

# BEACON NEWS

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

## THANK YOU JOE!

Twenty years ago, a professor at Trinity College, had an idea. He looked around the region and realized that while there were good biomedical engineering (BME) programs at Trinity College, University of Connecticut and University of Hartford, they could be great programs if they collaborated and joined forces. So he set to promote collaboration. He invited the BME leadership of the three institutions of higher education to meet and they talked. They talked about their programs, their students, their research goals, their thoughts about where the discipline was going and how they could make it better and stronger. So they wrote a grant to make it happen. Not a small grant, but a large grant to the Whitaker Foundation for \$1M to do just what they planned – integrate the BME programs into one, institute “tuition transparency” for the courses, hire four new faculty, create an “academic forum” of BME faculty in the region and start to interact with the medical device industry in the region. This would assuredly make their programs great! After three years (1997-2000) the grant ended, the goals of the grant were met and the next step was about to happen.

The Professor wanted to do more. The group that formed to create the collaboration (at that time called “The Biomedical Engineering Alliance of Connecticut” or BEACON) began to become known in the area. Over time others joined the group – a doctor, a lawyer, an entrepreneur, a medical device company executive all interested in what was happening with the development of new medical technology ideas coming out of the three institutions. So they did what many do when they are at a turning point – they held a retreat. At that retreat, the

Professor distributed a recently published article from MIT about “Preferential Access Networks” in Boston that allow access to the Fortune 500 companies for a substantial fee. This model of companies sharing their expertise with others was a good one and the group on the retreat formed what is now BEACON – Biomedical Engineering Alliance and Consortium. They appointed Professor Joseph D. Bronzino of Trinity College its Founder and President. From that point on, the Professor never looked back!



**Joseph D. Bronzino, PhD, PE**  
**President Emeritus**  
**BEACON**  
**May 1, 2015**

Early in 2000, when BEACON was forming, Joe reached out to the community at large to form a network of educational and medical institutions and established medical device companies to focus on creating the voice of the medical device industry! BEACON moved to its current offices in the historic Nicola Motta flat iron building on Congress Street in Hartford, CT. The membership of BEACON began to thrive as more and more people saw the activities such as one-day technology symposiums, grants for collaborative research projects, interns from the University of Stuttgart, Germany, and seminars on advanced BME topics with national speakers. This led to BEACON embracing the newly

designated Knowledge Corridor in 2001. This demonstrated the strength of working in the regions of New Haven & Hartford, CT with Springfield, MA in retaining jobs, creating wealth and providing the resources to capitalize on its strengths. Early in 2003 BEACON was approached by Northeast Utilities to commission a study on the medical device industry along the Knowledge Corridor. That report was issued in 2004 and showed that from New Haven, CT to Springfield, MA there were over 240 medical device and medical device manufacturing companies among the dozens of colleges and universities and 12 medical institutions in the corridor. In addition to



growing its membership from 10 members in 2000 to over 40 by 2004, BEACON held one-day symposium and technology fairs that drew more and more attendees each year to the Heublein Education Center at Hartford Hospital. By 2004, the event was full to capacity which created another opportunity for BEACON in its evolution.



In June 2005, the newly built Connecticut Convention Center opened and its first multi-day conference, sponsored by

BEACON, was held entitled *MEDi 2005, A Conference and Exposition where Medical Technologies, Life Science Research and Industry Converge*. It was the creation of BEACON to showcase to the world the assets of the medical device industry along the Knowledge Corridor. MEDi 2005 was a huge success – over 2,000 attendees and 200 exhibitors from all over the world converged on Hartford, CT. The Governor of the State of Connecticut and two Congressmen attended the event and walked the exhibition floor learning about what medical devices are and how they are the next generation of medicine. The BEACON Medical Technology Award debuted at MEDi 2005 and has been awarded every year since “to an individual or organization/corporation in recognition of significant advancement in the development, commercialization and/or manufacturing of new medical technology.”

From 2006 to 2007, BEACON grew to be the model for other non-profit trade associations by adding members, attending regional trade show events, hosting seminars with nationally known speakers, sponsoring a *Mini Medi* and developing a reputation as a professionally focused organization that meets the needs of its members through service.

So in 2008, BEACON held its second premier event entitled



*MEDi 2008, the Northeast Conference and Exhibition for the Medical Device Industry* at the Connecticut Convention

Center right at the start of the great recession. While it was not the huge success that was expected, it was still seen as a milestone in BEACON’s evolution. Over 1,000 attendees and 100 exhibitors came and many felt that it was time to move on despite the economics of the country. So BEACON pulled itself up by its bootstraps, made some changes in its operation and pushed on to hold seminar series and member meet & greets at various locations in the region. This kept the mission of BEACON alive and active.



2010 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BEACON. A yearlong series of seminar events, BEACON’s first ever tri-state event (with Massachusetts and New

Hampshire) and two member meet & greets events kept everyone busy. A grand event was held in December to mark the occasion with a formal dinner, speakers and awards. BEACON stood strong through the recession and the Professor’s mission of a decade before continued to move forward!

Since 2011, Joe and the staff have evolved BEACON into a thriving membership association with over 40 members, which includes entrepreneurs who are using the “preferential access network” to grow their companies. As BEACON turns 15 years old, we have Joe Bronzino to thank for leading us and guiding us to our next evolution which is right around the corner!



BEACON thanks Joe Bronzino and congratulates him on his retirement.

#### BEACON 2015 Members



**BEACON**  
One Congress Street,  
Suite 201, Hartford, CT 06114  
(860) 547-1995 Toll-free: (877) 723-2266  
Fax: (860) 727-0311  
Find BEACON on LinkedIn!

President Emeritus: Joseph Bronzino  
Executive Director: Terri Wilson  
Program Assistant: Leonor Snow

[www.beaconalliance.org](http://www.beaconalliance.org)

#### MISSION STATEMENT

*BEACON (the Biomedical Engineering Alliance & Consortium) is a non-profit 501(c)(6) trade organization comprised of academic and medical institutions, as well as corporations and entrepreneurs dedicated to the development and commercialization of new medical devices and technology.*

**Benefactors:** Medtronic

**Medical/Academic Members:** Academies of Aerospace and Engineering (PreK-12 CREC); Asnuntuck Community College; Fairfield University; University of Hartford; Medical Professions and Teacher Academy (CREC); CT Children’s Medical Center; Quinebaug Middle College; Science & Technology Magnet High School Of Southeastern CT; Trinity College; UConn and UConn Medical Center & John Dempsey Hospital; Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI); Yale-New Haven Hospital Clinical Engineering

**Corporate Members:** AMxTek; Arcor Laser Services; Cable Components Group; A/Z Corporation; Cell & Molecular Tissue Engineering LLC; Connecticut Innovations; Connecticut Spring & Stamping; Court Square Group; Covington Associates; Curtis Packaging; Dymax Corporation; Foster Corporation; The Hartford; Joining Technologies; Linemaster Switch Medical Corp.; MMEH, LLC; Movia Robotics; Pellectric; Putnam Plastics; Soft Tissue Regeneration, Inc.; Start LLC; Valtronic Technologies; Westminster Solutions; Zetroz Inc.

**Legal Members:** McCormick, Paulding & Huber LLP; Robinson & Cole LLP

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