



## Interview with ASCE Past-President, D. Wayne Klotz, P.E., D.WRE

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D. Wayne Klotz, P.E., D.WRE, F.ASCE, is President of [Klotz Associates, Inc.](http://www.klotzassociates.com), a full service civil engineering firm based in Houston. His 34-year career began with a B.S. in civil engineering from Texas A&M University in 1974 and a Master of Science in civil engineering from the University of Houston in 1976. He is a licensed professional engineer in Texas and Louisiana.

Mr. Klotz serves on the Board of Directors of the Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District. He also has served as officer for ASCE, HCEC, CEC-T Harris County Flood Control Task Force, the C Club, and the University of Houston and the Texas A&M Civil Engineering Advisory Boards. He launched the Klotz Associates Endowed Scholarship in Civil Engineering at both universities.

Among Mr. Klotz's awards are the ASCE National 2005 Edmund Friedman Professional Recognition Award and the 2004 Texas A&M Distinguished Graduate of the Department of Civil Engineering. He has also received the Texas Section and Houston Branch ASCE Awards of Honor. The American Water Works Association awarded him a Life Membership for his more than 30 years of dedication to AWWA and the water profession. In 2008, he received an Honorary Professor award from the Ricardo Palma University in Lima, Peru.

Mr. Klotz married Karen Wilson in July 1974. They have four children and one grandchild, and are active in ministries at Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston.

Wayne has been an AAWRE Diplomate since 2006 and as the out-going President of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE); Mr. Klotz took some time to share his thoughts with AAWRE in this interview.

### Five Fun Facts

Most fun class while in school:

Open channel hydraulics.

Most fun project you worked on:

The next one.

An item or something you always wanted:

Respect.

Favorite song & artist:

Paperback Writer by The Beatles.

Favorite movie:

Too many to choose. Last good movie I saw: The Blind Side.

Please share with us on where most of your childhood was spent? What was it like for you growing up there?

WK: I grew up in Victoria, TX, a town of about 30,000 people in south Texas. I am part of a large family, and we were active in many things around town. I loved it because I had nothing to compare to it. I had good friends, plenty of outside activities, and a supporting family. We moved to Houston when I was 16, and I still live in this great city.

How early on did you know that you wanted to study civil engineering? What were the key factors in your decision to be a civil engineer?

WK: My interests in school were math, science, music, and sports. I was unable to compete at a high level in sports, so that one dropped quickly. My father is a civil engineer, so I was around civil engineers and their projects for my whole childhood. I was in the band and enjoyed all aspects of music. Somewhere along the way in high school, I decided to pursue engineering as a career. I have never regretted that choice.

We know that you attended Texas A&M University and the University of Houston. Did you have other aspirations of going into another discipline or field, other than civil engineering at any point? If so, can you share with us?

WK: My initial selection of discipline was mechanical engineering. I think that was my way of going my own way instead of copying my father. After my first year of college, I ran as fast as I could to the CE Department. As I approached graduation with my BS, I briefly considered going to law school to become an environmental attorney. Fortunately, I came to my senses before enrolling. I went to engineering graduate school instead — a decision which continues to benefit me today.

You are one of the founding Diplomates of AAWRE- what were the main influencing factors in your decision to pursue the D.WRE?

WK: I am keenly aware of the multiple disciplines within civil engineering. Nobody can master them all. My entire career is based on the various "wet" disciplines of civil engineering. In addition, I have had the opportunity to participate in a number of organizations that made or influenced water resources public policy. Becoming a Diplomate of AAWRE gave me a chance to validate my special expertise while continuing my commitment to the profession as a whole.

What types of services or initiatives would you personally like to see AAWRE pursue?

WK: I would like to see AAWRE embark on a public education campaign to inform both civil engineers and the general public of what it means to be a Diplomate of AAWRE. We are a hidden jewel.

What is your message to professional engineers out there regarding specialty certification that you feel that they should know or be aware of?

WK: Specialty certification is the next step in creating the credibility of competence to practice engineering at the highest level. I opposed specialty certification when it was initially proposed a decade ago because I was concerned that we would inadvertently damage the credibility of the general practitioner. As administered by AAWRE, this concern has been removed. As we now work to increase the priority of infrastructure funding, we need more engineers who have advanced credentials to take up the cause. The public will respond to engineers who have proved themselves to be experts in the field.

We thank you for serving as President of ASCE this past year and for all of your leadership. In looking back over the last year, please tell us about some of your personal favorite highlights as serving as ASCE President.

WK: You have asked me which of my children that I love the most. I loved every aspect of serving as ASCE President. ASCE remains the gold standard of civil engineering around the world, and leading the organization remains a humbling, exhilarating experience. I will tell you about a few of my more memorable moments as opposed to my favorites.

1. 2009 ASCE Infrastructure Report Card release — We chose to release the grades from our new report card in January to be relevant to the discussion on the economic stimulus legislation. Travelling to Washington, we held a press conference at the National Press Club. The next morning, I went to a TV studio to do a series of live interviews across the nation. I was put in a room with a microphone, an earpiece, and a camera. We went on a whirlwind tour of 2-3 minute interviews with me staring at a red light and talking to people I had never seen nor heard. I remember doing a couple of dozen or more interviews. Whew!
2. OPAL and OCEA Awards — ASCE honors its most prominent leaders and projects at a formal dinner each spring. I had the distinct privilege of serving as MC at this event. You cannot imagine how wonderful it is to introduce the best of the best in civil engineering and then to listen to their humble acceptance speeches.
3. State Department Trip to the Netherlands — Sen. Mary Landrieu and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, both originally from New Orleans, led a delegation to see the water control structures and meet with government officials. The US is sincerely interested in exploring new options to protect our coastal zones from tropical weather and predicted flooding if sea levels rise. You can imagine how much fun a water resources engineer from Houston had meeting with these officials and discussing their practices. To make it even better, my wife went with me on the trip.
4. Everything else — I could write pages on the great experiences of being ASCE President. We have a great Board and a great staff, and I was honored to be able to work with them. We took on some new ideas like the No Wristwatch Committee as an outreach to the youngest among us. We completed a number of ongoing reports and committee activities. We developed some new tools to teach engineers how to talk to politicians. The list is endless. Thanks to everyone who contributed to a great ASCE year. Apologies to the people who I did not mention. Your contributions were equal, just not listed this time.

Which issues or topics (if any) did you personally feel that were most challenging to deal with as Society's President? And most fun or memorable?

WK: The most challenging issue took place behind the scenes. Members should be aware that a number of issues facing the society are confidential. They require integrity and diligence. We also faced a major recession while we changed our Association Management System software. For those who have ever made a major software change, you know that these do not make a good combination. The overall biggest challenge is time management as you try to lead an organization of 146,000 members who operate in hundreds of internal organizations all over the country and around the world. You can look at the previous answer for fun and memorable.

As you mentioned prior, under your leadership and guidance, you implemented the No-Wrist-Watch Committee at ASCE. Can you tell us a bit more on the goals of the committee and how did it come about?

WK: ASCE, like most other organizations, is led by people who have been involved for decades. Experience and maturity are necessary traits to lead such a large and dynamic organization. Most of the ASCE leadership was born in the 50's or 60's. We think, communicate, and act in certain ways. Our services are geared to what we know best. The generation that is now in their 20's has no concept of our preferences. They think, act, and communicate in ways that are totally different. They are also the foundation of the future of ASCE. Recognizing the differences, I thought it would be a good idea to ask the 20-somethings what was important to them in a professional society. We do not need to tell them how they should value ASCE; we should ask them what ASCE could do to provide value to them. We appointed a committee comprised solely of people below the age of 30. They did a wonderful job of telling us what they liked and what they did not. We have a lot of new ideas to explore as we seek to be the number 1 society of civil engineers of all ages.

How do you feel about the state of Civil Engineering and the profession as it is today?

WK: I think that the state of Civil Engineering is strong. We represent a profession that literally makes the world a better place. Civil engineers improve the quality of life for people they never meet. Young people who want to help others are coming to civil engineering, and our enrollments are up. While helping people, we do our work to the highest standards. We are members of an honorable profession.

What do you personally feel are the biggest challenges that are on the horizon for the profession?

WK: The biggest challenge that I see on the horizon is the continued degradation of our infrastructure. We have seen spending on our basic systems decline over the last 30 or 40 years. Systems are being used far past their useful lives, and the demands far exceed the original design parameters. To date, we have been unable to convince elected officials at any level of government of the consequences of this degradation. We are compromising our safety, our economy, our environment, and our quality of life. Yet, infrastructure continues to get second class status when spending priorities are made. We must get more civil engineers involved in establishing public policy, or we will pay a long-term price in all areas of our lives.

You began your own engineering firm, Klotz Associates many years ago and you've achieved proven success. What advice would you give to a student that is studying to be a Civil Engineer to find success as a professional engineer?

WK: The advice is easy. Take a job doing something you enjoy. Be willing to work hard. Do your best in everything you undertake. Be honest in all of your dealings. Enjoy a life away from work. Chase success over money.

We know that you helped create the Klotz Associates Endowed Scholarship in Civil Engineering at both Texas A&M and U. of Houston. Can you tell us more about your Scholarship programs?

WK: We have been fortunate to have great students to hire to build our company. Recognizing the financial challenges of a college education, we decided to create a pathway to assist deserving students. Both of our scholarships have the same basic criteria. We want upper level students because we want to help students who are going to stay in civil engineering. We ask the students to be looking to become practitioners. Most importantly, the recipients must be involved in extra-curricular activities. In short, we are trying to create a new generation of civil engineering practitioners who understand the value of being involved in things outside of work.

What will you miss the most as being the Society's President?

WK: I will miss the opportunity to meet civil engineers all over the country and around the world. Civil engineers are inspiring people wherever you find them. However, I do get to spend more time with the great civil engineers that comprise Klotz Associates!

What are some of your personal hobbies and interests?

WK: I spend a lot of time with my family. We are active in the ministries of our church. I read lots of novels. I am looking forward to having the time to get reacquainted with my golf game.

What are some of your personal and professional goals for the next year or so?

WK: My goals include supporting ASCE President Blaine Leonard and returning to work full time in my firm. I will also continue to promote the advocacy of infrastructure at all levels of government.



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