

# 2013

## John B. Merlette Sr.

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*Class of 1968*



After attending Grove City College, John Merlette began a career as a mechanical and aerospace engineer designing and fabricating advanced composite structures using carbon fiber-reinforced materials.

Merlette was the first to design a 'graphite' golf club shaft and to patent a 'graphite' bicycle wheel. He also designed and fabricated advanced composite satellite and other aerospace components for NASA and the Department of Defense. Every modern Boeing commercial aircraft flying today utilizes advanced composite parts designed by him.

In 1983, he started his own business and with his two partners, supplied the orthotic and prosthetic industry with thousands of advanced composite 'Springlite' devices that aid victims of leg amputations and foot injuries. After earning numerous patents

in the field of orthotics and prosthetics and serving as president of Springlite, Inc. in Salt Lake City, Utah, Merlette retired in 2003. Demonstrating that the innovative spirit never quits, he is currently completing work on both a new prosthetic foot design and a novel prosthetic knee for amputees.

Merlette and his wife live in Montana in a home they designed themselves. Chateau de Merlette was selected as one of the 10 best homes of 2010 by *Timber Home Living Magazine*. Merlette also is the published author of *The Time and Space Trilogy*.