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ITE Honors Three Transportation Leaders with Prestigious Membership Recognition

WASHINGTON, DC – ITE—A Community of Transportation Professionals is proud to announce the election of three distinguished professionals as its 2026 Honorary Members, the organization’s highest recognition of notable and outstanding professional achievement. Since the honor was first awarded in 1933, only 100 individuals have earned this distinction. The ITE International Board of Direction is pleased to recognize the following leaders for their exceptional service and lasting contributions to the profession: **Michael Sanderson, P.E., PTOE (H)**; **Jonathan Upchurch, Ph.D., P.E., PTOE (Ret.), Dist.M.ASCE (H)**; and **C. Michael Walton, Ph.D., P.E. (H)**. Congratulations to these remarkable professionals for receiving ITE’s highest honor.



Michael Sanderson, P.E., PTOE (H)

Michael Sanderson has demonstrated exceptional leadership throughout his career, particularly in shaping a people-centered approach to transportation and strengthening ITE. As CEO of Sanbell, Sanderson leads one of the fastest-growing community planning, engineering, and design firms in the western United States. A triple alumnus of Montana State University and the University of Montana, Sanderson complements his technical expertise with executive education from Harvard Business School.

His ITE service includes terms as International President (2018), founder and Chair of *Leadership*ITE, and pivotal roles in the ONE ITE initiative. Sanderson has also served as International Director, as well as on multiple councils and committees. A dedicated educator and mentor, he serves as faculty advisor for Montana State University’s ITE Student Chapter and teaches as an adjunct instructor. Sanderson has also published extensively in *ITE Journal* and earned several ITE awards, including the Burton W. Marsh Award for Distinguished Service and the *Leadership*ITE Cornerstone Award.

Throughout his career, Sanderson has championed education, mentorship, and community service. His thought leadership on evolving transportation roles and innovation has shaped both policy and practice, earning recognition through numerous awards and advisory roles. Sanderson’s influence spans technical, academic, and civic spheres, including service on

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boards for the Museum of the Rockies and Friends of Montana PBS. His legacy is defined by an unwavering dedication to advancing transportation and empowering future professionals.

[Read More.](#)



Jonathan Upchurch, Ph.D., P.E., PTOE (Ret.), Dist.M.ASCE (H)

Jonathan Upchurch has made a profound impact across five decades of service to transportation engineering. He served as ITE International President in 1991, has participated in more than 50 ITE International Annual Meetings, and has delivered over 100 presentations at ITE Section, District, and International meetings. He has held numerous leadership and volunteer roles, including Chair of the TRB Committee on Traffic Control Devices and

Executive Secretary of the U.S. National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Dr. Upchurch also served as a staff member for the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, contributing to the landmark SAFETEA-LU legislation. His academic legacy includes 20 years as a university professor and mentoring future leaders in the profession. Recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the ITE Western District and honored as a Distinguished Member of ASCE, Dr. Upchurch exemplifies lifelong dedication to public service, technical excellence, and professional mentorship.

Dr. Upchurch has made lasting contributions across government, academia, and professional associations. His policy expertise and dedication to MUTCD development have shaped national traffic control device standards. As a tireless volunteer, he has served on TRB committees and mentored countless students—11 of whom went on to become ITE Section Presidents. His decades of service exemplify the spirit of ITE Honorary Membership. [Read more.](#)



C. Michael Walton, Ph.D., P.E. (H)

Dr. C. Michael Walton is an internationally respected leader in transportation engineering, known for his extensive scholarship and visionary contributions to the profession. A professor at The University of Texas at Austin and holder of the Ernest H. Cockrell Centennial Chair Emeritus in Engineering, Dr. Walton has authored over 500 publications and served in leadership roles across ITE and many other national transportation organizations.



A longtime ITE Fellow, Dr. Walton chaired the editorial boards for the foundational *Traffic Engineering Handbook* and *Transportation Planning Handbook*, helping define ITE's technical standards. He has been honored with ITE's Wilbur S. Smith Distinguished Transportation Educator Award and the Theodore M. Matson Memorial Award. Among his many national honors are induction into the National Academy of Engineering, the George S. Bartlett Award, and the TRB Frank Turner Medal. Dr. Walton's lifelong commitment to technical excellence, education, and innovation is reflected in his tireless work advancing the transportation profession and ITE's mission.

Dr. Walton's professional leadership spans research, policy, and education. His influence is seen in national transportation policy, academic mentorship, and the evolution of ITE publications. Recognized by nearly every major transportation organization, Dr. Walton has earned top honors and shaped thought leadership in freight systems, ITS, and transportation economics. His work reflects an enduring commitment to the advancement of the transportation profession and its future. [Read more.](#)

Read more about these distinguished professionals in the January 2026 issue of the [ITE Journal](#). Visit ITE's [Honorary Members web page](#) to see a full list of Honorary Members.

About ITE — ITE—A Community of Transportation Professionals (ITE) works to improve mobility and safety for all transportation system users, helping to build smart and livable communities.

Founded in 1930, ITE is a volunteer-driven association of more than 18,000 engineers, planners, consultants, educators, researchers, technologists, and students working in more than 78 countries. ITE provides opportunities for professional development and community building through conferences, training, publications, and involvement in projects and products advancing knowledge in the industry.

Through our products and services, we promote professional development and career advancement, support education, lead research initiatives, develop technical resources, including standards and recommended practices, promote public awareness programs, and serve as a conduit for exchanging professional information.

Members benefit from involvement at all levels of the organization. ITE International refers to the staff and board leadership. Together with Districts, Sections, Chapters, and Student Chapters, ITE offers leadership, learning, and networking opportunities at the global, national, regional, and local levels. We work together to keep you up to date on key issues and provide professional development at every stage of your career.

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