

A VOLUNTEER HONORED: DAVID J. BENTLEY JR.

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HERMAN L. JOACHIM DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNER SERVED TAPPI WELL

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF TEACHERS. They can have a significant influence on the paths we choose and the way we live our lives. David J. Bentley, Jr., this year's Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award honoree, knows the truth of those statements. "I had many excellent teachers who not only taught me the A-B-Cs and the multiplication tables but also gave me basic concepts for life. I still appreciate today their emphasis on interacting with people, Judeo-Christian values and ethics, and similar fundamentals for living a successful life."

Realizing the importance of a simple "thank you," Bentley telephoned his high school freshman English teacher this past summer when he was visiting his hometown of Cincinnati for his 45th high school reunion.

"Miss Beck, this is Dave Bentley—we have not had contact for 48 years," he began and then invited his former teacher to lunch. "She actually did remember me because that was her first year of teaching. We had much in common and talked for hours after the last traces of food had disappeared. It was a unique experience because she had meant so much to me. She was a teacher who loved her profession and enjoyed interacting with students to help them develop as individuals."

Bentley's high school geometry teacher was another influential person in his life. She suggested that he enroll at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study chemical engineering. "MIT was a good school for me. In

addition to teaching the Periodic Table of the Elements, it taught students how to think." Although Bentley remembers Cincinnati as an interesting and fun place to grow up, he was especially excited to live in the Boston area during his four years at MIT. "Boston was teeming with culture. I developed a better appreciation, understanding, and love of music, theater, dance, art, etc. I still remember the performances of the Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler in Symphony Hall. As college students with limited budgets, we took advantage of the 50-cent rush tickets in the second balcony. Seeing performances of musicals and plays such as "Damn Yankees" and "Long Day's Journey Into Night" as they tried out in Boston on their way to opening on the Broadway stages in New York was thrilling."



BUSINESS CAREER

After obtaining his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from MIT in 1958, Bentley never actually worked as a chemical engineer. He used the chemistry background and that "ability to think" initially working as a polymer chemist. After a few years in that field, Bentley accepted a position as a development chemist for pressure sensitive adhesives. That position also involved extensive technical service work. His work on a novel pressure sensitive adhesive composition resulted in a U.S. patent.

Later, Bentley became involved in development and technical service with adhesives and coatings for the flexible packaging industry. Progressing through increasingly responsible managerial positions to project super-



Three-year-old Bentley enjoying a summer vacation in Niantic, CT

that period that he met Sue, his wife-to-be, for a second and more successful time.

The couple had met in passing once before when Bentley's father was ill at a hospital. Bentley was then a junior in college. His father was unhappy with the flowers in his room and wanted them removed. When Bentley walked from the room with the offending flowers, a student nurse (Sue) asked if he needed assistance. He noted that she was extremely attractive, kind, and caring. He did not pursue this encounter, however.

Two years later, when Bentley was living at home after graduation, he went to an organizational meeting of young adults at the church he was attending. He spotted Sue sitting in the front row and decided he had to meet her. From the sign-up sheet circulated at the meeting, he determined her name and telephone number. Six months later they married.

Bentley has one sister who lives in Boston. His father was an insurance agent, and his mother began work as a bookkeeper at approximately the time he went to college.

visor, group leader, and technical service manager in various aspects of the converting industry, he spent the final years of his career as a regulatory affairs manager in the converting and packaging industry. After living for 19 years in central New Jersey and 12 years in Woodstock, IL, northwest of Chicago, Bentley retired from the formal business world in 1991 at the age of 55. Currently, Bentley does freelance technical writing and editing and consulting.

The two years Bentley spent working in Cincinnati after graduation from college were important for another reason. It was during

When Bentley retired from the formal workplace, he and Sue moved to Albuquerque, NM. They had their "dream house" constructed on a piece of land at the edge of the foothills of the Sandia Mountains that they had purchased for that purpose eight years earlier. Their primary goal in moving to the Land of Enchantment was to escape the humidity that had plagued them in all the places they had lived earlier. "Besides the low relative humidity that can frequently be only a single digit, we also like the culture that Albuquerque offers as a university location. The influences of the Hispanic and Native American people are also fascinating. This is a completely different area of the world from any place we had ever lived."

LIFE TODAY

Today Bentley is president of the MIT Club of New Mexico, treasurer of his neighborhood association, and a volunteer usher with Sue at the University of New Mexico's performing arts center. Bridge, gardening and yard work, daily trips to a fitness center, numerous family activities, and travel are also important components of his present life. Visiting out-of-state children and grandchildren many times during the year is another diversion that the Bentleys enjoy.

"I retired from work, not from life," Bentley observes. "No grass grows under my feet. What I especially like about retirement is that I am the person who decides each morning what I am going to do, when I am going to do it, how I am going to do it, and everything else." He uses his newfound freedom from formal work to pursue a variety of interests that he has had for many years.

Two examples easily illustrate the diversity of these interests. He auditioned for and won a role singing in the chorus of the 1997 production of "Brigadoon" by the Albuquerque Civic Light Opera Association. "I had always noticed when attending performances of Broadway musicals that the cast seemed to be having so much fun—perhaps even more fun than the audience. I learned from that stint in acting, singing, and dancing that it is indeed fun. Considerable hard work also goes into the rehearsals and the actual performances!"

During that same year, Bentley participated in a "Distinguished Visitor Embark" aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln to fulfill a longtime dream to witness operations on an aircraft carrier. The ship was participating in training operations in the Pacific Ocean about 100 miles from San Diego, CA. "Those 24 hours probably constituted the greatest thrill of my entire lifetime," he recalled. "Life and operations aboard this 'floating city' are absolutely fascinating. The personnel were all proud of their work, anxious to explain everything, and eager to allow visitors to experience all aspects of operation from handling the wheel to standing on the deck during launch and re-



Bentley (right), and fellow crew members check equipment inside an ambulance of the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad

trieval of aircraft. Even landing on and taking off from the ship in the C-2A 'Greyhound' aircraft was different from anything else I have ever done or will do again."

An earlier volunteer activity from which Bentley has many fond memories is his involvement as a member of the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad when he lived in New Jersey. He was active not only as a member providing Emergency Medical Technician services but also became involved in the administration of the organization. By the time he moved from New Jersey, he was the only person who had been both captain and president of that organization.

FAMILY

Dave and Sue will mark their 40th wedding anniversary in June. Rather than celebrate family events and holidays in a traditional way, the Bentleys often plan an interesting trip around such occasions. This past January, they went on a cruise in the Caribbean and into the Panama Canal on the same ship on which they had cruised along the coast of Alaska last year. In May, they will remove another wish from their list when they travel to Ireland. They have a favorite lakeside resort north of Toronto where they will gather with their children and their families in July for an annual summer reunion. This occasion gathers family members from California, New Mexico, and Michigan for a week.

In recent years, Bentley began work on an autobiography to record his life experiences for his five children (Karen, Anne, Joan, Stephen, and Bruce) and his nine grandchildren. With roughly 250 pages written, he was almost ready to have the document printed and bound. "Since receiving the TAPPI 2000 Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award and some new grandchildren, I will have to add an epilogue to the document. I have had a long and interesting life. A definite highlight is receiving this award. TAPPI has done lots for me and meant very much to me."

Two of the Bentley children, Stephen and Bruce, work in the paper industry at the Domtar Industries mill in Port Huron, MI. Both are TAPPI members. Stephen is technical director, and Bruce is environmental manager. Anne and Joan are nurses, and Karen works in a medical office. The children all followed in their parents footsteps with the sons studying engineering and the daughters becoming involved in the medical field.

INITIAL TAPPI INVOLVEMENT

Bentley is something of a paradox. Although somewhat shy and introverted by nature, he has had a rather active and public life especially within TAPPI. "TAPPI has really helped me," Bentley said. "People like Miss Beck started the process, but TAPPI really helped me to blossom."



Bentley receiving a certificate of appreciation from Bill Griggs (above) for chairing the Specialty Coatings Committee from 1981-1983 and presenting the TAPPI 1996 Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award to Paul W. Magnabosco (below).



Although reluctant to name specific "heroes," Bentley notes that he has worked closely with 10 of the 16 previous Distinguished Service Award winners. "I guess they are really my heroes in TAPPI. What these 10 individuals gave me when I had the privilege to work with them were people skills and marketing skills. I really did not have these before my association with TAPPI." He also credits the TAPPI staff as important contributors to helping him grow in these areas. "An MIT education and my positions in industry gave me all the technical skills I needed. TAPPI was very instrumental in providing all the other skills that are necessary to become a well-rounded individual."

Bentley became involved in TAPPI through a coworker, Pete DeMarzio, who was soliciting papers for a TAPPI symposium. Bentley volunteered and proceeded to



Bentley as a newly commissioned second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Chemical Corps (left); Dave and Sue celebrating their marriage (center) and enjoying life aboard a cruise ship during a 1977 vacation

write many papers during subsequent years. On another occasion, DeMarzio asked if Bentley would substitute for him at a TAPPI committee meeting. At the meeting, Bentley volunteered to be secretary, "and the rest is history." He has written over 15 technical papers in his field of expertise. Most of these have been presented at TAPPI meetings, and many have appeared in this journal.

Since joining TAPPI in 1977, Bentley has established a long history of involvement in the activities and devel-

opment of the organization. During his term on TAPPI's Board of Directors, he chaired the Marketing Committee and the Member Perceptions Committee, served on the Strategic Planning Core Team, participated in the 1993 South America Study Tour, and sat on a range of committees. He was also Technical Operations Committee (TOC) chairman after having served as vice chairman, TOC Goals and Planning chairman, and TOC Publications Committee chairman.

"Looking back over the 23 years I have been involved with TAPPI, I find it interesting that many names of paper companies that existed 20 years ago, 10 years ago, five years ago, or even two years ago are absent today," Bentley reminisced. "These names have disappeared as have some people and facilities. TAPPI is still here, however. I think that says something important about the organization. It is providing a necessary and useful service not only to industry but also to individual members of the organization."

A TESTIMONIAL

"I met David Bentley when I joined TAPPI and the PLC Division in 1982," recalled David A. Markgraf, senior vice president of Enercom Industries Corporation. "My first impression of him was that he was Mr. TAPPI because he seemed to have all the answers to every question I had regarding TAPPI policies and procedures."

"As I progressed in my association with TAPPI and the PLC Division," Markgraf continued, "I became increasingly aware of David's role as the driving force holdign the PLC Division together and ensuring that TAPPI, as an organization, gave proper recognition to all the related infudtry divisions. Working very hard within the system, David clearly saw that the future growth of TAPPI as a complete, whole industry organization lay in strengthening the related divisions and in developing a more aggressive expansion program internationally."

Bentley also knew that the strength of the Association is in its individual members, "so he always had words of support and assistance for new and potential members—encouraging them to participate at all levels and to become an active part fo the TAPPI culture,"

DIVISION ACTIVITIES

Bentley's focus of involvement within TAPPI has primarily involved the Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division. This is an area that falls largely outside the pulp and paper industry but is an important allied field. For those members in this segment of industry, Bentley thinks "TAPPI has provided the necessary home for the sort of things that the organization does so well such publications and conferences, short courses, and symposia with their attendant networking opportunities. Nobody else serves the polymers, laminations and coatings area the way TAPPI does."

Nevertheless, Bentley acknowledge that "publicizing the efforts of TAPPI to the people involved in polymers, laminations and coatings is difficult." For many of the



The Bentley clan, less two recently arrived grandsons (above) and Dave and Sue outside their home in Albuquerque, NM.



years he served as an officer of the Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division of TAPPI, Bentley held multiple offices. While serving as vice chairman of the Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division, he was also acting chairman. In other years, he served as a division officer while simultaneously functioning as Conference Chairman or Technical Program Chairman. "The reason for my extensive involvement was that people who worked in this industry did not really know what TAPPI was and understand how it could help them. They therefore did not want to become involved. I think that has changed from the hard work of the people who were actively involved with me when I was a division officer. We did our best to promote TAPPI and its Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division."

"Today a different atmosphere exists," Bentley thinks. "When I awake each day, I am so thankful that I am not involved in a formal job in business. People simply cannot trust the status of their job each day. Although companies may now realize that TAPPI is a good organization with its Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division, but they do not want to pay for organization dues and expenses of attending meetings. Unfortunately, that vision is rather shortsighted. Companies should support TAPPI because of the wonderful benefits it provides to members that then translate into improvements in the workplace."

"In my case," Bentley says, "I had many jobs involving technical service and customer support. I was under constant bombardment with questions of all sorts from customers who needed to know how to use the products of my company successfully. Obviously, I did not have an an-

swer to every single question about the converting industry that came my way. The answers to the questions sometimes required knowledge of something outside my area of technical expertise. I always prided myself in being able to provide an answer to any question within 24 hours or so. My secret for doing that was to use the many friends I had made through TAPPI who were involved in other areas of the industry."

Because of his active involvement in TAPPI, Bentley has received numerous honors. He has won the Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division Leadership and Service Award and Andreas Ahlbrandt Prize; a Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division Special Certificate of Appreciation; a Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division Best Paper Award; and a Special Recognition for membership in the TAPPI Ambassador Program for three consecutive years. He was named a TAPPI Fellow in 1995.

CURRENT TAPPI INVOLVEMENT

Bentley remains active in volunteer work for the Polymers, Laminations and Coatings Division today. He is the division's Continuing Education Chairman and manages the Best Paper Award program for its annual conferences. He is a member of the Division Steering Committee where he "tries to keep them from reinventing the wheel while trying not to stifle the interesting creativity displayed by the younger members." He is also the polymers, laminations and coatings technical editor for *TAPPI JOURNAL*. TJ

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