Nash for setting up this scholarship to commemorate one of the school's legendary professors

and former mechanical engineering department chair, Dr. James MacDonald," said Alex Cheng, UM engineering dean. "The scholarship will assist students to meet their financial need and to fulfill their education goals."

Nash earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and his master's and doctoral degrees in engineering science from Ole Miss. With more than 40 years' experience in the aerospace industry, he manages an independent consulting company that provides aviation market analysis and strategic business support for international clients.

Administrators in the Department of Mechanical Engineering expressed appreciation for Nash's benevolence in honor of MacDonald.

"Dr. MacDonald was instrumental for setting up all undergraduate laboratories initially," said Arunachalam Rajendran, chair and professor. "It is nostalgic to realize how the efforts initiated by Dr. MacDonald as chair during 1957-1967 have today enabled the ME department to become the largest department in terms of undergraduate enrollment within the School of Engineering.

"I am indeed excited about the scholarship opportunity for full-time students majoring in mechanical engineering through the Dr. James R. MacDonald Scholarship Endowment."

Nash began his professional career with IBM in the late 1960s as an engineer scientist at the company's federal systems division in Huntsville, Alabama.

Commissioned through the Ole Miss Army ROTC program, he served on active duty in 1968-70 as a combat engineering officer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Upon returning from Vietnam in 1970, Nash continued graduate studies leading to his doctorate.

He rejoined IBM in 1973, holding technical and management positions supporting NASA, U.S. Army and Department of Energy programs. Nash's later responsibilities included serving as strategic planning manager for IBM's Gaithersburg, Maryland, facility and program manager for the Federal Aviation Administration and International Air Traffic Management programs. He continued in the latter position

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during the sale of IBM's Federal Systems Division to the Loral Corp., and the subsequent acquisition of Loral by Lockheed Martin.

Following his retirement from Lockheed Martin in 2004, Nash served for a year as assistant dean for corporate relations in the School of Engineering before establishing his consulting company. A member of the engineering school's advisory board, he was honored as UM's Engineer of Distinction in 1996.

MacDonald received his bachelor's degree from Colorado State University in 1927 and his doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1936. He worked as a research engineer with Hotpoint Inc., as a process engineer with Boeing Aircraft Co., and as a materials and process engineer with North American Aviation Co. His academic career began as an assistant professor of chemical engineering at West Virginia University and later at the University of Denver.

MacDonald joined the Ole Miss faculty in 1953 as an associate professor of chemical and mechanical engineering. Three year later, he was named professor of mechanical engineering and chair of the mechanical engineering department.

MacDonald was believed to be the state's first metallurgist. While a member of the Ole Miss faculty, he held summer positions at Oak Ridge National Laboratories, U.S. Naval Mine Defense Laboratory, U.S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory and the Redstone Arsenal.

He was co-author of "Metallurgy for Engineers" (1957).

MacDonald's professional memberships included the American Society of Metals, American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the American Society for Engineering Education. Before his retirement in 1969, he was also elected to Sigma Xi scientific research honorary. MacDonald died in 1988.

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