



the legacy project

BY
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The Legacy Project focuses on the lives and actions of leaders who have forged our profession into what it is today.

Many vocational education, technology education, and now technology and engineering education leaders have made their mark on our profession. Their legacy is something that members of the profession enjoy and have a responsibility to continue and build upon.

This is just one in a series of articles entitled The Legacy Project. The Legacy Project focuses on the lives and actions of leaders who have forged our profession into what it is today. Members of the profession owe a debt of gratitude to these leaders. One simple way to demonstrate that gratitude is to recognize these leaders and some of their accomplishments. The focus in this issue will be on Dr. Kenneth E. Dawson.

Dr. Kenneth E. Dawson

Executive Secretary/Treasurer, American Industrial Arts Association, 1961-1966

Professor Emeritus, International Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Place of Birth: Newark, OH – May 3, 1927

Degrees:

B.S. – Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI) – 1952

M. Ed. – University of Virginia – 1955

Ph.D. – University of Maryland – 1965

Occupational History:

- U.S. Army – 1946-1948
- Teacher, Wytheville, VA High School – 1952-1955
- Teacher, Jefferson Senior High School, Roanoke, VA – Fall 1955
- Assistant Professor, VPI – 1956-1958
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland – 1958-1960

- Executive Secretary/Treasurer – American Industrial Arts Association – 1961-1966
- Dean, School of Education – Morehead State University, Morehead, KY – 1966-1967
- Vice President for Academic Affairs, Atlanta Baptist College, Atlanta, GA – 1967-1968
- Science Education Advisor – Atlanta, GA School Board – Summer 1969
- Founding President, Southside VA Community College – 1969-1973
- Virginia Director of 4-H – 1973-1983
- Professor of International Development – Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University – 1983-1992

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YOU WERE THE AIAA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY DURING A TIME OF MUCH CHANGE AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM. PLEASE DESCRIBE EDUCATION AND, MORE SPECIFICALLY, INDUSTRIAL ARTS EDUCATION DURING YOUR TENURE AS A LEADER OF THE ASSOCIATION.

In January 1961, when we opened the AIAA office in Washington, there was great competition among numerous factions of education. Unions were pushing teachers and other school employees to organize and take control. In addition, led by many colleges of education, there was growing emphasis on promoting education as a profession, “just like doctors and lawyers.” At the National Education Association (NEA), the directors of 33 departments were constantly seeking ways to promote their curricula or administrative fields. Competition for recognition was strong. Jealousy between industrial arts and vocational education was at the top of the list. The leaders of industrial arts and vocational education were similar. During the 60s, educational problems grew. The American Federation of Teachers organized large groups of educators, and teacher strikes seemed to be the way to improve benefits. Inroads into the NEA membership led educators to seek new bargaining power, and by the end of the decade it became known as the large teachers’ union.

The federal government expanded its involvement in education, usurping the powers constitutionally granted to the states. So powerful were the educational unions that political candidates sought their endorsements. Industrial arts education gained popularity during the 1960s in several ways. Between 1960 and 1966 the American Industrial Arts Association was the fastest-growing curriculum department of the NEA, and federal aid, by line item of the federal budget, was granted to industrial arts education. The Association magazine, *Man, Society, and Technology*, received a first-place award from the Educational Press Association. As I review my tenure as the Executive Secretary of AIAA, it was a pivotal time for industrial arts education. Great support was garnered from industry and from federal, state, and local governments. Philosophically, trends were established. For people who believed that industrial arts education should lean toward occupational education, strong programs developed. For others, who wanted industrial arts to cover a broad scope of general education whereby students would be prepared to enter industry, business, and commerce, and to live effectively in an industrial democracy, early successes showed promise. Unfortunately, in my opinion, industrial arts education missed the opportunity to become a great curriculum. What might it have been if we had produced more scholars to lead our nation and the world into the technologically rich future?

IN WHAT DIRECTIONS WERE YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES ATTEMPTING TO TAKE THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS PROFESSION, AND WHAT SUCCESSES DID YOU HAVE?

In 1961 when we opened the AIAA Washington office, industrial arts was generally thought of as “school shop.” The main national publication was *School Shop*. The philosophical trend was toward vocational education. There was some concern within the American Vocational Association that industrial arts programs were cutting into their territory, and that the programs in industrial arts were too weak to prepare students for occupational skills. The AIAA Board of Directors was divided on what approaches to take. By the end of the decade, the trend was toward promoting industrial arts as general education, with its foundation on all phases of American Industry, business, and commerce.

Federal financial aid for industrial arts became the main thrust of our office, with much of my time being spent on Capitol Hill. Success finally came as industrial arts became a line item in the federal budget; the first contribution was for \$10,000,000. The funds were directed toward review and promotion of industrial arts as general education and making it available to all boys and girls. Concerning the successes we had, by 1966, the year that I left the office, the AIAA membership had risen dramatically, we had developed an award-winning journal, and AIAA leaders were involved in state and national programs of other curricula. Dr. Jack Simich, Associate Executive Secretary of AIAA, and I were invited to speak at most of the state educational annual meetings, as well as invited to serve on national group planning committees by the White House, Chambers of Commerce, and international organizations. Recognition of industrial arts as general education for all students, especially in high school, was probably the most successful part of industrial arts in the 1960s.

WHAT WAS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDUSTRIAL ARTS, GENERAL EDUCATION, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DURING THIS TIME IN HISTORY? IN WHAT DIRECTION WERE YOU ATTEMPTING TO INFLUENCE THIS RELATIONSHIP?

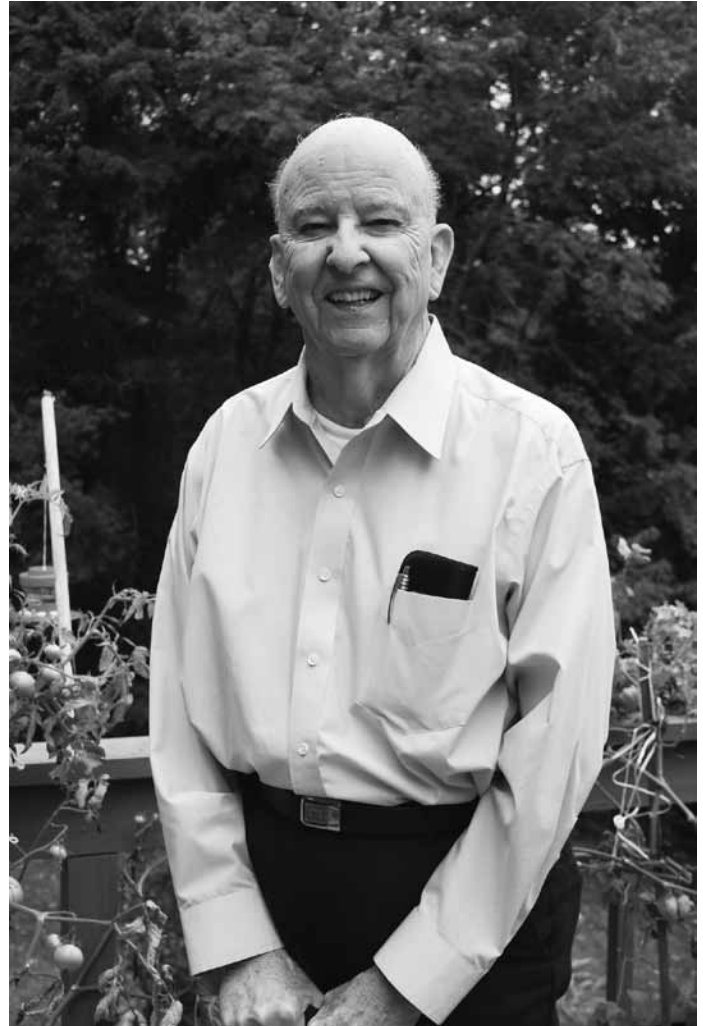
The 1960s were probably the greatest time of transition in education in the past century, and this is particularly true of industrial arts education. It was a time when such phrases as “the whole child” and “every child must be given the chance to develop to his/her greatest capacity,” and “integration of children by race, sex, and creed must be accomplished.” Industrial arts often was championed as a curriculum to promote these philosophies. In the first years of that decade, industrial arts was open

almost exclusively to boys. Far too often students of less ability were consigned to “school shop” class in preparation for developing skills for the work force. A small percent of industrial arts teachers belonged to the industrial arts section of the American Vocational Association. Relationships generally were cordial. The goal of promoting industrial arts as general education for all boys and girls grew rapidly during the decade. When industrial arts became a line item in the federal budget, recognition and acceptance of the curriculum spread widely. At the same time, industrial arts teacher education programs flourished, and advanced degrees in technical fields were promoted.

We in the AIAA office actively promoted industrial arts as general education for all boys and girls. The Board of Directors was divided, but the trend definitely was in that direction. For the six years that I was in Washington, our professional staff gave thousands of presentations to state industrial arts conventions, universities, and government and business and industrial groups promoting the general educational concept. From reviews of industrial arts and technical educational programs over the past half-century, apparently the directions that we sought from 1961 through 1966 were brought to fruition.

DID AIAA HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ON THE MANY 1960s CURRICULUM PROJECTS OR MAJOR FUNDING INITIATIVES? PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR OVERALL PERSPECTIVE OF THESE CURRICULUM EFFORTS.

The power of the purse for education put pressure on most phases of education during the last days of the decade. The federal administration promoted education as a strong political entity, although constitutionally education was left to the states. The U.S. Office of Education had reach into every state and territory, and with massive federal funding gave direction to most phases and levels of instruction. The \$10,000,000 grant to industrial arts, the “breakthrough” federal funding, provided incentive for deep study into the direction of the curriculum. To me, it was a period of growth philosophically and professionally. AIAA and its affiliates, the American Council of Industrial Arts Teacher Educators, the American Council of Industrial Arts Supervisors, the American Council of Industrial Arts Classroom Teachers, and the American Council of Elementary School Industrial Arts Teachers, guided the curriculum into rapid expansion in curriculum development and student enrollment. From 1961 to 1966 AIAA had the fastest growth in associational membership of any of the 33 departments of NEA. The industrial arts awards program in all states and nationally gave recognition of student excellence. Teachers, professors, and other industrial arts leaders became involved in multicurricular programs. From the



concept of “school shop” to broad education about the industrial democracy, industrial arts in the 1960s seems to have had its period in the educational sun.

PLEASE SHARE ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT THOUGHTS ABOUT THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS PROFESSION DURING YOUR TIME AS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY.

This question leads me to think of “what it might have been.” When I left AIAA in October 1966, the association had 11 full time staff, had produced an award-winning journal, and was well-funded financially. Industrial arts was recognized as a major curriculum for both boys and girls. Students, teachers, and administrators were often invited to participate in government, businesses, and industrial programs. For example, the President invited us to serve on the planning committee for the White House National Safety Program. Our AIAA staff members were constantly on Capitol Hill. This period in history was full of pos-

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sibilities. It was the beginning of the technology age. Industrial arts was the major curriculum with the potential to run with the ball. In my opinion, we were short-sighted. If our university programs had moved rapidly to change the curriculum into advancing technology, industrial arts might have become an educational leader in the field. As I see it, industry and engineering swiftly moved to the forefront, especially with patents and inventions. As a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Maryland, I signed two patent applications for two of my students. Otherwise, teaching was right out of the books of yesteryear. If I read the history charts correctly, industrial arts has lost too much in the past half century. However, remnants of those great leaders remain. ITEEA and numerous retired industrial and technology professors still have leadership potential that, in conjunction with scientists, engineers, and industry leaders, could once again develop programs for broad understanding in secondary schools to prepare young people for leadership, citizenship, and management. Such programs just might help retain students in school until graduation.

Recently I have had the opportunity to communicate with current leaders in the field. They are bright, dedicated, and still committed. May I commend leaders like Kendall Starkweather,

Bill Dugger, Tom Hughes, and Johnny Moye for their leadership with The Legacy Project. But let's remember thousands upon thousands of industrial arts teachers and professors who dedicated their lives and fortunes to making young children the wonderful citizens who are our leaders today. They are the ones to be remembered.

Thanks to Dr. Dawson for his leadership and for sharing a small portion of his legacy. The Legacy Project has now interviewed five leaders who were very influential to the technology and engineering education profession. It is very beneficial to current (and future) leaders to read about the issues that existed and how they were addressed "back in the day." In a few months the next interview will appear in this journal. If you have a suggestion of a leader to recognize, contact the author with that person's name and contact information.



Johnny J Moye recently retired from his position as a Supervisor of Career and Technical Education at Chesapeake Public Schools, Chesapeake, VA. He can be reached at johnnymoye@gmail.com.



The 2015 **Technology and Engineering STEM Showcase** provides a forum to feature your best exemplar of technology and engineering instruction! Consider sharing your STEM idea, technique, or best practice related to learning activities, marketing materials, career guidance, facility design, program design, assessment methods, equity, or classroom and laboratory management techniques. Showcasers are asked to illustrate a single element of technology or engineering

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