

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology Alumnus, Wife Establish Faculty Fellowship Honoring Former Physics Professor

Gift Recognizes the Leading STEM College's Commitment to Excellence and Innovation in Education and Research

TERRE HAUTE, IN, UNITED STATES, March 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A generous gift from alumnus Michael A. Huhnke and his wife, Karen, is supporting [Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology](#) and its standing as a leader in science, engineering, and mathematics education by establishing a new endowed faculty fellowship for the Physics and Optical Engineering Department, named in honor of former professor Bruce Danner, PhD.

The Dr. Bruce R. Danner Endowed Faculty Fellowship recognizes the college's commitment to excellence and innovation in education and research. It will be initiated in spring 2025 to support a current professor's expertise in [physics, optical](#)

[engineering, or nanoengineering](#), lead to conversations with other educators in career fields, and encourage research opportunities with undergraduate students.

Rose-Hulman President Robert A. Coons stated, "Michael and Karen Huhnke's support through this faculty fellowship is essential in our efforts to attract and retain exceptional professors who provide our students with the world's best undergraduate STEM education, while inspiring and preparing students for lives of purpose and success."

"When Karen and I decided to make a large donation somewhere, Rose-Hulman was the logical spot for several reasons," said Michael Huhnke, a 1975 physics and mechanical engineering alumnus. "(Rose-Hulman) gave me an opportunity to learn to excel in my field, provided an



Michael and Karen Huhnke have established an endowed faculty fellowship supporting physics education at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology





(Rose-Hulman) gave me an opportunity to learn to excel in my field, provided an academic environment that met my needs, and pushed me to achieve without overwhelming me from a social standpoint."

Michael Huhnke, 1975 Physics and Mechanical Engineering Alumnus

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The Huhnkes selected the Physics and Optical Engineering Department after careful consideration. "We picked the Physics Department because of my very strong feeling that physics provides one of, if not the most important, foundational pieces that all of the other science and engineering disciplines rest upon," Michael Huhnke explained. "It is my belief that Rose-Hulman must have and maintain a superb physics area, which of course means maintaining first-class instructors, to continue to succeed in its mission."

Danner was a member of the Rose-Hulman faculty for 30 years and after retiring in 1998 continued teaching on campus as an adjunct professor until 2012. He also spent time as director of Rose-Hulman's Waters Computer Center and helped establish a consortium with computer center directors from DePauw University (his alma mater), Franklin College, and Wabash College. Danner also played an instrumental role in Rose-Hulman's implementation of providing laptop computers to all incoming first-year students. He died in 2018.

"When considering the people at Rose-Hulman, and particularly within the physics department, who had helped and encouraged me the most, Dr. Danner was my faculty advisor. He did a good job guiding me through the many pitfalls that might befall a reasonably intelligent student competing with several quite brilliant scholars," Huhnke recalled. "What he was really good at though was relating to his student and that is what I remember about him the most. He could make us feel like we could do it, too."

Danner also played an instrumental role in encouraging Huhnke to add a major in mechanical engineering because of the expanding career opportunities within that field during the mid-1970s and early 1980s. Huhnke has enjoyed a 50-year career working in the petroleum industry, spending more than 45 years as vice president of operations with Texas Crude Energy in Houston, Texas.

"My Rose-Hulman education has paid huge dividends for me professionally and personally. It was time for me to give back through establishing this faculty fellowship," he stated.

Rose-Hulman's endowed faculty program recognizes the best and brightest faculty, who are committed to excellence and innovation in their fields and educational pursuits. These endowed positions help enact the mission and vision of the Institute while contributing to elements of its [strategic plan](#).

For more information about establishing endowed faculty fellowships at Rose-Hulman, contact Steve Brady, vice president for institutional advancement, at brady1@rose-hulman.edu or 812-877-8784.

About Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, located on a scenic 1,300-acre campus in Terre Haute, Indiana, is home to 2,300+ students from 47 states and 33 countries. Consistently ranked among the nation's top undergraduate STEM colleges, Rose-Hulman delivers a strong return on investment from day one. Students collaborate with esteemed faculty in labs and innovation centers equipped with cutting-edge technology—opportunities often reserved for graduate students elsewhere. With nearly 100% career placement for two decades, Rose-Hulman prepares graduates for success. Founded in 1874, Rose-Hulman offers a vibrant student experience with a close-knit campus community, nationally recognized competition teams, 20 NCAA Division III sports, 90+ student clubs, and 12 fraternities and sororities. Learn more at rose-hulman.edu.

DROPBOX PHOTO AVAILABILITY:

A Dropbox with images of endowed faculty fellowship donors Michael and Karen Huhnke and former physics professor Bruce Danner can be found at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/8g7dvearfy7i2ay1z41lf/AA3xrta2T962Lnv2Ditgb54?rlkey=ojnjvthotrnenkx6sfcb50ezj&e=1&st=qsbvezzi&dl=0>

ROSE-HULMAN B-ROLL VIDEO:

Video showcasing Rose-Hulman's campus can be found at:

<https://bit.ly/rhitvideos>

Any portion of this b-roll segment can be used with this news release.

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