

## A BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE SCIENCE ENGINEERING FAIR OF HOUSTON

- 1949** Science Service Inc. in Washington, D.C. began a movement to encourage countries and states to promote engineering, mathematics, and science at the pre-college level via organized science and engineering fairs.
- 1960** The first **Science Engineering Fair of Houston (SEFH)** was held in the Sam Houston Coliseum, sponsored by The Houston Post and the Engineers Council of Houston (now known as the Engineering, Science & Technology Council of Houston). It was held as a regional fair and open to private and public school students in grades 9-12 throughout most of Southeast Texas. There were about 500 students in this first event. **SEFH** joined the International Science and Engineering organization sponsored by Science Service and thus agreed to follow a comprehensive set of rules related to student research. It also agreed to send its Grand Award winners to compete in the annual international fair.
- 1961-82** The Fair continued to grow and eventually moved to the Astrohall Exhibition Center in 1974. In 1980 the **SEFH** was recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization.
- 1983** **SEFH** hosted the 34<sup>th</sup> International Science & Engineering Fair.
- 1984** **SEFH** was officially recognized by the State as a not-for-profit organization and accepted its Articles of Incorporation. A formal organizational structure was established with a Board of Directors, Officers, and an appointed Executive Director. 847 district finalists from area fairs entered this fair.
- 1986** The Fair changed its official structure and formed two fairs:  
**Science Engineering Fair of Houston – Life Sciences**  
**Science Engineering Fair of Houston – Engineering/Physical Sciences**  
Each fair has six entry categories. A Junior Division was created for grades 7&8; a Ninth Grade Division; and a Senior Division for grades 10-12. The fair moved to the Astroarena Exhibition Center and was recognized as an official Texas Sesquicentennial Event.
- 1987** **SEFH** established a Poster Design Contest and a Science Writing Contest.
- 1990** **SEFH** awards scholarships to the 39 place award winners in the Senior Division.
- 1992** The Houston Museum of Natural Science and the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) were added as co-sponsors of The Fair. The American Petroleum Institute awarded scholarships to the Grand Award Winners in the Junior and Ninth Grade Divisions. Teacher of the Year Awards were presented to one teacher in each of the three divisions.
- 1994** Team project competition was added to the Junior Division.
- 1999** **Fortieth Anniversary!!** Most of the administrative work associated with the fair is now handled by UHD. About 85% of the operating costs are paid for via an annual fund solicitation drive, conducted without any paid professional assistance. Twelve "working" committees and many continuing volunteers and dedicated teachers help to make **SEFH** a successful event. **SEFH** continues to serve as an excellent example of how effective an all-volunteer organization can be in providing a valuable service to the public.
- 2001** Team project competition was added to the Ninth Grade Division.
- 2004** Fair moves to the George R. Brown Convention Center.
- 2005** Top award winners become eligible to participate in the International ExpoScience.

### **SEFH**

Sponsored by

The University of Houston-Downtown  
The Houston Museum of Natural Science  
The Engineering, Science & Technology Council of Houston

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