

A Place to Innovate the Manufacturing of Tomorrow

Whelen Engineering honors John Olson '57 with a gift to UNH and the Granite State

Wednesday, April 27, 2016



Whelen Engineering president John Olson '57 has always kept a low profile when it comes to his support of UNH. The benefactor behind one of the [College of Engineering and Physical Sciences'](#) most generous need-based endowments as well as one of the Durham campus' more visible gifts — the 2007 installation of a campuswide emergency notification system — Olson has long been quick to redirect the spotlight from his personal contributions to those of his company, one of the state's most successful manufacturing enterprises.

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This fall, however, it will become a little bit harder for the mechanical engineering grad to stay under the radar, as UNH opens the John Olson Advanced Manufacturing Center on the west edge of the Durham campus. A center within CEPS, the Olson Center is the result of a \$5.3 million gift from Whelen Engineering owner George W. Whelen IV in honor of his company's longtime leader, who is retiring this year after a 40-year run as president.

The Olson Center will focus on high-precision machining, light materials and flexible electronics. A win-win for UNH and New Hampshire, it will give the university's engineering students experiential learning opportunities even as it helps the state meet the demand for workers in advanced manufacturing, its leading economic sector. In addition, the Olson Center will provide state and regional companies with the chance to partner with CEPS faculty and students to develop innovative manufacturing solutions.

"In the sciences and engineering, we are constantly searching for a way to slow the export of UNH-educated students to other states, and the Olson Center gives us a competitive advantage to retain talented engineers and scientists," says CEPS dean Sam Mukasa '77. For his part, Olson says having his career recognized in such a generous and enduring manner is an honor. "It pleases me to see that UNH students are now going to have a facility where they can tinker and innovate the manufacturing of tomorrow."

Originally published in UNH
Magazine Spring 2016 Issue

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BY: Public Affairs

UNH MAGAZINE SPRING 2016

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