

Engineer recognized for explaining engineering to the public: New role for engineering professor emerging

THIS YEAR BILL'S public radio pieces on engineering won the American Institute of Chemical Engineers' "Service to Society Award" and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' Edwin F. Church Medal.

AIChE "Service to Society" Award

This award recognizes outstanding contributions by a chemical engineer to community service and to the solution of socially oriented problems.

The award citation reads "For his weekly public radio commentaries which increase the public's understanding and appreciation of the role of engineering and technology in our society." The award features a plaque and a \$2,000 honorarium. This is an Institute level award, which is the highest level of recognition given by the AIChE.

ASME Edwin F. Church Medal

Also this year, Bill's radio work was recognized by The American Society of Mechanical Engineers' 2002 Edwin F. Church Medal.

The award is given annually to an individual rendering eminent service in increasing the value, importance and attractiveness of engineering. The award features a bronze medal and a \$2,500 honorarium.

Past winners of the award include: Kenneth Roe, former president of ASME; Woodie Flowers, developer of MIT's renowned course "Introduction to Design"; and Dean Kamen, inventor most



Bill Hammack in the WILL-AM studios in Urbana Illinois. This year Bill's public radio pieces on engineering won the American Institute of Chemical Engineers' "Service to Society Award" and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' Edwin F. Church Medal. You can listen to Bill's commentaries at www.engineerguy.com. You can get an audio CD

recently of the "Segway", a gyroscope-stabilized scooter.

Bill's Radio Work

Bill's weekly radio series, "Engineering & Life", opens the world of engineering to the public by sharing the human stories behind all the seemingly simple stuff around us -- coffee makers, screws, and plastic bottles. Each week he broadcasts a two and a half minute commentary telling these stories using a humanistic view of technology and engineering.

"Engineering and Life" is produced at WILL-AM 580 in Urbana, Illinois and distributed by Illinois Public Radio. It can also be heard at www.engineerguy.com.

Why did Bill create this series?

Bill felt there was a need to do something like this because the normal view people have of technology is that it's a force that overtakes us.

Bill rejects this view. "Technology reflects us and we should be more concerned with shaping it," he says, adding that "people think, mistakenly, that the programs are about how things work. But actually they are about a humanistic view of science, and how it affects us."

In addition, he was concerned about the

of his pieces, plus a speech entitled "How Engineers & Scientists Should Talk to the Public" by sending a request to Donna Sarver at donna@engineerguy.com. Bill is a professor in the Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He can be reached at hammack@netbox.com

"pipeline" problem the country faces. As a recent *Wall Street Journal* article [June 7, 2002] pointed out, graduation rates for engineering have declined from 80,000 in the mid-1980s to 60,000 in 1998.

Part of the problem is that students don't view engineering as a creative profession. Bill's radio work helps young people see engineering design as stimulating and creative work.

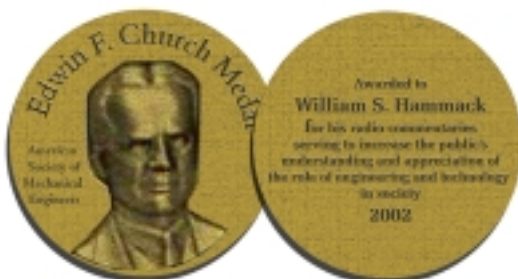
About Bill Hammack

Bill has a B.S. in chemical engineering from Michigan Technological University, and a M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He taught engineering at Carnegie Mellon University before returning to Illinois. He has received a Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award and the ACS/Exxon Fellowship for Solid State Chemistry.

Unique Role in Profession

Bill's focus, as a Professor of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, is exclusively on reaching out to the general public. This means his position is unique; in fact, there is none like it in any engineering college in the nation.

Also, he's created a General Education class taught to hundreds of students from such diverse disciplines as business, dance, and history. ■



The Edwin F. Church Medal and a \$2,500 honorarium is given by the ASME to "an individual who has rendered eminent service to increasing the value, importance and attractiveness of engineering."