Ralph Wanger

DEGREES: B.S. (’55) M.S. (’58), Industrial Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

CAREER: Wanger is the former chief investment officer and president of Wanger Asset Management, which he founded in 1992 after leaving Harris Associates while continuing to manage the Acorn Fund. He began managing the fund in 1970, and its assets have since grown from $8 million to $20 billion. His advice for investors is, “Find something you can believe in and can be excited about.”

Wanger wrote the book *A Zebra in Lion Country: Ralph Wanger’s Guide to Investment Survival*, and he is known for writing humorous quarterly investment reports.

HONORS: In 1999, *USA Today* named Wanger one of five “Fund Managers of the Decade,” and he has been featured in numerous media, from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Fortune*.

IIT INVOLVEMENT: Wanger is an IIT Life Trustee and Philip Danforth Armour Society member, as well as a founding member of the Mies van der Rohe Society. In 2007, he launched the Wanger Institute for Sustainable Energy Research (WISER). His gifts to WISER helped IIT secure additional tens of millions of dollars for student and faculty research in clean coal technology, hybrid vehicles, wind energy, and smart electric grids. “I hope that WISER will be a high-profile institute that will attract new faculty and students to IIT and enhance the reputation of our university.”

Bill Cardoso

[ M.S. EE ’00, Ph.D. ’05 ]

DEGREES: B.S. Electrical Engineering (’98), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; M.S. Electrical Engineering (’00), Ph.D. (’05), Illinois Institute of Technology; M.B.A. (’07), The University of Chicago.

CAREER: Upon completion of his M.B.A., Cardoso moved to California to pursue a career with Aguila Technologies. After only two months, he took the reins as president and chief executive officer. He successfully ran Aguila for a year before starting his own company, Creative Electron. Creative Electron acquired Aguila in 2008 and has grown to 15 employees in its facility in San Marcos, California. At Creative, Cardoso leads a team of talented engineers who provide award-winning products and services to military, homeland security, astrophysics, and medical customers. “I reproduced at Creative Electron the environment of curiosity and intellectual discipline I experienced in Dr. Saniie’s group. This IIT ‘think tank’ template is being used to challenge the technological status quo. And that’s what we need to protect our nation from ever-increasing threats.”

THANKS TO IIT: During his time at IIT, Bill quickly bonded with his faculty advisor, Professor Jafar Saniie. “IIT faculty members are willing to go above the call of duty to make sure students are successful.”

FAVORITE IIT MEMORY: “I truly valued traveling around the world attending conferences as a graduate student. It solidified eternal friendships.”

INSPIRATION: His family provided him the emotional backbone to face adversity and prosper. “Whatever happens, I know they will always be there for me.”

ADVICE TO IIT STUDENTS: “IIT is your bridge to a life of unlimited opportunities. Don’t be afraid to try new ideas, and don’t be afraid to make mistakes. Be ready to invent a better tomorrow!”
Frank H. Brod
[MGMT ’75]

Degrees: B.S. Industrial Management (’75), Illinois Institute of Technology; Certified Public Accountant

Career: Brod immediately went to work for The Dow Chemical Company after graduation, where he worked in areas of operations, corporate finance, accounting, and acquisitions. He spent 31 years traveling the world with Dow before retiring as corporate vice president and controller at the age of 51. He is now corporate vice president, finance and administration, and chief accounting officer with Microsoft Corporation in Redmond, Washington. In addition to the finance roles, Brod leads corporate planning, procurement, security, real estate, and facilities at Microsoft.

Service: Brod believes in repaying his community. Of all their religious, educational, charitable, political, and community development activities, Brod is most proud of the 20-plus years he and his wife, Holly, have served on the board of a cancer services organization in Michigan. In celebration of their fathers, who were cancer-stricken, they have worked with this organization to bring care, support, prayer, finances, and compassion to those battling cancer.

Biggest Risk: While working with The Dow Chemical Company, Brod was asked to move his family to London, England, to be the chief financial officer of UK operations. “At a very young age, my family had to learn a whole new culture. We didn’t know anyone, but it taught us to build relationships outside our comfort zone. Our family strengthened its bonds. It was the best development move I made from a personal perspective.”

Advice to IIT Students: “Keep your skills current. Your degree will get you in the door, but you must participate in lifelong learning to advance and succeed. Always look to make a discernable difference in all you do.”

Dirk Denison
[B.ARCH ’83, M.B.A. ’85]

Degrees: B.Arch (’83), M.B.A. (’85), Illinois Institute of Technology; M.Arch (’85), Harvard Graduate School of Design

Career: Dirk Denison, FAIA is an architect and professor who has taught at IIT for 25 years and founded Dirk Denison Architects in 1990. His work is recognized internationally through publications and awards, including Best Restaurant Design Worldwide for L20. Denison has taught at every level of the curriculum, creating special experiences for students like his S. R. Crown Hall collaboration with Hubbard Street Dance. He has served as the College of Architecture’s director of graduate and undergraduate programs, chair of the college curriculum committee, and is currently director of the master’s thesis program. Under Denison’s directorships, the college founded the master of architecture program, created the student awards recognition program, and structured its important study abroad program. Denison feels his most important contribution to IIT was in his role as supervising campus architect, where he fostered the university’s recommitment to its urban setting and architecturally significant Main Campus. Denison serves on the Mayor’s Committees for Landscape and City Planning, Hubbard Street Dance and Mies van der Rohe Society’s boards, and is president of Society for Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Inspiration: “My parents encouraged me to try everything,” says Denison. His early introduction to architecture was through IIT Professor Myron Goldsmith, who told Denison “When you’re serious about becoming an architect, you will come to IIT.” Denison also acknowledges his professors George Schipporeit, David Sharpe, Arthur Takeuchi, Gerald Horn, and Gene Summers: “I utilize what I learned from them every day.”

Most Proud Accomplishment: Denison recalls “very early one morning my clients Frank and Shirley Piku called me, after several years in their new home, to say that they were lying in bed saying to each other how lucky they felt to be living in this house that we had created together.”

Advice for His Students: “Don’t separate life from work.”
**Milton A. Gordon**  
[Ph.D. MATH ’78]

**Degrees:** B.S. Mathematics and Secondary Education (’57), Xavier University of Louisiana; M.A. Mathematics (’60), University of Detroit; Ph.D. Mathematics (’68), Illinois Institute of Technology

**Career:** Gordon continues to show his dedication to learning as he nears his 43rd year as a higher education leader. Gordon has worked for Chicago Public Schools, Loyola University of Chicago, Chicago State University, and Sonoma State University. He is currently in his 21st year as the president at California State University, Fullerton.

**Honors:** 2010 President’s Award of Excellence, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; 2010 Outstanding Service to Children and Community Award, San Francisco Court Appointed Special Advocates; 2010 Man of the Year Award given by Christ Our Redeemer AME Church, the Black Chamber of Commerce of Orange County, 100 Black Men of Orange County, and the Orange County Ministerial Alliance.

**Inspiration:** “I was fortunate enough to meet Cesar Chavez in my early years at Loyola University. It was an honor to meet him at that time. He encouraged me to be more concerned about ethnic cultures in our student body.” Gordon was director of Afro-American Studies at Loyola University the year he met Chavez.

**Hobbies:** Gordon enjoys watching movies with his wife, Margaret. They also enjoy traveling the world together. They have recently visited Portugal and Ireland, choosing Ireland as their favorite.

**Advice to IIT Students:** “Stay the course. Pursue your degree.”

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**Keith E. McKee**  
[CE ’50, M.S. ’56, Ph.D. ’62]

**Degrees:** B.S. (’50), M.S. (’56), and Ph.D. (’62) Civil Engineering, Illinois Institute of Technology

**Career:** After earning all three of his degrees at IIT, McKee served as director of engineering research and director of manufacturing research at IIT Research Institute (IITRI). A prolific writer, McKee felt that IIT and IITRI provided a unique intellectual environment in which to explore and impart his many academic and research interests and contribute to the university’s history of beneficial activities. During his career, McKee visited hundreds of manufacturing facilities and found that a distinct need existed for an educational pathway for technical specialists. Upon retiring in 1993, he responded by creating the Industrial Technology and Management (INTM) program and served as the program director for the next 17 years.

**Inspiration:** McKee’s parents encouraged him to earn a high school diploma, as his mother had been considered fortunate to stay in school through the eighth grade. After McKee won an academic award in junior high, his teacher asked what he wanted to do when he grew up. “He replied that he wanted to go to college and become an engineer, and the teacher said, ‘Well, that’s nice, but you really shouldn’t aspire too far beyond your station.’ He was taken aback and vowed to prove her wrong—and boy did he!” —Pam Houser, daughter and INTM program coordinator

**As Remembered by His Friends:** “The contributions many of us have made to the INTM Scholarship Fund pale when compared to the endless hours that Keith worked on his singular dedication to spearheading the efforts in founding the program and administrating it so well and for so long. Keith was a selfless man, ready to face any challenge—large or small and from any corner—and an inspiring crusader for those less fortunate.”—Serepe Kalpakjian, retired Mechanical, Materials, and Aerospace Engineering faculty
William W. Parks
[CE ’44]

Degrees: B.S. Civil Engineering (’44), Illinois Institute of Technology; M.B.A. (’59), The University of Chicago

Career: After his career in the U.S. Navy serving with the Seabees 111th Battalion in the Philippines, Parks began work at VAPOR Corporation and spent his entire professional life working for a company he believed in. He started out as a development engineer in the steam generator lab, made his way through the aeronautical division, and became president before his retirement.

Professional Achievements: Parks held six patents for transportation equipment devices and served on the Board of Directors of the American Public Transit Association. He also served as an IIT Life Trustee.

IIT Dedication: “Bill loved his years at IIT—he loved being a Scarlet Hawk. His love of IIT was long and strong and enduring, which is why he was so humbly to be a trustee. He was proud of his work on the board, and I know he would be honored to know that he left his mark at the university he loved.” —Joan Parks, wife

Hobbies: Parks was a world-renowned yachtsman. He was awarded a bronze medal in the 1960 Olympics racing a Star Class boat, and a banner hangs in IIT’s Keating Hall honoring his achievement and his induction into the IIT Athletics Hall of Fame in 1983. He was commodore of both the Chicago Yacht Club and the Chicago Yachting Association, president of the International Star Class Yacht Racing Association, and served as a yachting judge for the 1984 Olympics. Parks was Chicago Yachtsman of the Year in 1994.

As Remembered by His Daughter: “In 1997, my mother Patricia, father, husband, and I sailed in the British Virgin Islands. I still remember how Dad would decide to race another cruising vessel and then slow down to serenade them as we passed by. He was a natural teacher and couldn’t resist explaining to the other boat how to adjust their trim to be more competitive. What a wonderful combination of qualities: a competitor, a music maker, and a coach.” —Julia Parks-Soxman, daughter

Sunwoong Choi
[B.S. ME ’81, B.S. METM ’81, Ph.D. METM ’92]

Degrees: B.S. Mechanical Engineering (’81) and B.S. (’81) and Ph.D. (’92), Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Illinois Institute of Technology

Career: Choi is currently a professor and chairman of the Department of Polymer Science and Engineering at Hannam University in Daejeon, Korea. He also serves as the associate director for the Institute for Academia-Industry Cooperation and the director of both the Manufacturing Innovation Center and Business Incubation Center.

Professional Achievements: Internationally known for his work in fracture of polymers, Choi has made a name for himself in fracture preventions in plastics pressure pipe structures. Some of his work has become international standards, and he is currently serving in several national and international standard-making organizations. Choi is also the president of the IIT Korean Alumni Association and the president emeritus of the Korean Society for Plastics Pipes Research.

Hobbies: “Seventy percent of the land that makes up Korea is mountains, and hiking and trekking is well developed and popular. I always try to make myself available for mountain hiking throughout the country almost every weekend.”

Inspiration: "Presenting my students’ work to the technical community is always an exciting experience. Many of my students have set national and international standards with their work, and their discoveries have become public service materials. It’s rewarding to help them make a name for themselves.”

Thanks to IIT: “Being an all-IIT graduate, everything that I do—professionally and socially—traces back to IIT. IIT follows me everywhere—I owe everything to the university. Professor L.J. Broutman has helped to define my professional life, first as my graduate advisor and now a lifetime mentor, and I wouldn’t have met him if not for IIT.”

Advice to Students: “Open your mind and heart to seek into the unknown, and do not be afraid to make mistakes! Along the way throughout your professional life, the truth that you acquired through those experiences will become a guiding light into success.”
Michael P. Galvin  
[LAW ’78]

**Degrees:** B.S. Economics (’74), Boston College; LAW (’78), Illinois Institute of Technology; Chicago-Kent College of Law (Editor-In-Chief of the Law Review)

**Career:** Mike Galvin was a partner of corporate finance transactions at the law firm of Winston & Strawn in Chicago. He later served under President George H.W. Bush as the Senate confirmed assistant secretary of the United States Department of Commerce for Export Administration (the defense trade area), where he worked with the Defense and State Departments to reformulate and renegotiate 45 years of post Cold War strategic trade policies after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Mike and his brother, Chris Galvin, with the support and inspiration of their father, Bob Galvin, co-founded Harrison Street Capital—which now owns and leads operating companies in the more essential, less cyclical, service and product sectors of the software, defense contracting, and real estate industries.

**Service:** Mike Galvin is an IIT Life Trustee and currently a member of the IIT Board’s Executive Committee. He served on the recent Strategic Planning and Campaign Planning Committees. He is further a member of the Board of Overseers at Chicago-Kent, among other IIT board commitments. He serves the university while living in Washington, D.C., continuing a family tradition of IIT active leadership service and philanthropy that started with his father, University Regent Robert Galvin, and also included the parallel support of his step-grandmother, Virginia Galvin Piper, who made the lead gift to endow and name the IIT library after Mike’s grandfather, Paul Galvin, among other noteworthy programmatic gifts over the years since the 1960s.

**IIT Memory:** As a student at Chicago-Kent, Mike was mentored by former law school dean and IIT President Emeritus, Lew Collens, as well as professors Richard Conviser and Ralph Brill. He characterizes his IIT student experience as follows: “I felt like I had received an excellent education at IIT, which had prepared me to achieve and succeed in the real world after law school. But what really inspired me to give back to IIT were those professors (well, friends actually) who gave me really sensible career and personal advice.”

Alan W. Wendorf  
[ME ’71]

**Degree:** B.S. Mechanical Engineering (’71), Illinois Institute of Technology

**Career:** Wendorf began his career at Sargent & Lundy in the 1970s as an entry-level engineer and worked his way up to the top. He was made partner in 1992, and in 2005 Wendorf became the firm’s 13th chairman, president, and chief executive officer.

**Honors:** A member of the IIT Board of Trustees and Alumni Association Board of Directors, Wendorf recently became the co-chair of the Campaign for IIT. He is a member of Pi Kappa Phi, the Board of Directors of the Nuclear Energy Institute, and the National Society of Professional Engineers. His most humbling honor, however, is his Fellow Grade membership in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

**Hobbies:** “I enjoy golfing, fly fishing, and skiing, and my wife Suzie and I have been taking ballroom dancing lessons. It’s not my best skill, but we have fun.”

**Inspiration:** IIT Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering Roland A. Budenholzer made an impact on Wendorf at an impressionable age. “Dr. Budenholzer’s work is the academic foundation of everything in the power business. The things I learned in his classes really stuck with me, and it’s what I’ve done with the rest of my career. It’s a significant part of my life, all thanks to him.”

**IIT Support:** The Wendorfs are committed to supporting scholarships at IIT—particularly the Collens Scholarship—and have made it possible for many students to attend IIT, including Trevor Townsend, a 3rd year student studying aerospace engineering. “Each year we meet a new student who is helped by our scholarship. We’ve known Trevor for three years now and have had the chance to see him excel at IIT and watch as his studies click into place. We’ve even met his family. We believe in him.”
Edward L. Kaplan
[ME '65]

DEGREES: B.S. Mechanical Engineering ('65), Illinois Institute of Technology; M.B.A. ('70), The University of Chicago

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS: Kaplan co-founded Zebra Technologies in 1969 at age 26 and grew it into the largest provider of barcode printing equipment in the world. The company produces more than 1 million printers annually and is poised to achieve 1 billion in sales this year.

In 1965, he went to work for Teletype Corp. as a design engineer. In early 1969, he started working evenings and weekends as an engineering consultant. That turned into a design/manufacturing operation and then a full-time business, Data Specialties Company, was hatched. Kaplan thought he was on easy street, but orders cancellations and lawsuits quickly followed. That's when he started to learn how to survive and build a business.

THANKS TO IIT: "I learned a great deal as a result of joining a fraternity, AEPi, it was first among all the fraternities in academic achievement at IIT. When you have people around you who are very bright and work very hard to do well, you are motivated to do better."

INSPIRATION: "I credit my father. He had a very positive attitude and was an extremely determined man. He led by example and was a fantastic mentor. It didn't make a difference if you were shooting baskets or preparing for a major exam. He inspired me and gave me confidence."

SERVICE: Kaplan believes in giving back to the community. He is the vice chair of the Board of Trustees at IIT, he is on the Advisory Board at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, and he is on the Board of Trustees at the Museum of Science and Industry. His wife, Carol, is president of the Kaplan Foundation.

ADVICE FOR ENTREPRENEURS: "If you really have confidence that you have a product or service that provides real value and you are willing to work very hard, don't give up. It's going to take a lot longer than you think and it will also take more money than you planned. But if you stick with it, you will ultimately achieve your goals and be successful. However, it will not come without sacrifice."