

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dr. John Brooks Slaughter is the fifth president and CEO of NACME — The National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc. Founded in 1974, NACME is a non-profit corporation that conducts research, analyzes and advances public policy, develops and operates precollege, university and workplace programs, and broadly disseminates information through publications, conferences, and electronic media. NACME is also the nation's largest private source of scholarships for minorities in engineering. More than ten percent of all African American, American Indian, and Latino engineering graduates have received NACME support.



Dr. Slaughter has a long and illustrious career as a leader in the education, engineering, and scientific communities. President Emeritus of Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, he also served as assistant director and, later, director of the National Science Foundation and Chancellor at the University of Maryland, College Park.

A member of the National Academy of Engineering, where he has served on the Committee on Minorities in Engineering and co-chaired its Action Forum on Engineering Workforce Diversity — Dr. Slaughter is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and an eminent member of the Tau Beta Pi Honorary Engineering Society. In 1993, he was inducted into the American Society of Engineering Education Hall of Fame.

Dr. Slaughter began his professional career as an electronics engineer at General Dynamics and spent 15 years at the U.S. Navy Electronics Laboratory in San Diego, where he became head of the Information Systems Technology department. He was Director of the Applied Physics Laboratory and Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington, Academic Vice President, and Provost at Washington State University and, most recently, The Irving R. Melbo Professor of Leadership in Education at the University of Southern California.

Dr. Slaughter serves on the board of directors of IBM, Northrop Grumman, and Solutia, Inc. He earned the Ph.D. in engineering science from the University of California at San Diego; an M.S. in engineering from UCLA and a B.S. in electrical engineering from Kansas State University. He holds honorary degrees from more than 20 institutions. Dr. Slaughter was honored with the first U.S. Black Engineer of the Year award in 1987, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Award in 1997, and the Heritage Award of the Executive Leadership Council in 2001.

He has been married for more than 40 years to Dr. Ida Bernice Slaughter. They have two children.

## *The Search for Excellence and Equity in Higher Education: A Perspective from an Engineer*



John Brooks Slaughter  
President and CEO  
National Action Council for Minorities in  
Engineering (NACME)

Thursday, April 10, 2003  
3:30 p.m.  
Van Leer (Electrical Engineering) Building  
Auditorium

## SYNOPSIS OF THE LECTURE

### *The Search for Excellence and Equity in Higher Education: A Perspective from an Engineer*

There is an immutable and inevitable divergence between the desire for selectivity and the goal of diversity in higher education. It is manifested in many ways, most recently and publicly in the form of the legal case contesting the affirmative action admission policies of the University of Michigan and the decisions of Princeton University and MIT to open programs originally designed for underrepresented minorities to white and Asian students. But viewing this as simply a contest between an adherence to principles of meritocracy and a quest for inclusiveness in academe marginalizes the issue as being one of what constitutes “best” and masks the underlying questions of what is right, what is responsible and what is necessary.

Nowhere are these matters more prevalent in higher education than in the several disciplines of science and engineering. Historically, matters of diversity and pluralism have not been highly visible on the radar screens of science and engineering departments in our nation’s colleges and universities and the relative absence of women and minorities in and in front of the classrooms and laboratories is one indication of this reality. To be sure, too few African American, Latino and American Indian young people complete high school with the necessary math and science preparation to enter and complete a rigorous scientific or engineering education. And for many women and other underrepresented groups, academic scientific and engineering communities are perceived as unfriendly places to enter and attempt to take up residence. There are many reasons that these inequities either are or appear to be true and it is encouraging to note that a growing number of activities are underway to address them. But a coherent, widely accepted, broad-based and well-supported effort that is designed to effectively redress these disproportions and apparent injustices in treatment remains elusive.

America requires all of the scientific and engineering talent it can muster to maintain a competitive edge in the global marketplace of ideas and artifacts. Failure to address the inequalities that exist in our educational systems, especially in higher education, could doom us to a position of technological inferiority among the principal nations of the world.

## PROGRAM

Introduction	Dr. Ward O. Winer Woodruff School Chair
Distinguished Lecture	Dr. John B. Slaughter
Question-and-Answer Session	Drs. Winer and Slaughter
Presentation of the Woodruff Medallion	Dr. Ward O. Winer
Reception	George P. Burdell Plaza (Adjacent to the Love Building)

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### THE WOODRUFF LECTURE

The George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering Annual Distinguished Lecture was established in 1990 to honor an engineer who has made an outstanding contribution to society and to provide a forum for that person to address the Georgia Tech community. The lecture is made possible by an endowment established for the Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering by the late George W. Woodruff (class of 1917). Thus, the occasion is also an opportunity to remember and honor Mr. Woodruff’s own contributions as a distinguished alumnus and as a benevolent and generous citizen of Atlanta and the State of Georgia.