

DARRYL K. BOYCE

ASHRAE President 2019-20



Darryl Boyce: I was born in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on February 17, 1951. And I have two half-brothers, and two half-sisters. So, it's a bit of an interesting family. When I was young, I, we moved around a lot. My father had many jobs, so we moved around quite a bit. I went to a number of schools in Langley and Surrey, British Columbia. And that was my school life. Now, when I was 14, my father left our family, and we ended up on welfare. So, the problems that that created in my life is I had no financial support for my schooling beyond high school. But I was able to go to university basically on money that I had saved up from working for McDonald's restaurants, and I was able to do first-year university in the sciences program.

By the end of that program, though, my grades were not all that good, and I didn't have any more money, so I ended up dropping out of university. Well, it I was attracted to HVAC well, I was actually attracted to engineering first, and that happened when I was in grade 9. The grade nine, at that time the class arranged a trip to the local university, for us to sort of look at various careers, and we toured the campus, and one of the stops was the heating plant at the university. And so, I asked the tour guide, "So who would be responsible for this heating plant?" And it was hissing steam and all this, large equipment. And he said, "A mechanical engineer." So out of this tour, we were supposed to write a little write-up on what, career we thought we would like to pursue. And I wrote it up on mechanical engineering.

So, I was on a vacation across Canada, and I, one of my stops was to visit some, relatives in Edmonton, Alberta. So I go to Edmonton, Alberta, and I'm there, and I open up the Saturday paper. And there are 42 pages of job opportunities in the Saturday paper. So, I thought I'd look at it, and I circled the ones that I had the background that I could apply for, and there were seven. I applied for two jobs and got two offers. And so, the opportunity I don't know whether I found that opportunity or it found me but then that was what took me from my production-oriented, path to an HVAC&R path, because I took the job as a mechanical systems designer. And the two options were mechanical systems designer for the university or for a consulting firm. And I took the university one. Well, where'd I stay? I stayed with universities my entire career. So, I worked at three different universities in my lifetime and rose to the top position in the facility side of the university.

My first major job was in HVAC and systems design, so I had no training. And so, when I got the job, I went to the senior, mechanical designers and said, "I've got this project, can you help me with it?" And they said, "Oh yeah, we're very- very helpful." They said, "Those four handbooks of ASHRAE over there in the bookcase will be everything you need to know. Good luck." So that's how I got sort of interacted with ASHRAE. I worked for a while in that area and then decided to go back to university, get my engineering degree. And, in third year of the engineering degree, they had an HVAC&R course. And to get the handbook for that, to get the text for that course, you got a discount if you're an ASHRAE student member. So, I signed up as a student member and I stayed as a student member until I graduated.

I graduated from the mechanical engineering program. I was a student member of ASHRAE. And the, Northern Alberta chapter, which was, the chapter in our area came to me and said you know, like, the year I graduated, "Would you be interested in being on a committee of- on the chapter level?" And I said, "Oh, what's this involve?" And they said, "Well, it's, you know, you'll just be on the committee, you'll have a chance to learn about the chapter and the society, and we have a chair that's been there for a number of years, so you can learn a lot from this individual." So, I said, "Sure, I'll do that." And about three months later, the president of the chapter called me up and said, "Would you consider chairing the committee?" And I said, "Well, yeah, but I'm just new to the committee. Maybe another member of the committee that has more experience should chair it." And he says, "Well, you're the only member of the committee." And so, I said, and he said, "Oh, by the way, we'll help you, you know, we'll give you great support and everything, but would you consider chairing it?" And I said, "Yeah, I'll give it a try." And- and so that's how I got started at the chapter level, which is really your beginning point in the Society.

So, what happened after that is that, I got engaged, that, well, the committee that I, that I joined was, called the, Education Activities Committee, so they were responsible for, oversight on the chapter programs, the content of the chapter programs, and seminars, and, we had a very good year, a year and a half that I was the chair, and such a good year that it got recognized at the regional level, and, I was nominated for a regional award for that particular capacity at the region, and, I won the award. And then at that same, CRC, Chapters Regional Conference, I was nominated to be the regional representative for that, area of the- of the society. And I got elected for that.

So, within a very short period of time, I'd moved to a chapter committee to a regional, level position, just because I said yes. But after the, Education Activities Committee, I actually went back to the chapter level and served as the president of the London, Ontario, Canada chapter, which, because I'd moved from Region XI to Region II. And it was interesting, I said I became the, regional representative for Region XI at the CRC. I only served one year there. And then I had a job opportunity that took me to Region II, and then I immediately was nominated for that same position in Region II, so I went from Region XI as the Vice Chair of, Education Activities to Region II Vice Chair of Education Activities, which I then served for three years. So, I've had kind of an interesting journey in society.

So, there's kind of about three things that I think stand out to- to me. One is that, during my term, we finished the design of our new headquarters building and went into construction. It was really a pleasure to be involved in that, initiative, to the point of actually being able to, swing a, sledgehammer to break a-break a chunk of the wall away in the new headquarters building before it got renovated. So that- that was exciting. The other thing that- around the headquarters building is that we were very successful in a capital campaign. We raised over nine million dollars with one- with a five-million-dollar contribution, a single five-million-dollar contribution, which is the largest contribution society's ever had as a single contribution.

The next thing that really, and this is, quite amazing actually, is that when COVID hit, we created a task force for, epidemic task force. And we mobilized over a hundred people, a hundred volunteers of our society, that actually started working on recommendations and strategies for safely operating buildings during the COVID pandemic. And this information that these volunteers created were, was utilized around the world. It was used by governments and building owners and operators to really properly operate buildings in a safe and efficient manner.

So, we knew we wanted to raise a fair sum of money for our new building, right, our capital campaign. And we decided to put on a dinner in the presidential suite, the sort of the year before we initiated the construction. And we had a list of potential donors, and we invited to the, to this dinner. And one of the donors, potential donors, said they couldn't make it, so it opened up two seats at the table. And somebody came up to me and said, "You really need to add this company here. They have quite a bit of money, and they're interested in the types of things you're gonna be doing with headquarters building." If you invite them, they might actually donate. And so, we did invite them, and interestingly enough, I sat at the table with this company that I had no idea who they were, and we chatted a little bit, and they said, "Yeah, we'd be interested in contributing, if you could tell us some more about it and everything." I said, "Okay, we'll come and visit you."

The company is based in Sweden. And so, we went there, and we visited with them, and they showed us around and toured us their factory and a lot of things in their area. And then finally they said, "Okay, you're here to raise some money, so, well, how much money do you want?" And so now I'm kind of like, "Okay, five million dollars." And they didn't really flinch, right? And they said, "Oh, could we have ten minutes to talk about this?" And I said, "Yeah, I mean, you could take longer than 10 minutes if you wish, but, you know, sure, absolutely." They went away 10 minutes, and they came back and said, "Yeah, we're in. If we can donate it over 10 years, you've got the \$5 million."

Is there anything that I would have done differently in my presidency year? Actually, and I've thought about this quite a bit, because I've had some time to think about it, and I can't find anything that I would do differently. I think that the fact that we agreed to have some different people show up at a dinner, and it led to a \$5 million contribution, things sort of fell into place, and I think really what happened is we made good decisions when we had to, and I don't think I would do anything differently.

Yeah, the events that have changed, ASHRAE and the industry, I mean, the pandemic is one for sure, because we, and it's interesting, so we've always been about having face-to-face meetings, and when the pandemic hit in the March, you know, shut down the world in March of 2020, it was kind of like, we have an annual meeting coming up, what do we do? And we made an early decision that we were gonna go with an online version of the meeting and began the planning of that in March, which allowed us to actually do a very good meeting, online, for the first time ever, you know? So, it's the pandemic changed us to being able to do that when we need to do that and actually to have better online meetings for our committees and councils and the board.

The other thing that happens that's happened recently is the real, understanding of the global climate change. And I think that's really, I mean, if you look at what ASHRAE's doing now, if ASHRAE started in the mid-'70s to get really recognized for their role in reducing energy consumption, and the codes and standards around that, and have been for decades. And along with that, we've become global, much more global. And, you know, it's interesting because when we pivoted from, total reliance on face-to-face meetings, mostly, we actually opened up the globalization much more in terms of being able to meet with our members, in a web-based, manner.

What advice for a person entering the field? That this is interesting. I and, you know, taking from my own experience, I'd say, first of all, get involved at the chapter level. I you know, I mean, that's a good starting point for the society activities. And don't be afraid to volunteer. And also, I would have to say, don't be afraid to take on a challenge that you say, "I'm, you know, I'm not really sure I can do this." Well, try. Give it a try. It's like when they asked me to chair that committee at the chapter level. I said, "Well, I'll

try." And they said, "We'll help." And it's interesting because they will help. And that's the place to start. You'll gain skills that allow you to manage and work with people and get things done. So, I say yes to things and what happens then is that often you'll get involved in something that gives you the opportunity. But it really is about, I what I've found in my life is that it's really important to be able to make decisions. And even if you make a wrong decision or a bad decision, it's better to make a decision than to not make a decision. And I think that's really where the opportunity comes from. You know, it's like whether you say yes to being the chair of a committee at the chapter level, or you say yes to, being treasurer of the society that leads to being president, it's about making a decision that keeps you moving.

So, you could say I have a hobby called golfing. I golf a couple times a week, but I suck at it. But the good news about that is that I get to walk the course, and it gives me some exercise, and so that's all good. I actually built a dollhouse, for my granddaughter, so I built this thing, and by the way, that was in it was supposed to be for my daughter. I started it when she was young. But by the time I finished it was my granddaughter. I have a 19, I just recently got a classic car, a 1965 Beaumont or Malibu convertible, which is, a work in progress. So that's kind of a hobby as well. And you can say volunteering is a hobby, I think. So, it's not just ASHRAE. I've actually been elected to the board of our local hospital. So, I continue to volunteer in some other areas as well, so that keeps my life fairly full.

The basics of being involved with ASHRAE is about what you learn about the technology, the industry, and the opportunities that, the technology can bring to serve humanity. Right? And I'm really big on making sure that what we do is for the built environment, and that's really primarily for the people that utilize the built environment. And I could say that, through my career and through my presidency, to be able to serve in that regard that you improve that environment and you reduce energy consumption is been very important to me and the new technology you learn about while you're a society member is very valuable. You're able to talk to the people that are on the leading edge of technology development. You begin to learn about the applications and the potential. So, yeah, I think I've benefited quite a bit and that's why I hope I gave back, to the society enough.