



Woodie Flowers *FIRST* National Advisor

Dr. Woodie Flowers gives his signature thumbs up at the 2006 FIRST Robotics Competition in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Woodie Flowers is the Pappalardo Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Distinguished Partner at Olin College. Dr. Flowers participates in the design of the *FIRST* Robotics Competition game each year. He has served as a National Advisor to *FIRST* since the inception of the *FIRST* Robotics Competition.

Dr. Flowers received national recognition in his role as host for the PBS television series *Scientific American Frontiers* from 1990 to 1993 and received a New England EMMY Award for a special PBS program on design. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He recently received The Joel and Ruth Spria Outstanding Design Educator Award from ASME, a Public Service Medal from NASA, and the Tower Medallion from Louisiana Tech University. He is a MacVicar Faculty Fellow at MIT for extraordinary contributions to undergraduate education. He was also the Inaugural Recipient of the Woodie Flowers Award by *FIRST*. Currently, Dr. Flowers is a director of two companies. He and his wife Margaret live in Weston, Massachusetts. He gained his B.S. at Louisiana Polytechnic University in 1966 and added a M.S., a M.E., and a Ph.D., all from MIT between 1968 and 1972. He was made an Assistant Professor at MIT in 1972 and a professor in 1988.



Dr. Woodie Flowers, *FIRST* National Advisor and Pappalardo Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, coined the term “Gracious Professionalism.” Gracious Professionalism is part of the ethos of *FIRST*. It’s a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. With Gracious Professionalism, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. Gracious professionals learn and compete like crazy, but treat one another with respect and kindness in the process. They avoid treating anyone like losers. No chest thumping tough talk, but no sticky-sweet platitudes either. Knowledge, competition, and empathy are comfortably blended. In the long run, Gracious Professionalism is part of pursuing a meaningful life. One can add to society and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing one has acted with integrity and sensitivity.