

# *Alfred State College Centennial*

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## Memories:

I feel both honored and quite inspired for the opportunity to write a few memories but know full well that when I begin, I will find it difficult to select which to mention and even when to stop. Therefore, please feel free to edit anything you wish, as well as modify or omit parts not relevant or appropriate for the book.

I was chosen as one of ten original faculty for the Wellsville Vocational Division as a Drafting Instructor when the school was created in 1966. One of my most vivid memories involves obtaining that position. I worked at Air Preheater Corporation where I assisted in hiring and helping to train new draftspersons for our specific job needs. There were no post secondary, vocational programs at that time in New York State. This was expensive, very time consuming and not very thorough in terms of preparing them to do ancillary jobs requiring broader training. Employees often lacked the ability to advance normally or progress to other duties and better salaries. Simply put, we needed dedicated, competent, entry level employees, able to handle engineering and mathematical situations involved in structural and assembly processes. They also needed to be conversant using industrial terms, observant of directions, and have the proper knowledge of materials, machine operations and applications, with dependable accuracy.

We first heard rumors that Alfred Tech. might be starting a Vocational Division in the old, unused, Wellsville Sinclair buildings, but were somewhat in doubt because of the long time vacancy of that plant. Then some of my own workers mentioned a Drafting program and were interested in a possible teaching position for themselves. This was clearly a new concept for Alfred that we needed to investigate. I visited Professor Donald Jones, the new school Director, to verify or squelch the rumor. He confirmed and we discussed their plan. What an inspiration it was talking with him. Little did I suspect I might be offered a job myself.

It was a difficult decision to leave a very pleasant position at Air Preheater and begin this trial vocational offering which required success to continue. However, the challenge was overpowering and I accepted, because the possibilities were unlimited and clearly a probable answer to the critical need we had faced in industry. And much more was obvious that could include special needs like piping, sheet metal and welded fabrications, plumbing and heating systems, mechanisms and endless other possibilities as time would permit. I know that similar, unquestionable needs, were foremost in every one of the other four departments that opened. We soon learned how well it closed the educational gap at that time by adding new options for high school students and even unemployed adults. And of course it met its goal to provide well trained workers for small shops, on up to large industries.

I feel deep satisfaction and pride being part of the project inspired by such leaders of that time as President David Huntington, Dr. Milo Van Hall, Dr. George Morgenfeld, Dr. Roger Rawe and many others who had the foresight and courage to put forth the effort it took to create such a successful and lasting educational undertaking.

Other everlasting memories were the physical chores of creating a curriculum, obtaining equipment, settling and helping renovate the old Sinclair facilities and orienting parents and students. Bob Decker, the other Drafting Instructor and I, were hoping to receive about twenty people for Drafting. We rounded up long, library type tables and the old fashioned T-Squares and portable drawing boards for example, to get them started. Our rooms still lacked heat when we started in late October. (Equipment and supplies we ordered hadn't yet arrived). Then, believe it or not, we learned that forty students were coming, not the twenty our supplies would support. Picture this; students crowded along the sides of library type tables with hats and gloves on while we lectured and demonstrated drawing procedures and practices with our breath showing from the cold air, not only from frustration. Fortunately this was temporary but was actually how we began. Luckily, student acceptance of these conditions was commendable.

Another of the most vivid and pleasurable memories has to do with student progress, respect and acceptance of our requirements. In those early years, discipline was seldom a factor. Students were honestly appreciative of the opportunities and we seldom found much need for corrective measures. We always believed, that since most of our faculty

were recruited having actual industrial experience, their examples and assignments were real and could be corroborated. In Drafting, we even had a dress code of skirts for ladies and white shirts with ties for men. At that time, this was expected in industrial offices. Parents, especially mothers, were probably not too happy but it was short lived and changed eventually to more casual wear, both at work and at school. Our class day was also similar to what they might expect in industry. Classes convened about six hours each day, five days a week. They usually had nightly and weekend homework, also common where real jobs require plenty of thought and planning, compared to many other less professional type jobs. As a result, students could foresee future opportunities which firmly prepared them for productive careers. Parents seemed satisfied and later overjoyed when graduates obtained related type employment.

My original anxiety about entering teaching changed completely to gratification and also to an immense satisfaction that I probably would not have experienced otherwise. I retired after twenty three years and am in awe of the current capabilities not even heard of when I left. Computer use was very primitive then, but now of course, I can barely recognize and comprehend the modern, advanced, accomplishments they have achieved.