



Wichita Chapter

PAST PRESIDENTS

LEADERSHIP RECALL



NAME & YEAR(S) AS PRESIDENT OF THE ASHRAE-WICHITA CHAPTER. SCOTT HILDRETH 2006-2007

WOULD YOU GIVE A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF YOUR LIFE? (PLACE OF BIRTH, FAMILY SIZE, EARLY SCHOOLING, HIGHER EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND OUTSIDE OF THE HVAC INDUSTRY, CURRENT FAMILY—SPOUSE, CHILDREN.)

I WAS BORN IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, AND MOVED TO KANSAS IN THE MID-1970S. ATTENDED SCHOOL IN KANSAS, AND WENT TO WORK IN THE HVAC INDUSTRY IN 1989, AND REMAINED IN THE INDUSTRY UNTIL 2011. CURRENTLY MARRIED, AND HAVE SIX CHILDREN, MY YOUNGEST BEING 7 MONTHS OLD.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO ENGINEERING AND/OR THE HVAC INDUSTRY?

I FOUND THE HVAC CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN WICHITA (DURING THE TIME I WAS EMPLOYED) TO BE FAST-PACED, CHALLENGING, AND REWARDING. THE CHALLENGES PLACED IN FRONT OF THE CONTRACTORS BY THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY FOR FAST-PACED DESIGN-BUILD PROJECTS WAS SOMETHING I PERCEIVED AS STIMULATING. SO, I FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON DESIGN-BUILD PROJECTS DURING MY TENURE.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN THE HVAC INDUSTRY AND WHERE DID IT LEAD?

I BEGAN MY CAREER WITH DEN MANAGEMENT, WORKING FOR DAVID HUGHES, A LOCAL, WELL-RESPECTED PE. HE TOOK ME UNDER HIS WING, TAUGHT ME THE INS AND OUTS OF THE INDUSTRY, AND TRAINED ME TO BID AND MANAGE DESIGN-BUILD WORK. HIS INSIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDUSTRY FORMED ME INTO AN EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGER OF DESIGN-BUILD HVAC PROJECTS, AND ALLOWED ME TO ENJOY THE INDUSTRY FOR 20 YEARS.

DESCRIBE THE INDUSTRY AT THAT TIME. WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES WERE FACING?

THE INDUSTRY IN THE EARLY 1990'S WAS AN INTERESTING ONE. THE CITY OF WICHITA RELIED ON BOEING, LEARJET, CESSNA, AND (AT THE TIME) BEECHCRAFT, AND THEIR RESPECTIVE PROFITS. A GREAT THING FOR WICHITA, BECAUSE THE 1990'S WERE PROFITABLE FOR THE INDUSTRY (HVAC AND AIRCRAFT). OUR CHALLENGES (AT LEAST IN THE DESIGN-BUILD MARKETS) WERE SIMPLY KEEPING UP WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY DEMANDS OF THE HVAC INDUSTRY, AND STAYING ONE THOUGHT (OR STEP) AHEAD OF OUR COMPETITORS.

HOW AND WHEN DID YOU GET STARTED IN ASHRAE?

IN 1991, MY BOSS, DAVID J. HUGHES, DEMANDED THAT I JOIN ASHRAE. EVENTUALLY, I THANKED HIM.

WHAT WAS YOUR ASHRAE CHAPTER AND/OR REGIONAL AND SOCIETY EXPERIENCE?

WICHITA. MY EXPERIENCES WITH REGIONAL AND SOCIETY LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION WERE LIMITED TO ATTENDING CRC ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

WHAT WERE THE MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE INDUSTRY AT THAT TIME?

WHEN I CAME INTO THE INDUSTRY, THE ONLY THING THAT WAS GREEN WAS THE GRASS AND LEED DIDN'T EXIST. THE ISSUES WE WERE FACED WITH WERE DETERMINING WAYS TO MAKE COMPONENTS, SYSTEMS, AND BUILDING PERFORM IN A MANNER THAT COST LESS AND PROVIDED ADEQUATE PERFORMANCE WITHOUT SACRIFICING QUALITY OR LONGEVITY. 'VALUE RECEIVED' BECAME A COMMON CATCH-PHASE IN THE INDUSTRY.

WHAT PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY STAND OUT AS INFLUENCES ON YOU?

DAVID HUGHES, RICHARD BOWMAN, KEN STOPPEL, AND JAMES HERRMAN.

WHAT EVENTS CHANGED THE INDUSTRY?

THE BIRTH OF AL GORE.

WHAT HAS ASHRAE MEANT TO THE INDUSTRY'S GROWTH?

EVERYTHING.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A YOUNG PERSON ENTERING THE HVAC FIELD?

THINK OUT OF THE BOX. THE EASY WAS ISN'T ALWAYS THE BEST WAY.

DID ANY HUMOROUS EVENTS TAKE PLACE DURING YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH ASHRAE?

DURING MY INVOLVEMENT IN ASHRAE, THE INDUSTRY (AS A WHOLE) HAD FUN. OUR CHAPTER WAS A STRONG CHAPTER, THE REGION IX WAS STRONG, AND EVERYONE ENJOYED PARTICIPATING. BECAUSE WE ENJOYED IT GREATLY, OUR DAYS, EVENTS, AND MEETINGS WERE FILLED WITH HUMOR.

WHAT OTHER INTERESTS AND/OR HOBBIES DO YOU HAVE?

RIDING MY MOTORCYCLE (WEATHER PERMITTING), READING, AND WRITING.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE?