Mark C. Smith is a native Alabamian, born in Birmingham in 1940. Graduating from Woodlawn High School in Birmingham, he entered the Georgia Institute of Technology and earned a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering in 1962. Since that time he has made his home and his career in Alabama.

As a junior engineer and later engineering manager at SCI Systems, Inc., Smith’s work helped this company attain the status that in 1992 saw it inducted into the State of Alabama Engineering Hall of Fame in the Corporate category. Not completely satisfied with a normal workday, Smith worked at home at nights and on weekends developing a data communications modem.

This led to his first independent venture at the age of 29, and, in 1970, he founded Universal Data Systems (UDS), the first data communications company in Alabama. Design and manufacturing techniques which provided an economical product contributed to the rapid growth in the utilization of data terminals. Mark Smith’s ability to apply technology previously developed for military and space to the development of non-space and non-military high technology products and services has led to a $1.6 billion national data communications industry. UDS, which was bought by Motorola, Inc. in 1983, is a technology leader in high-speed modems for commercial applications.

Mark Smith served as vice president of Motorola until 1986 when he left to form ADTRAN, Inc., a company noted for the development of a digital transmission system which has significantly advanced data communications technology, adding efficiency, and reducing product costs. Started without product, service, or business, ADTRAN today has become a premier supplier of hundreds of thousands of advanced technology products to the Regional Bell Operating Companies, which have led to reduced operating costs for data transfer in the telephone system network. With 270 employees and 300 additional jobs created through the subcontractor base, ADTRAN makes significant economic contributions to the Huntsville area and through the state. Inc. magazine listed ADTRAN 48th in its 1992 list of the 500 fastest-growing private companies in America. In late 1993, the company opened a 40,000-square-foot addition to its Research Park West facility. Current work is in the development of technology to supply 1.5 megabit T-1 data rates without using repeaters, one of only four groups in the world pursing this technology.

Mark’s contribution to these companies exceeds leadership. His own engineering excellence and his ability to exact engineering excellence from others has spawned significant economic development in our state. In recognition of his contributions Mark Smith was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science degree in 1986 from The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Another of America’s leaders who contribute so greatly to their communities, Mark is a board member, past chairman and member of the executive committee of the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce, president of the Greater Huntsville Foundation, member of the board of the Burritt Museum, and a Rotarian. He also serves on the board of The University of Alabama/Huntsville Foundation, AmSouth Bank and is chairman of the advisory board of UAH’s School of Administrative Science.

Mr. Smith has been awarded two patents in his field.