

TIMOTHY G. WENTZ

ASHRAE President 2016-17



Tim Wentz: I was born and raised in Nebraska, a very rural state in the United States, as was my wife. I met my wife in high school, and we got married in college, and I have two children. I started out as a mechanical contractor, and, worked in the industry for 20 years. Before I made the switch into academia. Our family had a long history as mechanical contractors. Our family firm was founded in 1908 by my great-grandfather. So that's just what our family did. We were mechanical contractors, and I loved being a mechanical contractor. It was a lot of fun. I enjoyed the accomplishment of building something. And I loved the accomplishment of solving problems for clients.

I started ASHRAE immediately after I graduated. When I went to work for my father's firm, he said the first thing he wanted me to do was go join the Nebraska chapter of ASHRAE. And, admittedly, at that point in my life, I'd never even heard of ASHRAE. So, I said, "Well, gotta tell me what it is and why I should go." And he told me, he said, "Look it, you go to an ASHRAE meeting, and you'll find the engineers we work for, you're gonna find the building owners we serve, you're gonna find the vendors we buy from, and you're going to find our competitors. You need to be in that room." And that was forty-some years ago, and it still resonates with me today.

You know, the first ten years ago or so, I just went to ASHRAE meetings and sat in the room and listened to the speakers and didn't do that much. And then somebody asked me to get involved. And they asked me to serve on student activities. So that's where I started. And so I served on a committee there. Then, after a couple of years, I chaired the committee, and then they asked me to sit on the board, so then I went through the chairs, became the Nebraska chapter president, and, quite frankly, I thought, well, that I'm done with leadership in ASHRAE.

And then, a couple of years later, somebody at the regional level said, "Say, weren't you the student activities chair at Nebraska?" And I said, "Yeah." "How would you like to do that at the regional level?" I said, "Well, why not? I'll give it a try." And so did that at the regional level. After that term was done, I became the Director and Regional Chair. And then I thought, well, now I'm done. And somebody asked if I'd sit for election as Vice President. So that's how I progressed, through all the positions within ASHRAE.

Oh, I, there was lot of, things that were really interesting. You know, one of the things I mentioned the slide rule, and everywhere I went, people would come up with slide rule. I had

people bring me round slide rules, brass slide rules, plastic slide rules. I've got, believe it or not, an asbestos slide rule. Why would anybody design an asbestos slide rule? But that was always fun. And, you know, they'd bring me their slide rule, and they'd say, "Well, this is my grandfather's slide rule," which kind of dated me a little bit. So, the story of the slide rule kind of followed me all around the world.

Hobbies beyond ASHRAE? Yeah, most of us look at ASHRAE as a hobby. But yes, I have a lot of things that I like to do. I'm constantly busy restoring a 1969 Mustang, and, you know, a car of that age constantly needs attention or something fixed, and it's a fun hobby. You know, it's again, to your point, it's a real simple machine. You know, it's back from those days when I could lift the hood up and I can look at the engine. I can see all the parts and I know what the parts do. On a new car, I lift up the hood. I don't see any parts. It's all electrical. So, I work on cars.

I love photography. So, I hope to get involved back with doing some photography. I like reading and writing, and so I'm hoping to be able to explore some new books and maybe do some writing that I haven't been able to do.

ASHRAE changed my career as an engineer. I mean, as I look back on it now, the network of people I developed early in my career is the same network in many respects that I use today. And it's made me a much better, a mechanical contractor, made me a much, much better educator. And it- it's opened my eyes to people and cultures and solutions around the world. And I can't think of another organization that could do that.

Yeah, I would tell any young man or woman coming into our industry, in the first instance, you're entering an industry of great importance. There's huge challenges in front of us. There's great opportunities. Second thing I tell them: it's people based. Get to know people. Network with people. And in my experience, that is the number one benefit in ASHRAE, is networking with people, learning from people, and being able to relate with people around the world. And so, that's what I would tell a young person entering our industry. Go to an ASHRAE meeting.

Ahmed Alaa Eldin Mohamed: Join the big family of ASHRAE.

Tim Wentz: Join the big family of ASHRAE. And that's what it is. It really is. I tell you what, anybody listening to this, I'd encourage them to get involved. Those that are involved, thanks for your service. Thanks for your service to our society.

Ahmed Alaa Eldin Mohamed: It was my honor and great pleasure to be with you, Tim, today. Thanks a lot. Thank you. Thank you.