



**ETA KAPPA NU**

*Electrical and Computer Engineering Honor Society*

## **John A. Kassebaum**

CTO and Chairman of the Board of Directors  
National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)  
*Gamma Upsilon chapter, Johns Hopkins University*



### **Career Synopsis**

B.S.E.E. (1987), Johns Hopkins University; M.S.E.E. (1988) and Ph.D. (1995), University of Maryland. Postdoctoral Associate (1995-1998) and Assistant Scientist (1998-2001) in the Physics Department of the University of Wisconsin. Physicist (2001-present), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST); NIST Director's staff for program development and strategy (2005-2006); Group Leader for Atomic Spectroscopy (2008 to present). 30+ peer-reviewed technical papers and 1 U.S. patent. Senior Member of the IEEE and Member of the American Physical Society. Current research interests: plasma diagnostics and basic atomic data related to gas discharge lighting.

### **Career Highlights**

The highlight of my career has been the opportunity to work at NIST. It's a pleasure to come to work every day when you have the benefit of an incredible support staff and it's professionally thrilling to be able to work with some of the smartest engineers and scientists in the world.

### **Education and Career**

Getting a Ph.D. taught me a lot about perseverance and taking on a challenge alone. It's great to be part of a team, but sometimes you are handed responsibility for something important that no one else is able to help you with. When my thesis advisor described to me an interesting research program, I was thrilled at the thought of working with the rest of the group on such a fascinating endeavor. It took quite a while for me to realize that he had been describing what he expected me to accomplish by myself. He and his other students had their own, equally fascinating, projects.

### **Advice to Engineering Graduates**

My advice is to remember that you are not finished with your education when you receive your degree. Success requires continually learning how to be better today than you were yesterday. One of the most important abilities to continue developing is your ability to communicate. You will go only as far as your communication skills carry you. Of course, you must have something worthwhile to communicate.