Bill Fricks spent most of his 34-year career building U.S. nuclear carriers and submarines as CFO of Newport News Shipbuilding, later sold to Northrop Grummond. Bill came to Auburn as an engineering major for one of the best reasons imaginable: his Dad said he would only pay for college if Bill studied engineering! Like many IE’s, Bill discovered he wasn’t cut out to be an ME or an EE, so he settled on the Industrial Engineering (then, Industrial Management) major because of its more general business aspect.

Bill went to work for Newport News right out of college, spent two years working as an Industrial Engineer, and then obtained his MBA from William & Mary. Afterwards he worked his way up to the position from which he retired: President & CEO of Northrop Grummond Newport News. He has not been idle during retirement, spending several years as Chairman of the Board of Regent University. He is currently on the Board of General Dynamics Corporation.

Bill and his wife Deanie have three children. They visit them when they are not residing at their retirement home in Naples, FL. eight months out of the year. Bill, an ex-tennis player, plays golf 3-4 times a week. Bill says that studying engineering gave him a solid technical background and the discipline of structured thinking. His advice to newly graduated engineers is “Find your niche – what you enjoy. Keep looking until you find it because you won’t be successful without a passion for what you do.”