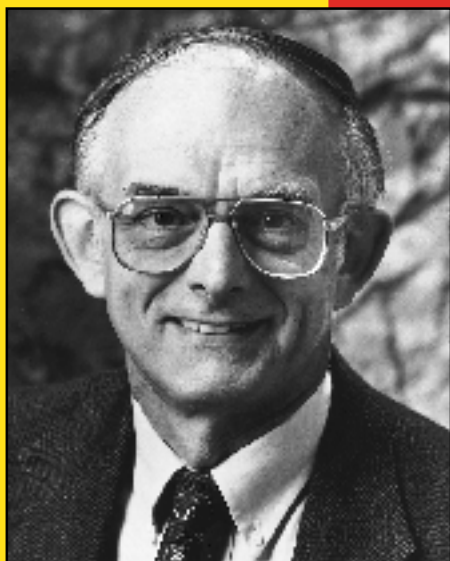


TAPPI INTERVIEW

1995



William S. Fuller honored by TAPPI with 1995 Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award

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William S. "Bill" Fuller, senior scientist for Weyerhaeuser Corp., in Tacoma, WA, is the 1995 recipient of TAPPI's Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award. Established in 1981, the award is one of the highest that TAPPI bestows upon a member. It is presented annually to a member in recognition for exemplary service and contributions to the advancement of the Association. Fuller received the award during a ceremony at TAPPI's Annual Meeting held on Feb. 20 in New Orleans, LA.

Fuller received his B.S. in wood technology in 1966 and an M.S. in pulp and paper technology in 1968, both from the University of Washington College of Forest Resources. He worked with Weyerhaeuser under contract while in graduate school and joined full-time shortly after completing his master's degree. It was also around this time, in 1969, that he joined TAPPI. Fuller has remained at Weyerhaeuser throughout his career. He first worked at Weyerhaeuser's Pulp and Paper Research Laboratory in Everett, WA, and later moved to Weyerhaeuser Technology Center outside of Tacoma, WA, after its completion.

As a young scientist, Fuller quickly found his specialty in chip production and quality. His studies over the years led him to become active in TAPPI pulping operations. He has served as organizing chairman and chairman of the Fiber Raw Material Supply Committee, member of the Alkaline Pulping and

Forest Biology Committees, chairman of the Pulp Manufacture Division, and Pulp Manufacture and Fiber Supply technical editor for *Tappi Journal*. He has written numerous articles for *Tappi Journal* on a variety of subjects and has authored chapters in several industry textbooks. In addition, he was instrumental in organizing and chairing the TAPPI-WEST meetings in 1985 and 1987.

In honor of his accomplishments as a TAPPI member, Fuller was named a TAPPI Fellow in 1986. Outside of TAPPI, he's also participated in the Forest Products Research Society, American Society of Safety Engineers, the National Safety Council, and Meeting Planners International.

Fuller has also been active in promoting industry educational activities, such as TAPPI's conferences, short courses, and continuing education courses. He has taught courses at the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources, the University of Maine, British Columbia Institute of Technology, and Everett Community College Pulp and Paper School for Industry Employees. He has also co-produced educational videos on pulp mill problem-solving for the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point.

Fuller married during his senior year in college. His wife, Pat, operates a gift and craft business from their home in Federal Way, WA. They have five daughters, ranging in age from 9 to 26 years. Fuller recently gave some insight into his

involvement with TAPPI, the industry, and his receipt of the Herman L. Joachim Distinguished Service Award in an interview with *Tappi Journal*.



Why did you choose to work in the pulp and paper industry?

Fuller: When I was in school, between my junior and senior years, I was offered a job up at Weyerhaeuser's pulp and paper research lab and got interested in the application of wood technology. It seemed strange that chemical engineers and pulp and paper people couldn't identify or were having problems with wood in the pulping process. That's where I found my niche as a wood technologist. That's the value of doing summer intern and co-op experiences. Students really need to go out and look for those kinds of jobs, but at the same time, industry needs to provide them; otherwise you wouldn't make that unlikely match between somebody that was in wood technology and pulp and paper.



What led you to a career in pulp and paper?

Fuller: I guess it was Howard Gardner, who was the professor that established the pulp and paper program at the University of Washington. He was insistent on people going out and finding summer jobs in the industry and he provided good coaching along those lines. He found good industry contacts for his students.



Throughout your involvement in TAPPI, you have stressed education in the industry as one of your major concerns. What are your reasons for this?

Fuller: I am the son of an educator—my father was a high-school teacher—so I've been around academic things a lot of my life. At one point in time, I thought it might be good to be a college professor. I never got that far though; the Vietnam war and my family came along first, so I never got back to get a Ph.D. But I've found that the desire to work in education is pretty well fulfilled now with what I'm doing in TAPPI. It's fun to learn—you should never stop learning. When you get involved with education, it motivates you to keep learning new skills.



Do you think it's important for people in industry to keep learning?

Fuller: Extremely. If you aren't learning, particularly in this day and age of rapidly advancing technology, you are just going to fall behind.



Why did you join TAPPI in 1969?

Fuller: My first boss, Curt Walseth, who headed up the research lab up at Everett, encouraged me to join. One of the first things he suggested I do was to submit some work I'd done to the Pacific Section Shibley Award competition. This is a com-

petition for new people in the industry to present their first technical work. It is a good experience; it encourages them to get involved, and that's how I got started and haven't stopped since.



Could you describe your early TAPPI involvement?

Fuller: Early on, I got really involved in woodyards by working with a woodyard consultant, Jim Holekamp. Jim was really the father of modern Southern woodyards. He developed the woodyard superintendent's workshop, better known as MOTAG. Working with him made me realize that there was a real need in the industry for that kind of activity. Another significant event in my early involvement was when the American Pulpwood Association and TAPPI got together and formed a joint committee on whole tree utilization during the mid-1970s. Out of those two activities, the woodyard superintendent's workshop and the APA/TAPPI committee, you could see the need in TAPPI for a committee on fiber raw material supply. A group of us got together and formed the Fiber Raw Material Committee. That led to increased involvement in different levels of TAPPI. I became a *Tappi Journal* technical editor about eight years ago and further widened the sphere of involvement with the Pulp Manufacture Division and Technical Operations Committee. The network of the people that you get involved with just keeps increasing and the opportunities for involvement are abundant.



What are some of the memorable or significant events in your career with TAPPI and the paper industry?

Fuller: I guess a couple of the more memorable are participating in and organizing meetings with my good friend Wayne Gross (TAPPI's former director of international operations). Participating in China Paper and helping with a meeting down in South America helped me see the global impact that technology and TAPPI are making. Wayne and I organized an exhibit called TAPPI-WEST out here on the West Coast. It was a scaled-down annual meeting that we ran for a couple of years to see if there was a market. That really got me interested in meeting planning, which I now do for the Washington Pulp and Paper Foundation and for the TAPPI Pacific Section.



Can you relate your work through the years at Weyerhaeuser with your work at TAPPI?

Fuller: There's a very close parallel in what I do in the company to what I do with TAPPI. I've spent most of my time working in the fiber raw material area, then moving to the pulping area. When I moved into the pulping area, being a technical editor for *Tappi Journal* really helped me learn more about pulping. There has been very strong support from Weyerhaeuser in allowing me to participate so heavily in TAPPI. But I think I've brought a good bit back to the company as a result of my activities.

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You are considered an expert in the industry. How would you say that the pulp and paper industry has changed in the nearly 30 years of your participation?

Fuller: I guess the biggest change that I've seen from my perspective is the ability to think on the basis from the forest all the way to the product. Understanding the impact of the raw material from chipping to digesting and all the way to the product—and understanding that that is a valid area of technology. The other big change has been in keeping life in kraft pulping technology. This is technology that is over 100 years old, and we continue to improve it and optimize it. I think a lot of people thought kraft pulping would have to be shelved because of environmental reasons. It is interesting to see how we've taken it to an even higher level of technology and environmental compliance—and improved strength and productivity and cost. Those two things, understanding forest-to-product thinking and the ability to keep very old technology viable, have changed the most.

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What areas of the industry do you see changing in the future?

Fuller: Probably the biggest area of change is one that I'm not really involved in and that's the papermaking area. Finding new products and new materials—really I'd stress the materials, new combinations of paper and fiber with other materials. Obviously with the electronic age, we are not going to be a paperless society, but we're going to be a less-paper society. I think the role of fibers in paper is going to change. We're going to see combinations with other materials. It's not that the industry is going to go away, but we are going to be producing probably some very interesting innovations in the product area that you don't just dream of right now.

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How have you seen practices and standards change within your specialty since you began as a student in the early 1960s?

Fuller: In the forest-to-product thinking, there is a different perception in the value of the chips in producing a quality product. We used to spend virtually nothing on testing chips. We're going to be measuring chip quality in different ways, not just size, bark content, moisture, but looking at other properties and allocating the chips to their highest value and use in a different way, even more than we do now. Chips have increased in value and in most mills they range from 25-50% of the cost of manufacturing the product. So there's plenty of room to look at the value of those chips. Forestry is changing drastically too. We are now in an era of global fiber supply where intensive forest plantations will increasingly play an important role.

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Who would you say are some of the key people you have enjoyed working with during your years in the pulp and paper industry?

Fuller: Oh, there's a long list of them all. I guess I'd have to start with Jim Holekamp, who passed away a few years ago. Jim was one who really expanded my horizons about how broad my involvement could be. I have to mention Wayne Gross, who's been a mentor within the staff on how to get things done in TAPPI and how to work in an association to be really effective. Michael Kouris (*Tappi Journal* editor emeritus), in inviting me to be an editor, provided some really sound counsel and guidance on how to look for good articles and papers and produce a top-quality product. Some of the volunteers out there—Bill Griggs, who is still regarded as, I think, one of the best presidents that TAPPI ever had. A real gentleman, really dedicated and enthusiastic, not only about TAPPI, but about the individuals. Mike Kocurek (Herty Foundation director), whom I've worked with in educational endeavors, has boundless energy and enthusiasm that just gets me excited about new teaching ideas. Martin McLeod, over at PAPRICAN, always stimulates my thinking about kraft pulping and new educational ideas that make adult education more effective. On the academic side, Bill McKean at the University of Washington has been a good friend. He and I have worked closely together and he has provided me with some opportunities to work with the university and students.

There's a long list of TAPPI staff, like Ed Robie, Matt Coleman, and Laura Feix-Baker, that helped me get the job done on a day-to-day basis. They're the kind of people that make involvement easy and are really effective at their jobs. Then there's the division leaders that you work with: Dick Elliot, Wayne Carr, Wells Nutt, Dick Spangenburg, Ian Clarke-Pounder, and Jean-Claude Corbi are some that I've enjoyed working with through the last 10 years in my involvement with the Pulp Manufacture Division. We've learned a lot from each other in the last eight years. I think we were able to build a very strong division as a result of that teamwork. And the important thing about it is that it was never just one person, it was always a team that got the job done.

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What recommendations would you have for a young person just beginning a career in the pulp and paper industry?

Fuller: Well, first join TAPPI—local or national, whichever you can get the sponsorship for. If you can't join national, you can always turn to the Local Section. Doing that, you can start developing a contact network of people outside of your company—supplier organizations and other mills that you can call on when you need help and advice. Find a mentor, a senior person that you can talk to about technical problems and career development. It is extremely important to find that mentor. If the company doesn't have a formal program, then you can go find somebody to develop that kind of relationship. Most senior people will be glad to do that. Get involved in a

TAPPI committee, once you have your feet into your job, that allows you to bring something back to your job. I think continuing to learn is extremely important. And in all of this, you've got to somehow keep it all balanced. It's easy to go overboard on TAPPI involvement vs. the home or your job, but you've got to get involved and keep it balanced.



What effect has your TAPPI involvement meant to your family over the years?

Fuller: TAPPI has taken a lot of time away from the family over the years. For years, the Annual Meeting fell on my daughter Alicia's birthday. There were quite a few of her birthdays that I missed when she was young. I hope my family better understood my involvement when I took them to the Pulping Conference in Orlando. I had my wife and all five daughters with me when I was last chairman of the Division. They got to experience a little more of what TAPPI was all about, whom I was involved with, and what a TAPPI meeting was about. I think they regard TAPPI as part of the family. I must also thank my wife for providing support for my TAPPI activities.



What does winning the Distinguished Service Award mean to you?

Fuller: All of a sudden you realize how great TAPPI has been to you. When I became sick a year ago at a TAPPI meeting, lying flat on my back for 10 days in Atlanta, GA, I was cared for by the TAPPI staff and volunteers better than I could ever ask for. The expressions of concern and the offers to help out were just amazing. I think it's a tribute to the volunteers and the professionals of that organization just how much they do care about the individual. Once you've experienced that, you know that there's something different and something special about an organization like that.

The award surprised me and the reality is just now sinking in. I am looking forward to continuing to work on new things in TAPPI. There is a big opportunity in education. I very much appreciate this recognition and thank all those I have had the opportunity to work with in the industry and on the TAPPI staff. 

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