

## Benjamin Pratt, P.E., Named New Hampshire's 2014 Engineer of the Year



CONCORD – Benjamin “Ben” Pratt, P.E., has been selected by a jury of his peers from New Hampshire’s Joint Engineering Societies as the 2014 New Hampshire Engineer of the Year. This distinguished award will be presented to Ben on February 20<sup>th</sup> at the annual Engineers’ Week Awards and Celebration banquet at the SERESC Center in Bedford, NH. The New Hampshire Section of National Society of Professional Engineers (NHSPE) nominated Ben based on his strong record of professional accomplishments, long time service to the engineering profession, efforts in mentoring young students through key leadership in the annual state MATHCOUNTS competitions, a distinguished history of leadership and involvement in his hometown of Antrim, NH, and a passion for giving back to his Community.

Ben attended UNH from 1951 until Nov. 1953 and withdrew for personal reasons. He held a series of engineering-related jobs at Kingsbury Machine Tool Co. in Keene, Improved Machinery Corp. in Nashua, Raytheon in Maynard, MA, Anderson Nichols in Concord, NH and Sylvania in Hillsborough, NH. Ben joined New Hampshire Ball Bearings as a Jr. Engineer in March of 1960. In 1967, he submitted an application for registration as a Professional Engineer, and the Board of Registration notified him that his application would be held without action pending completion of the PE examination. He took and passed the exam in April of 1968, and was notified that his application had been approved.

Throughout his 44-year career, Ben oversaw numerous design, manufacturing, and analytical initiatives for the aerospace, aircraft, and helicopter industries, many of which were classified military assignments. During his tenure, he watched New Hampshire Ball Bearing (NHBB) grow from about 200 employees to over 1,100 prior to his retirement. The Peterborough-borne company was purchased by a global manufacturing conglomerate, Minebea Co., Ltd in 1985 and Ben was deeply involved in the transition of NHBB from bearings for high-speed surgical appliances and miniature products to larger sized roller bearings for machine, medical, dental, aerospace and even the racing industry. He routinely worked with NHBB’s corporate customers such as Garrett Hydraulics, Garret Engines (now Honeywell), Raytheon, Singer, Lincoln Labs (part of MIT), Northrop-Grumman, Stryker Corporation–Medical Instrumentation, and Bell Helicopter. His typical projects would range from bearings for instrumentation, slow control surfaces, fuel controls, and mechanical systems for aircraft.

As a *Special Projects Engineer* at NHBB, Ben was also instrumental in a number of unique assignments including the design and stress analyses on bearings applications for the *NASA Mars Lander* as part of NASA's Mars Exploration Program which ultimately put exploration rovers on Mars in 2004. He also served as Project Engineer for the design of bearings used in the first heart pumps for the Hersey Pennsylvania Medical Center and has been instrumental in the research, design and testing of bearings using special metals and ceramics.

Ben enjoys offering his time to give back to both his hometown and the engineering communities. In Antrim, he has served as Library Trustee, Chair of the Zoning Board, sat on the Board of Selectmen, the Antrim Water and Sewer Commission, and currently as the Town Treasurer. Ben has also made a tremendous commitment to enriching the education of our youth in NH. Since 1983, he has been involved in NH's MATHCOUNTS program both as a Regional coordinator and currently as the State Coordinator for its six regions. MATHCOUNTS is a 31-year old national math competition created by the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) that challenges middle school students to expand their academic and professional opportunities through math prowess.

Inspired by tragic events involving his wife in 1988, Ben founded the Southwestern New Hampshire Hospital Equipment "*Lend a Bed Program*" which continues to provide pre-used/repared hospital beds, wheelchairs and other ambulatory equipment to needy homebound patients.

Ben enjoyed 35 years of marriage with his wife Patricia until she passed in 1988. He has two sons, a daughter and two stepchildren. He remains active and loves outdoor activities including running and hiking and is also an accomplished pilot. Ben has been and continues to be a faithful steward of the Engineering Profession through his quiet and humble leadership. He continues to mentor those around him through his unwavering energy, dedication and passion for life and the Engineering Profession.

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