Theodore C. Kennedy, chairman and CEO of BE&K, Inc., and a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, co-founded the Birmingham, Alabama, corporation in 1972. A national industrial design/construction firm serving the process industries, BE&K has been recognized as one of the nation’s top fifty contractors and was inducted into the Engineering Hall of Fame in 1990. The establishment of BE&K’s headquarters in Birmingham, a move strongly supported by Mr. Kennedy, contributed much to the state’s image as an engineering center.

Mr. Kennedy is internationally acknowledged as an industry leader who promotes innovation, technological advancement, and progressive human resource management. His contributions in the areas of cost effectiveness, research, and community service have earned him many honors, including his election two times as Contractor of the Year by the Associated Builders and Contractors. From the Business Roundtable, he received an award of commendation for his work in the construction industry; from the Construction Innovation Forum, he received the NOVA Award honoring his work on the first mobile daycare center.

The Construction Industry Institute presented him with its Carol H. Dunn Award recognizing contributions to industry research, and the Professional Engineers in Construction paid tribute to his dedication with its Walter A. Nasher Constructor Award. The National Association of Women in Construction honored Mr. Kennedy with its Employer of the Year Award for promoting “family-friendly” benefits and opportunities for women in engineering. Finally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation saluted Mr. Kennedy’s distinguished civic leadership with a Community Leadership Award honoring the “Drug-Free for Safety” program he launched.

A talented athlete in high school, Mr. Kennedy was offered an athletic scholarship to Randolph-Macon College. Instead, he chose to attend Duke University and its engineering program. He was elected to Tau Beta Pi and Phi Beta Kappa, graduated in 1952, and joined Rust Engineering Company before joining the Navy in 1955. After a two-year tour of duty, he rejoined Rust as a construction superintendent. In 1968, he was named vice-president of Rust Associates, Ltd., and, in 1971, vice-president of operations for Rust.

In 1972, Mr. Kennedy helped form BE&K, Inc. In less than three years the company was recognized internationally for its excellence and unprecedented growth. Mr. Kennedy was featured in a cover story by the Engineering News-Record, which honored him as a “man who made his mark” developing effective manpower training programs for the construction industry.

In 1980, Mr. Kennedy served as national president of the Associated Builders and Contractors. The following year he was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to the Tennessee Valley Authority transition team. He has also served as chairman of Duke University’s School of Engineering Board of Visitors and is a recipient of the university’s Distinguished Alumnus Award. In addition, he is a past member of Auburn University’s Building Science Department Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Mr. Kennedy and his wife, Rita, have five grown children and make their home in Birmingham.