

*The Hall of
Distinguished Alumni* Class of 2015

NAOMI J. MCAFEE ('56)

Internationally recognized engineer



Favorite WKU memory: *Standing on the steps of Van Meter Hall, looking out over a sea of changing colors in the fall, watching the sun set.*

The first woman to graduate with a degree in Physics from WKU, Naomi McAfee distinguished herself throughout her pioneering engineering career. In those days, women engineers were rare, receiving less than .1 percent of the engineering degrees granted. She is an exemplary role model for women in the fields of engineering, science and management.

Early in her career, she entered the Westinghouse all-male engineering establishment, where she successfully introduced the innovative field of reliability engineering into the mainstream design process. Through her excellent technical background, work ethic and respect for people, McAfee persevered over the years to successfully change the culture of the entire Westinghouse design organization, which included more than 5,000 engineers.

As she rose through the ranks of Westinghouse, she was one of the most respected and well-liked members of the management team. She became the

first woman Supervisory Engineer at Westinghouse, a groundbreaking position that opened the way for many other women engineers to follow in her footsteps. During her 38-year tenure at Westinghouse, McAfee played a lead role in a number of other progressive activities both within and outside the company. She held key positions in the initial government-industry group that played a leading role in advocating the use of computer-aided information technology into the design engineering and manufacturing process as well as the Department of Defense (DOD) logistics and support world. In this capacity, she won the praise and respect of high-level members of DOD and industry leaders.

She was appointed to the Army Science Board, where she served three consecutive two-year terms and chaired several studies that led to the Army's adoption of recommendations related to reliability, maintainability and logistics support of Army systems. In addition, she

has served as an advisor and consultant to the DOD and the Departments of the Air Force and Army. In 1982, she was appointed to serve a three-year term on the President's Commission on the National Medal of Science.

McAfee is recognized internationally as an expert in the area of reliability engineering for complex electronic systems, and has provided consulting services to a host of international governments and industries. She has served on the Advisory Boards to the Colleges of Engineering at Princeton University, Penn State University, Clarkson University and the University of California at Davis. She has received national awards and honors from the American Society of Quality and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. An elected Fellow of the Society of Women Engineers, she also received the U.S. Army Commendation for Patriotic Civilian Service.