

ASHRAE Leadership Recall (formerly Leadership Recalled)
Transcription

Interview of: David Rickleton

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Interviewed by: Charles Henck

Charles Henck

Hello, my name is Charlie Henck with the historical committee. Today we are conducting a leadership recall interview with David Rickleton, past presidential member of ASHRAE who was president of ASHRAE from 1974 through 1975. Welcome David. Dave, I'd like to start off the interview by having you give us a little bit about your background. How you got involved in engineering?

David Rickleton

How far back do you want me to go?

C.H.

As far as you'd like to go.

D.R.

Well I was born in Glasgow, Scotland. Came to United States at the age of six. Grew up in New York City and really didn't become much involved in ASHRAE until after the war. Having transferred to Charlotte, North Carolina for the company I was with in New York, that was the Buensod-Stacy Corporation. I became a member of the local chapter in Charlotte about in the early 50s probably '55 or '60. Chapter activities, I became secretary, '59 or somewhere and then president '61-62. I don't know the exact dates but somewhere around there.

C.H.

After you finish your chapter activities, how do you get involved with the society at a national level?

D.R.

I happened to attend a regional meeting in Orlando, Florida about 1964. And at that time they were just having a day meeting there weren't any conferences or anything. And they were having a hard time finding someone to step in as Regional Chairman for Region IV. And I volunteered for that, to do that since I traveled quite a bit for the company I was with and it wasn't a lot more work to fit in some calls for ASHRAE and do some work ASHRAE while I was traveling and at that time I was a regional sales manager in the south. So it all worked out very well to do that. I spent six years as Regional Chairman.

C.H.

That's longer than...

D.R.

Longer than normal, well normal, two terms is not unusual. And then from there on I went into, no Director at Large after that so another three years. And then into the officers of ASHRAE starting out with treasurer but into secretarial work, vice president, two terms as vice president. And finally a term as president of the society.

C.H.

Dave. Tell us a little bit about your most enjoyable moment being a society officer?

D.R.

I think the most interesting work was the work with the regions. You are close to the chapter membership at that stage. You get to know a lot of people and you travel a lot of places and it's probably the most exciting part of the job working with people.

C.H.

And after you finished your term as president elect you became president and I'm sure you had a presidential theme. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

D.R.

My presidential theme was an international theme. With my company I was traveling all over the United States and Canada and out of the country. I made about four or five trips out of the country in the 70s and one of the things that stood out in my mind as I traveled was the people that I met with, the engineering firms that I met with all depended considerably upon ASHRAE. You wouldn't, couldn't go into an engineering office in London or France or anywhere and not find the ASHRAE Handbooks. So they were very much dependent upon ASHRAE. Also I noticed that foreign countries, particularly in Europe were extremely strong in heating and their knowledge of heating probably surpassed ours. Their equipment was first class. And it seemed to me to be an area here where we needed to cooperate. We needed to get some means that we would be talking to each other. And therefore started this theme, an international year of cooperation. And went about to write to our international members, had ASHRAE set up a procedure of producing an international newsletter, getting that mailed out to people. Special letters went out to the overseas members to let them know that ASHRAE was interested in working with them cooperatively in research efforts and standards work, state of the art knowledge. We needed to communicate. We needed to know what each other was doing and that was my theme. And we appointed an international committee to get this activity rolling. We decided we'd have what we would call international day. And international day was set up to take place in Atlantic City in January '75 and for the international day we had a special committee an international day committee who contacted foreign, not foreign but overseas international associates to let them know we were going to do this and to invite them to attend. We wanted as many to come as possible and during that particular day, it was a Tuesday, we set up to put on a symposium which would include international speakers for around the world. And we had half a dozen speakers on that particular day to talk about their technology and there was an interchange of technology. There were some American speakers on the program also. Followed by wine and cheese party.

C.H.

A chance to socialize and get to know your international ...

D.R.

That's right. Get to meet everybody and they get to know them and we canceled the fees to attend the meeting for that day for our international people. The program was translated into four languages. First time we've ever tried an international translation. So it was quite an interesting day. Yeah we invited our members from overseas to apply for a committee membership. In fact we had four gentlemen volunteered to serve on some of our committees almost immediately. Ole Fanger was one of those gentlemen who's been active ever since with ASHRAE. Gunther Keller from Germany. Rudahl

from Norway. And there was one other, kind of skipped my mind but they are accepted appointments to our committees and began to work with our committees. Of course since then that has grown tremendously. We have lots of people from overseas on our committees. We asked our associate societies to promote membership in ASHRAE thinking that, well there are a lot of them, their members were not members of ASHRAE. Generally the people who were responsible for the associate society were members and others in the group were members but in general not a whole lot of them were members. So we wanted them to join us. That was suggested to them. We encouraged the organization of ASHRAE chapters wherever. And there was some ground rules. One of the rules, main rules was that if there was interest, of course, in any one being or working in a chapter as long as there was no associate society in that area, in that city or country then they could make up an application for chapter. Of course the usual rules for a chapter were applied. You had to have so many members and they would make application to us and we would eventually charter the chapters. And presidents following me traveled around the world chartering chapters. We now have six. Of course that's 15, 20 years. It's not bad progress, we've made good progress. That was the beginning of all of it anyway and it was a very interesting and exciting theme to me. I really enjoyed that, promoting that particular theme. And of course I got to travel a lot myself and visited with members of the Society everywhere. Whenever I travel for my company everywhere in the world and I would, while I was traveling I would make trips to take care of ASHRAE business. The company did not object to that so it worked out very well.

C.H.

Sound like it blended together.

D.R.

It all blended together very well. It was a really an interesting year.

C.H.

What things were happening in the world leading up to your term as president and beyond?

D.R.

There was a lot of excitement there too. The energy crisis had just hit. It had been a year or so before my presidential year that it became quite evident that we really had a problem with getting oil from the oil producing countries and everybody got all excited about energy. President Kirkwood who preceded me set up an energy conservation committee. The committee began to meet in my term and has met ever since. We also at that particular time hired a public relations firm in New York, Ruder and Finn Company to help us to get our story across. We were not experts at communicating by any means and Ruder and Finn did an excellent job of taking the ASHRAE message. The message basically was if you want to save energy now, you better clean up some of the old buildings. Try to get the systems energy efficient. Get all the houses insulated. Get insulation into large buildings. All of these were our specific objectives and then you take care of the longer term things later but immediately, if you wanted immediate results that's what you needed to do. And we projected something like seven to ten percent of the energy expended in the country could be saved almost immediately, 25 to 50 percent over a period of time if you would do this.

C.H.

That's phenomenal numbers.

D.V.

Yes. It is. And Ruder and Finn was a very effective in helping us get that message across. They got me into, talked to all the major publications, newspapers, magazines, radio. Got the material published.

C.H.

Well Dave that sounds like the public relations firm did a very good job of getting ASHRAE's message across. How about, tell us a little bit about standard 90.

D.R.

Because as I mentioned the energy crisis that hit and ASHRAE was already well underway in producing standard 90 during my term. The standard had probably been being worked over for several years. It was just about ready to go out for final review. I think it was about the third review that was going out. There was a, oh several problems, there are lots of problems with standard 90. Of course has been revised a thousand times since then so the standard as it was turned out in my term didn't last long. I think it immediately went back into review again. One of the problems was the site to source problem that came up. How do you account for that in the energy analysis and we really didn't know how to do that. And I set up a committee called the site to source committee to review the problems and see if they could come up with a solution. They came up with what was called section twelve. But it never did get added to the standard as such. However much of that material I'm sure is in the standard today in some other form. It was finally approved in my last session as president as an ASHRAE standard. And since then of course it's been revised a number of other times so it's an entirely different document. But there's quite a battle here over so many things with that standard. Source to site energy was one, problem was one.

C.H.

What do you mean by source to site Dave?

D.R.

A standard as it was originally put together was concerned with the building envelope, inside the building envelope and what happened at that point. The losses in transporting energy from where it's generated to the building itself were not accounted for. The cost to haul oil to the building was not accounted for, only what it cost to burn the oil, what was involved in burning the oil. The gas, gas had the same problem. Gas had to be transported to the building site. So the gas industry and the oil industry and the coal industry, all were very much concerned with that particular problem. They flooded ASHRAE with questions in letters and comments about this particular item. As I say I don't know whether they've ever been satisfied with it or not. I kind of lost track of the standard as it was revised after a while. But that was the major problem. How do you account for that and we had a very top level committee members from each of those industries, oil, gas, electric, consulting engineers and so on sat around a table for quite some time debating those issues and came up with some solutions that we won't go into but eventually has been incorporated to some degree, I'm sure, in the standard today.

C.H.

What else happened during your term as president and the other exciting things you think you would like to share with us?

D.R.

There were several other minor items. For example, I remember one thing we used to sing the national anthem of the United States and Canada at every meeting we held. And I suggested that let's eliminate one of those anthems. Where let's just sing the national anthem of the country where we're meeting.

And that was approved by the board. So from then on we did that. That was one item. The fog dew units in the handbooks was approved. We were going to go into producing dew units and within a few years time, I forgot how long it was, five years so, we're going to convert over to metric. And that's been done I don't know how many times since then. And I don't think we'll ever convert to metric. I hope we don't.

C.H.

Oh I don't know. I think we probably will. The federal government's moving that way right now. They really are.

D.R.

It's going to be a very expensive item, very expensive.

C.H.

Yeah but you're right about that. Any people that stand out in your mind along the way that were influential to you either in your business or in ASHRAE?

D.R.

Oh me, there's a lot of people. I can think of for ASHRAE, one thing was the international day committee. Joe Olivieri headed that committee up with Frank Versagi, Ed Gutman were all on the committee. They were certainly very instrumental in helping with that. Some of the gentleman from overseas that we've gotten to work with, this has been really, been great to get to know them, people like Fanger, Rudahl, and so many. There's so many. I hate to mention them because I hate to leave out anyone.

C.H.

How about what kind of advice would you give for a new college graduate today about joining ASHRAE and what they can get back from ASHRAE and what they can contribute to ASHRAE?

D.R.

Certainly one of the major pieces of advice is to get a good education and don't stop at just college graduation that includes an education with the firm that you're working with. ASHRAE's a great society and just the interaction of individuals sitting down around a table talking about problems that we're faced with. A young man coming into the industry can get a lot of information by just taking part in the technical committee of ASHRAE in the area of his interest. The people that are on those committees usually are extremely knowledgeable individuals and can pass on information to young people and strengthen them. Belonging to ASHRAE is very important for a young man. It's expensive but you can't get along much today without the Handbook of Fundamentals and the knowledge that ASHRAE has available to anyone who wants it. It's free. That's why I call it a great society.

C.H.

As you mentioned earlier when you were overseas you saw the Handbook on everybody's table. And I think it's true in the United States too. Everybody has it there on their table using it constantly.

D.R.

Absolutely. No question about it. It has really been a tremendous Society to me.

C.H.

Any closing remarks you'd like to make, anything you'd like to say in summing up this interview.

D.R.

Well I think we pretty well covered everything Charlie.

Okay. I'd like to thank you very much Dave Rickleton for allowing the Historical Committee to conduct this leadership recall interview. Thank you.

D.R.

Thank you.