



Laurel County Schools Alumni Hall of Fame



Ronald W. Garland 1974 Laurel County High School

Ronald Wayne Garland is a distinguished chemical engineer, a lifelong learner, and a dedicated community servant who has spent over four decades exemplifying the highest standards of professional excellence and humanitarian leadership. A 1974 graduate of Laurel County High School, he moved from his hometown of London, KY, to pursue higher education, ultimately transforming his passion for intellect and hard work into a top-tier career in chemical engineering.

Following his graduation from Laurel County High School, Ron attended Cumberland College before earning both his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering from the University of Kentucky. He then launched a monumental forty-three-year career at the Eastman Chemical Company in Kingsport, TN, where his technical expertise and leadership have left an indelible mark on the industry. Throughout his tenure, Ron excelled in diverse assignments spanning manufacturing, quality control, capital projects, and process safety, ultimately serving as a production supervisor and technical staff group leader. As a leader, he actively fostered a culture of education by encouraging his team members to attend technical conferences and expand their own skill sets.

Because of his outstanding capabilities and contributions, Ron was promoted to Senior Associate, representing the second-highest technical level achievable within the company. During the second half of his career, he specialized in Process Safety, evaluating the intricate design of chemical processes to ensure the utmost safety for workers and communities alike. A recognized thought leader, he has authored 18 peer-reviewed technical articles and books published in prestigious journals and books, including the Canadian Journal of Chemical Engineering, Chemical Engineering Progress, Process Safety Progress, and Chemical Process Safety. For his profound contributions to the field, he was honored with the title of Fellow by both the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the Center for Chemical Process Safety.

Beyond his professional accolades, Mr. Garland has dedicated his life to empowering youth and uplifting communities. A steadfast member of the Lions Club International for forty-three years, he has served as a local club President and held numerous district offices. He now begins the prestigious honor of serving as District Governor of the East Tennessee Lions Club, overseeing thirty-five clubs. His humanitarian efforts through the organization have been extensive, encompassing school vision screenings, purchasing eyeglasses for children and adults in need, assisting pediatric cancer patients, and supporting employment initiatives for the visually impaired at Volunteer Blind Industries. Ron's commitment to service extends to immediate crisis response and global outreach. He has provided hands-on disaster relief for major events and traveled to Belize to serve as a pharmacist assistant on a medical mission trip. Closer to home, he has been a pillar of his church community, serving as a youth counselor for more than twenty years, teaching fifth-grade Sunday School and middle school Bible studies, and leading numerous youth mission trips dedicated to repairing homes for families in need.

Ronald Wayne Garland is the exemplary representation of a Laurel County alumnus. He has combined world-class professional achievement with a servant's heart, demonstrating to generations of students that a foundation built in Laurel County Public Schools can lead to becoming a globally respected professional with a deeply impactful life.