

- DENNIS T. SAUER '72 -

DENNIS SAUER grew up on the family farm near Lamont, Washington. After graduating high school, he attended Whitworth University, completing a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1966. He continued his education at Central Washington University where he completed a master's degree in 1968. He then received a research fellowship at the University of Idaho that allowed him to pursue a doctoral degree. In September 1971, he went to the University of Utah as a faculty intern for that academic year, returning to U of I to complete his doctoral degree in 1972.

After graduating from U of I, Sauer joined Hercules, Inc., a chemical and munitions manufacturing company, where he worked until his retirement in 2001. In his initial role as a research scientist, he led the research and development of solid reactant gas generators for chemical laser weapons, resulting in the delivery of a fieldable gas generating system for the U.S. Army.

Sauer was selected to direct the development of critical propellants and case bond systems for the solid rocket motors of the U.S. Navy's D5 program in 1984. Through Sauer's guidance and leadership, materials were developed to be reliable and provide long-term missile service life. These materials were incorporated into the U.S. Navy's submarine-based strategic deterrent missile system. This work was critical to the submarine Trident D5 missile; this system is currently in use and projected to be used into the 2050s, saving hundreds of billions of dollars in redesign and rebuilding of new systems.

In 1986, Sauer was named the manager of materials technology where he oversaw a group of approximately 100 engineers, chemists, physicists and technicians responsible for the selection of materials that go in or on rocket motors. In 1991, he also assumed the responsibility as the director of plant engineering, which oversaw both propulsion and composites. In this role, he led a group of more than 350 employees with a variety of responsibilities, overseeing the development and engineering of all phases of motor case production and propellant processing. The group also developed materials and processes that were used to provide optic benches for the Hubble Telescope and the backplane structure for the James Webb Space Telescope.

Sauer provided leadership to Hercules, Inc. as they entered the space launch programs for both government and private businesses. A series of varied sized rocket motors were developed to support contractors to launch satellites into orbit.

From 1999 to 2001, Sauer was the director of advanced technology with the responsibility to manage technology development at the company's Utah site and all internally funded research and development at Maryland and Texas facilities.

Sauer was appointed to the Utah State Science Advisory Council by former Governor Mike Leavitt in 1996. He served on the council until his retirement in 2001. During this time, the council assessed the impact of Utah hosting the 2002 Winter Olympics and the disposal of nerve gas supplies. After his term on the board, he was named the Science Advisor for Utah, a role he filled for two years.

Sauer was also Little League Commissioner for two years and co-managed Little League baseball teams. He co-chaired the Hercules company blood drive for the American Red Cross for more than a decade. He continues to volunteer with the United Way Day of Caring by hosting a children's center carnival that raises funds to offer half-day therapy for preschool-aged children, as well as funds for the facility.

Sauer met his wife, Charlotte Steigers, in 1969 while working on his Ph.D. in Moscow. They have three sons, David, Michael and Matthew. The couple resides in Salt Lake City, Utah and Sauer continues to serve as an aerospace consultant and runs a company retiree organization.