



**Lester A. Gerhardt, MS '64, Ph.D. '69** Lester Gerhardt's career combines industrial and academic experience. Lester joined Rensselaer in 1970. He was promoted to full professor, and was selected as [the first](#) chairman of the newly merged electrical, computer, and systems engineering department following a nationwide search. At Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, his specialty is Digital Signal Processing, emphasizing image processing, speech processing, and brain computer interfacing, conducting sponsored research and teaching in this field. He has been actively involved in academic administration concurrent with his professorial career. He has served in the roles of ECSE Department Chair which was then cited as the most improved Department in the US at the time by the National Academy of Engineering; Founding Director of the Center for Manufacturing Productivity, appointed by President George Low, which then became the second such Center in the US; Director of the Computer Integrated Manufacturing Program, then the largest interdisciplinary research program on campus, which was awarded the National LEAD (Leadership, Excellence, and Development) Award; Director of the Center for Industrial Innovation; Associate Dean of Engineering for Research; a VP of Research Administration and Finance; Dean of Engineering; and most recently as Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. He was the Inaugural Recipient of the National ASEE Research Administration Award.

Internationally speaking, he has served as a Delegate to NATO; consultant to the governments of Singapore, Portugal, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom; co-founder of the ongoing Global Engineering Education Exchange Program in 1995 and served as its Chair of the Executive Committee for over a decade; originator of the Rensselaer Engineering Education Across Cultural Horizons (REACH) Program requiring an international experience of each undergraduate student in 2008; on the International Advisory Board of the ASEE; was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Technical University of Denmark; his numerous presentations and publications include the subject of globalization of higher education; and travels globally extensively.

Before going to RPI, Lester spent ten years with Bell Aerospace Corporation, where he worked on the visual simulation of space flight including the Apollo Program's moon landing, using both model based and electronic based imaging technology. In 1999, he organized Space Week at Rensselaer in 1999, in honor of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the moon landing in which he was involved many years before. Four of the twelve astronauts who walked on the moon attended this event including Buzz Aldrin. He is an active consultant to industry, government, and academe, sits on the Board and directs the research of a privately held company, is a Fellow of the IEEE, and ASEE; and holds several patents. He is married to a wonderful woman, Karen, and they have two sons. Lester enjoys tennis, sailing, swimming, art, and woodworking.

His Bachelors degree in electrical engineering is from the City College of New York, and his Masters and PhD degrees are from the University of Buffalo in electrical engineering, earned while working at Bell concurrently.