

# Alumnus Bernie Berson ('57) Takes Reins at NSPE

**B**ernard R. Berson, P.E., who earned his B.S. in civil engineering at UConn in 1957, was installed as president of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) during the annual conference in Denver (July 26-29). The NSPE serves 45,000 members through 500 chapters nationwide and promotes engineering licensure and ethics, continuing education opportunities and other activities that enhance the preparation and reputation of practicing engineers.

As President, Mr. Berson plans to focus on three core initiatives: the continued improvement of state and national partnerships to enhance member services, benefits and incentives as well as licensure; continued and expanded efforts toward building enterprise and company-wide memberships; and development of strategies for attracting young engineers and enhancing outreach with colleges and universities. The young engineer initiative is a particular priority for him.

Mr. Berson operated a private practice for nearly 30 years—Berson, Ackermann & Associates, Inc., located in Fords, NJ, and later Piscataway, which provided site engineering, surveying, and public works design services. He later founded a consulting practice specializing in general consultation, forensic engineering, and professional development seminars. He holds Professional Engineer (PE) and Land Surveyor licenses (LS) in New Jersey and Pennsylvania; PE licenses in Delaware and Massachusetts; and LS licenses in Virginia and Maryland. He is also a PE and LS in Connecticut (retired status), and in New York (inactive status).

Mr. Berson is dedicated to enhancing the educational opportunities and professionalism of engineers nationwide—particularly young engineers. For four years, he produced “PEPP Talk,” an electronic newsletter with a circulation of approximately 13,000 members of the NSPE and Professional Engineers in Private Practice

(PEPP). As Chair of NSPE/PEPP (2001-02), he created the PEPP Young Engineers Advisory Council with the goal of engaging young engineers and shedding light on the issues and concerns relevant to them.

Mr. Berson has conducted professional development seminars to engineers, architects and land surveyors, many in participation with construction claims attorneys, and he a co-authored (with Douglas Benner) a signature 2007 book, *Career Success in Engineering: A Guide for Students and New Professionals*.

Within NSPE and other professional societies, he has held various leadership posts, and he is an NSPE Fellow (2000). Mr. Berson received the 1997 UConn Distinguished Engineering Alumnus, which he cherishes above all other honors and awards he has received during his career.

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In addition to his bachelor’s degree, he earned an M.S. in civil engineering at the Newark College of Engineering in 1966.

Recalling his undergraduate days at UConn, Mr. Berson said “My family could not really afford any significant expenditure for me to attend college. In those days (1952-57), there were no student loans available. Although UConn charged no tuition to in-state students back then, my costs were \$75/semester for university fees and another \$75 for lodging. Even at that, it was difficult for me to earn sufficient funds to maintain a reasonable diet during my freshman year, which—by the way—was spent in the School of Business Administration. I was determined to make some decent money



during the summer following my freshman year, and sought a job in construction at the State Employment Agency in Meriden. I thought I had gotten one, at the reasonably good rate of \$1.10/hour. When I reported for work, I was befuddled when I was handed a strange object that I soon came to know was a plumb bob. I had been hired by a civil engineer and land surveyor in Wallingford.”

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Mr. Berson credits the School of Engineering with providing him the skills needed to build a long and successful career in engineering and in service to the profession.