

James Crownover Pampa High School Class of 1948



James Crownover was born in Marble Falls, near Austin, and moved to Pampa in 1942 with his parents and younger brother. He began the sixth grade at Pampa Junior High School, which was located at Cuyler and Francis Street at that time. That year, he also met his childhood sweetheart, Jeanne Hollis. They both graduated from Pampa High School in 1948, and were married three years after graduation. They raised a family of four children and eight grandchildren, and were married fifty-five years, until Jeanne's death in 2006.

Mr. Crownover attended the University of Texas in Austin, and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1954. He also received his Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Southern Methodist University by attending night school.

Upon graduation, Mr. Crownover moved to Dallas, Texas and worked for Collins Radio Company, where he was instrumental in the development of a weather radar for commercial airlines. In 1956, the engineering model was offered to Channel 5 TV, making Channel 5 the first television station in the Southwest to use radar in forecasting the weather.

Mr. Crownover then assumed a position with Texas Instruments, where he was in charge of the development of military night vision equipment, first used in Vietnam. Mr. Crownover coined the acronym, FLIR, for Forward Looking Infrared, and he patented the FLIR, which can be found on various military equipment, and most modern police helicopters today.

Mr. Crownover's career as an entrepreneur began with his formation of Crown Design Manufacturing Corporation, where he designed and produced products for the telephone industry. His design and patent of five items were manufactured and sold to telephone companies throughout the U.S. and Canada.

In 1969, Mr. Crownover developed Spectronic Incorporated, which manufactured opto-electronic components and equipment for the military and electronic industries. The company was one of the first to develop fiber optics for communication. The company grew large enough in four years to become a publicly traded company on the NASD Stock Exchange. In 1978, the company was sold to Honeywell Corporation.

Shortly after the sale of Spectronics, Mr. Crownover founded Optek Technology, Inc., which produced opto-electronic components and fiber optics for the electronics industry. This company was also made a publicly traded company on the NASD Stock Exchange. While serving as Chairman and CEO, Mr. Crownover was invited to sit on the Board of Control Systems International. Mr. Crownover and other board members were

featured on the September 1997 cover of Fortune magazine. Optek was later sold to an investment group in Chicago.

Following his retirement from Optek, Inc., Mr. Crownover formed Crown Ranch Properties, Inc., which is a real estate development company currently operating in the Texas Hill Country.

Mr. Crownover then co-founded Zeecon Wireless Internet, which currently provides high speed internet in the Texas Hill Country, and is undergoing rapid expansion.

Mr. Crownover's career has been a notable success in the field of electronics. He has been featured by the Dallas Morning News, and the late Dallas Times Herald. He was selected as the High Tech Entrepreneur for Texas in 1989. He was Assistant Director of the American Electronic Association for the Texas region for two years, and continues to be a member of the Engineering Advisory Board of the University of Texas in Austin, and the Engineering Advisory Board of the University of Texas in Dallas.

Mr. Crownover currently resides on a small ranch in Central Texas, near a resort area called Horseshoe Bay, located 50 miles west of Austin, Texas.