

## Harris B. McKee '61 Th '63

### Recipient of the 2018-19 Alumni Award

Hailing from a farm in Iowa, you attended a one-room schoolhouse during your elementary years. Though you expected to attend Iowa State in the footsteps of your family, that plan shifted when your outstanding performance on the football field and in the classroom attracted the attention of the Dartmouth football coaches. You were drawn to the Tuck-Thayer program, among other aspects of the College, and you made up your mind to head east to Hanover.



HBM and Council Pres Dee Lotson

The Class of 1961 was the first for which the engineering science major existed, and Hayou created a very detailed study schedule to keep you on track, earning the William Churchill First Year Prize for outstanding academic achievement and a record of contribution to fairness, respect for duty, and citizenship. Outside of academic hours, you lettered in football and track, joined the debate team, pledged SAE, and later were tapped for the Judiciary Committee, Green Key Society, Paleopitus, and Casque & Gauntlet. You were an active participant in student government, taking on roles including president of Mid-Mass dormitory and later the senior class. Highlights during these years included participating on the 1958 Ivy League Football Championship team, being inducted into Phi Beta Kappa as a junior, and delivering the valedictory address at Commencement.

Graduate studies led you to the Thayer School for an MS in engineering followed by a PhD in mechanical engineering at Stanford and later an MBA from Southern Methodist University. Active in ROTC as an undergraduate, you were also commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and served on active duty. Your extensive career included stints in aerospace with NASA and McDonnell Douglas; snack-food engineering, research, and manufacturing with Frito-Lay; engineering for a

manufacturing company and a publication printing company; engineering and quality assurance with Sunbeam Outdoor Products; and then finally with the investment company Edward Jones.

In addition to this very accomplished body of work, you have devoted countless hours to the College. Right off the bat, you served as class president for the great Class of 1961, and you have frequently been a member of your class executive committees over the years. Always adept with technology, you created and chaired the '61 virtual reunions and have been the class webmaster from the 45th reunion onward. That role has included handling class communications (you sent 52 emails last year!), and you have also co-edited the class newsletter and the 55th Reunion class directory. On the fundraising side, you served as a co-head agent. Involved in the Thayer School Annual Fund from its inception, your recent appearance at a CASE conference was a big hit with annual fund directors from other institutions. You served as president and secretary of the Dartmouth Club of St. Louis; district enrollment director (DED) for eastern Missouri; and alumni interviewer in St. Louis, Dallas, Cedar Rapids, Arkansas, and Chicago. Personal highlights include serving as DED for the eastern half of Missouri; growing the class website into a key part of class communications; and helping the class achieve the highest participation of any class in the Dartmouth College Fund.

How you found time to volunteer in your community is hard to fathom, but you did so with aplomb, becoming involved with your daughters' school and teams, the Unitarian Church, the Rotary, gardeners' associations, and now your Chicago residence Admiral at the Lake, among a plethora of other activities.

Of course, your fabulous wife Mary, whom you married shortly after graduation, has been an amazing supporter throughout this journey, as have your wonderful daughters Laura and Margaret.

In your valedictory address at the 1961 Commencement, you stated, "As President Dickey has so aptly stated, conscience must go hand in hand with competence." Harris, you have deftly brought both competence and conscience to everything you do. In recognition of your extraordinary dedication to your career, your community, and Dartmouth College, we are immensely proud to honor you with the Dartmouth Alumni Award.

Here's a link to the Video: Click on [McKee Video](https://player.vimeo.com/video/301864572) or copy and paste:  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/301864572>



Denniston, Rich, Rozycki, Zhuoman, O'Neill, HBM, Mary, Margaret, Henry, Laurie  
Class of '61 Table



Gaudet '81, McKee '61, Alumni Council Pres. Lotson, Heald '68, Pastuck '11



HBM w.Coach Hamilton's Dau. Sue Heald



Harris and Zhuoman '61a



Prez O'Neill, V.P. Denniston, and HBM



Alumni Council Members Rich & Roz



**Award Response.** First of all, thank you to the Dartmouth Alumni Council for honoring me with this award. Thanks also to my classmates who were so generous with their interview comments and have joined my family and me tonight. I'm also grateful to my wife, Mary, who has supported my Dartmouth activities for more than 57 yrs. My Class of '61 classmates have been especially supportive as they learned that I would be here tonight as they have been during my service as a class officer.

I have been incredibly lucky. My back-up plan if I didn't get a scholarship was to go to the Military Academy. Instead, I came to Dartmouth and in the words of Robert Frost, an icon to our class, "that has made all the difference." My friends on the freshman football and track squads, provided me with enough recognition to be elected to the Inter-dormitory Council while we were still freshmen and later to Sr. Class President and first President of our alumni class. After that I just fell into opportunities to give back to Dartmouth.

My wife says that I always say yes today when our neighbors ask for help and that mode has governed my Dartmouth Alumni service. I said yes when I was asked to help with enrollment and take an office in the St. Louis Alumni Club. The Interviewing followed me to four more cities. Besides my luck in getting to Dartmouth, I was lucky at Thayer School. I switched from Tuck-Thayer to a Master of Science program in order to work with a then new to Thayer professor, Robert C. Dean, Jr. That change provided the path for my Stanford studies.

Agreeing to help with the Thayer School Annual Fund efforts was just a way to pay back a little for my Thayer gift. Agreeing to become the class webmaster was another response to a request for help and was a logical application of my computer skills. I didn't know that I would get to build that activity into communication responsibilities long before this year's decision to call webmasters "Digital Content Managers". "Digital Content Manager" does not have much sparkle to it but I guess that it has more than one of my other titles, "Necrologist".

My Dartmouth associations have provided a nurturing environment that I never envisioned. The gratitude expressed to me by my classmates for keeping them informed of the triumphs of other classmates as well as the memorials to fallen members of the class has made the effort worthwhile. I never believed that I would be standing here tonight.

Thank you for continuing to make my life so lucky.

Harris B. McKee D'61, Th'63, November 2018