



Lauren Williams' introduction

Lauren Williams, a bio-medical engineer with Exact Sciences, gave a memorable introduction of her father, Ted Williams.

When my dad asked me to introduce him this evening, I struggled with where to start. As I suspect, listed in the program, there is a list of his professional accomplishments that is long...very long, so instead I would like to give you a daughter's view of the life of a civil engineer and the 2020 Delaware Engineer of the Year.

Sometimes a story is best told from the beginning but let me jump to when I think my dad's life really changed...the moment he met our mom. They met young and clearly, he wooed her with his baby blues and his genuine smile, one or both that I suspect have also helped him in business. They married young and my mom spent the first two years of their marriage finishing college, where she didn't walk her college graduation because of the very hot day and because she was 8 months pregnant with me. During that time, dad worked full time but also spent his time volunteering to coach youth football with my grandfather, helping to coach boys, not just in the ins and outs of football, but in growing to be good young men.

I was born about a week shy of their 2-year anniversary. Five months later, my mom almost became a widow. Dad was injured in an accident at a site. With his own mental strength, and a little luck of the Irish he got with marriage, he was able to help direct his own extraction and leave with his life. The outcome was a toe to hip cast and in and out of surgeries and rehab for 6 months. The accident changed forever how he could play with us as kids. The upside was that Ryan and I could always out run him in a foot race, but he always found a way to be active with us. A couple of years later, we became a family of four with my brother Ryan.

I believe that accident, the unwavering support of my mom, and his own internal desire to do more led dad to go back to school to get his engineering degree. He started when I was 5 years old, driving to Philadelphia a couple nights a week after a work day to go to school. Six years later he graduated, and Ryan and I walked across the stage with him.

Here is where my memories really start...I don't remember ever having a sense that my dad wasn't present during this time. He made it to all of our sporting events, helped coach our teams, and was there for meals. I remember how thick his calculus book was...it was huge to a kid...the cover was gray and I even think Da Vinci's Virtruvian Man was on the cover. I was in awe that a school book could be *that big* and it must mean he was *really smart*. Always interesting what stands out when you are a kid.

As we got older, I started to have a better understanding of what dad "did." He designed parking lots...dang, is that boring when it is career day at school. One upside was getting to go to a movie theater opening that he worked on, but otherwise...boring. I mean, a 12-year old really doesn't have a lot of interest in how cars park or where water drains. The interesting thing is that both Ryan and I grew up understanding the importance of being an engineer, but wanted to be "some other kind."

When we would drive places, dad would provide commentary of projects going on around Delaware and what may be being built here or there. (As a note, this has not changed at ALL!!) He told a story once of colleagues counting foot traffic at the beach during bar time to help his coolness factor. Please insert pre-teen skepticism at this point. All along the way though, dad was there. His career was not the center of our family, but rather swim meets where he was a turn judge, football games he coached, softball games he was at first base, and all the other things we tried where he was always in the stands were what defined us as a family. I cannot recall a single game/match/meet that was missed because of work.

I share this because as an adult, I suspect the trajectory of my dad's success may have been slowed a bit because of how he and my mom prioritized our family and how lucky Ryan and I are because of it.

In the spirit of time, I will jump to the end. I decided to be an engineer, but not a civil engineer. Since graduating college and starting my own career, I have watched my dad, with my mom always in support while running her own company, put so much of the energy he spent on raising our family into his work. This is not just in his 7-5 job, but through his inability to say "no" to any committees, volunteer opportunities, etc. I seriously am not sure he has ever said no. Now 25 years later from the skeptical teen and well into "adulating," I get a little chuckle out of the calls I make home after a new shopping area opens or road expansion is in process. I call just to tell dad how bad the parking lot is laid out, openly wondering who approved that plan or that flow of traffic. So, I guess maybe civil engineering is not so boring after all.

**With that, I would like to introduce my dad, Ted Williams,
this year's Delaware Engineer of the Year...**



Ted Williams
2020 Engineer of the Year

I would like to thank the Delaware Engineering Society and Past Presidents for bestowing this honor on me. I am both humbled and honored to be the 2020 Delaware Engineer of the Year.

I would like to recognize the past winners of the Engineer of the Year award, several are in attendance this evening. Each of you in some way have influenced me and my career. From Jeff Bross who hired me for my first job in Delaware, to Tom Prusak, my retired partner who encouraged me to become involved outside of the day to day job to support our profession, our businesses and our community, to Steve Johns who nominated me for this award. I would like to ask you to keep Dave Charles, past Engineer of the Year and his family in your thoughts and prayers on the recent passing of Dave's wife Lauren.

I would like to thank my current and past partners and my current and past fellow employees of Landmark Science & Engineering, a few of whom are here this evening.

I want to thank my daughter Lauren, my son Ryan and daughter-in-law Allison who are with us this evening. The three of you inspire and make me proud each and every day. And to my two beautiful grand-daughters that help keep me young by giving them pony rides on my back to chasing them around the park.

Last, but not the least I want to thank my best friend and wife of over 42 years, Karen. You have been and continue to be my biggest supporter from my darkest time when a collapse of a pile load test landed me in the hospital for two months, to encouraging me to complete my degree at Drexel University to supporting my involvement in organizations such as ACEC, including my Chairmanship of the National Board of Directors, the Committee of 100, the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association where I was one of the first public members and the Council on Transportation where I am currently Chairman, thank you Governor Carney for re-appointing me to the Council. The best thing that you have given me beyond our children and life together is our passion for having beautiful gardens. While I cannot name most of the plants, I do enjoy the effort to establish the gardens and the awakening of the gardens where we see the yearly re-birth of nature's wonders.

I want to congratulate the Young Engineer of the Year, Chris Brendza. I wish you the best in your career and encourage you to continue your involvement outside of the daily job.

I want to congratulate each of the ACEC Project of the Year Award winners. These projects represent the best of what we do as engineers to support efficient multi-modal transportation, protection of the environmental and economic development needs of the State. These projects, along with the multitude of other projects that are designed by engineers, are the backbone of a strong and vibrant community and economy.

I want to congratulate all the scholarship winners. I and all in this room this evening are encouraged by where we as a profession are headed. We can be rest insured that each of you will contribute to our community, our state and our country with future engineering designs that address all the pressing needs of an advanced society and economy. As you pursue your education imagine what you can accomplish, I quote Albert Einstein who said “Imagination is everything, it is the preview of life’s coming attractions.” Like those who just received their Professional Engineer license certificates this evening, I encourage each of future engineering students to follow the same path to obtain your professional licensure. It is extremely awarding and validates your commitment to the engineering profession.

Lastly, I want to encourage each of you to get involved whether it is in business organizations, technical societies, coaching, mentoring, etc., but, in particular, I encourage you to support STEM education for all children. We need to show the young members of our community the importance of STEM in everything that we do as a society. For those of you who are so inclined, DES is looking for a state wide Math Counts coordinator. This program, which is run by NSPE, is for a math team/individual competition for middle school students.

Thank you again to all winners this evening and thank you for this award.



DES President James Taylor presents Ted with the 2020 Engineer of the Year award.



Ted with his family (left) and with his Landmark partners and staff (right)