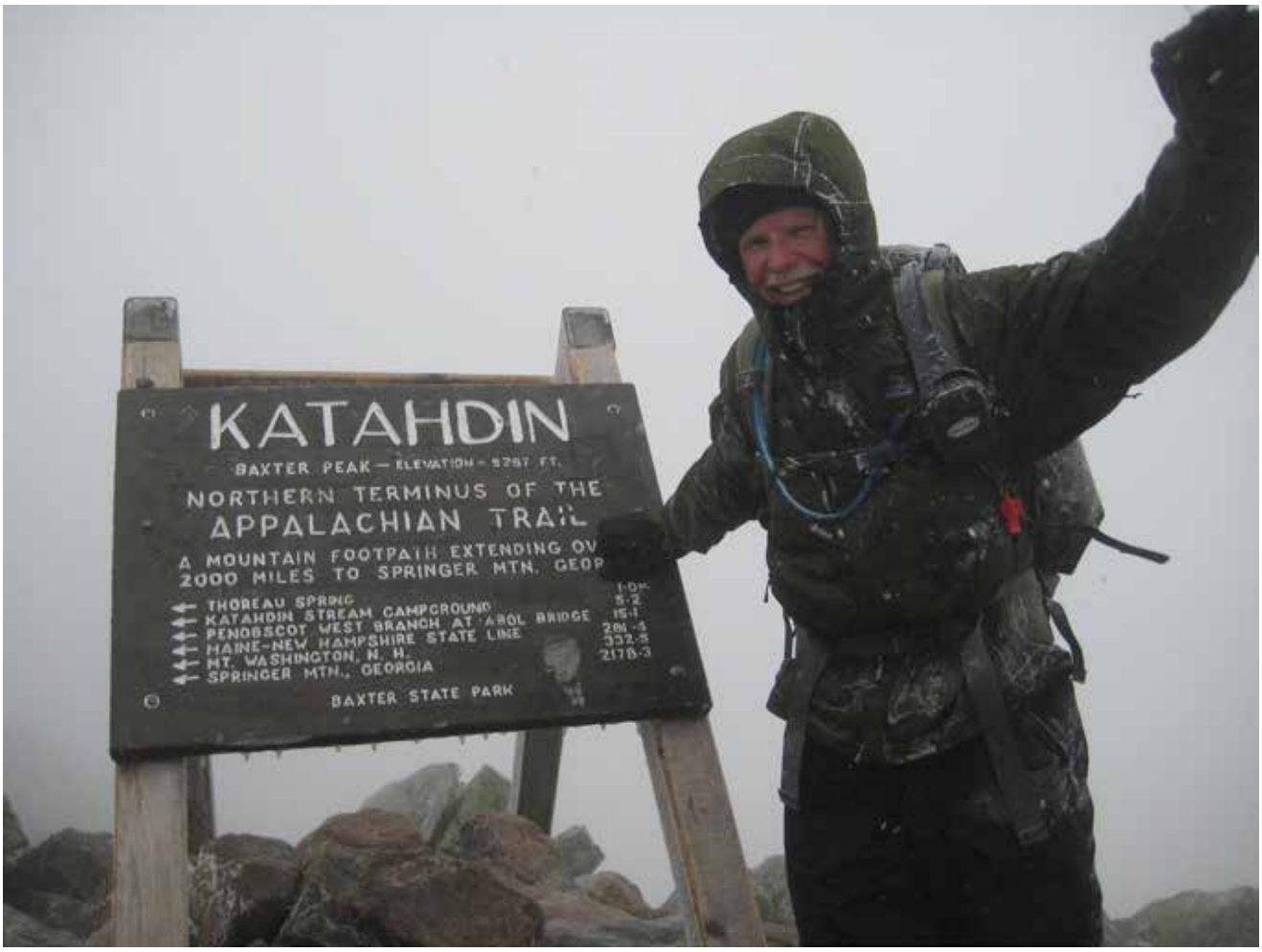
the legacy project



Gerald G. Lovedahl, DTE

by
Gerald G. Lovedahl, DTE
and Johnny J Moye, DTE

Many industrial arts, 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 the responsibility to continue to build upon. 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. Gerald Lovedahl.

Gerald G. (Jerry) Lovedahl, Ph.D., DTE

Professor Emeritus, Clemson University, 2002-Present

Place of Birth: Waynesville, North Carolina

Married to: Martha Jane Lovedahl

Degrees:

- B.S., Berea College (KY), 1969 (Industrial Arts)
- M.Ed., College of New Jersey (formerly Trenton State), 1972 (Industrial Education)
- Ph.D., The Ohio State University, 1977 (Industrial
- Education)

Occupational History:

- Asst. Professor, Assoc. Professor, Professor, Clemson University (SC) 1977-2002
- Visiting Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Summers from 1984-1992
- Director, Center for Technology Literacy, University of Houston, 2002-2003
- Visiting Professor, The Ohio State University, 2004-2005
- Adjunct Professor, University of Houston–Clear Lake and Sam Houston University, 2006-2008

When did you become interested in Industrial Arts? Did you take any of those courses in junior/high school?

When I was enrolling in ninth grade, I was most excited about the prospect of taking "shop." I had looked forward to it for quite some time, and since it was not offered in junior high school, it would be my first opportunity to take the class. I absolutely loved working with my hands to create items, mostly from wood. My teacher, Mr. Scott, once remarked that in all his years of teaching, I was the first college prep student to enroll in his class. I've often thought about that, and about how guidance counselors did, and probably still do, hold to the notion that technology courses are for those kids not planning to go to college. The drafting class I took my senior year ended up being my all-time favorite class, and I even envisioned a career as a draftsman.

You attended Berea College following high school. What program did you take and why?

The industrial arts program I majored in at Berea College was a very traditional program, with two options: the industry option and the teaching option. I told my advisor, Mr. Osolnik, that I had absolutely no interest in teaching, and that I'd pursue the industry option. His advice at that moment was a life-changing moment for me. He recommended getting a teaching certificate, just to have it as a future option, and that I could get a job in industry as easily with that option as I could with the industry curriculum. As I was approaching the end of my studies at Berea College, a professor named Mr. Carl Kilbourn told me how impressed he was with my writing. Mr. Kilbourn asked me if I had ever considered a career as a university professor. Bit by bit my future was being shaped.

What was your first job as an industrial arts teacher? How did your thoughts (and philosophy) change as you began your teaching career?

After graduating from Berea, I accepted a position in the St. Mary's County School system in Leonardtown, Maryland where I worked first as the Materials Center Coordinator at the technical school and later as the industrial arts teacher at the high school in Lexington Park. Following that year, I accepted a job offer in the Council Rock School District, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where I taught middle school graphic arts for four years while completing a master's degree at Trenton State College, now known as The College of New Jersey. Many of the professors I had at Trenton State were Ohio State graduates, and consequently I was exposed to the writings of Don Lux, Willis Ray, James Buffer, and others. I was enthralled with the philosophies espoused in those writings and thus began thinking about pursuing additional education so that I could eventually secure a position as a university professor. Since a majority of my professors at Trenton State were graduates of the program at Ohio State (Thrower, Ruggles, Weber, Krupa), I decided that I would apply there. It was about that time that the Industrial Arts Curriculum Project (IACP) was publishing *The World of Construction* and *The World of Manufacturing* and, along with the curriculum work being done at Maryland and elsewhere, was transforming "shop" into a more structured series of courses. Enrolling at Ohio State would place me at the epicenter of the restructuring of our field.

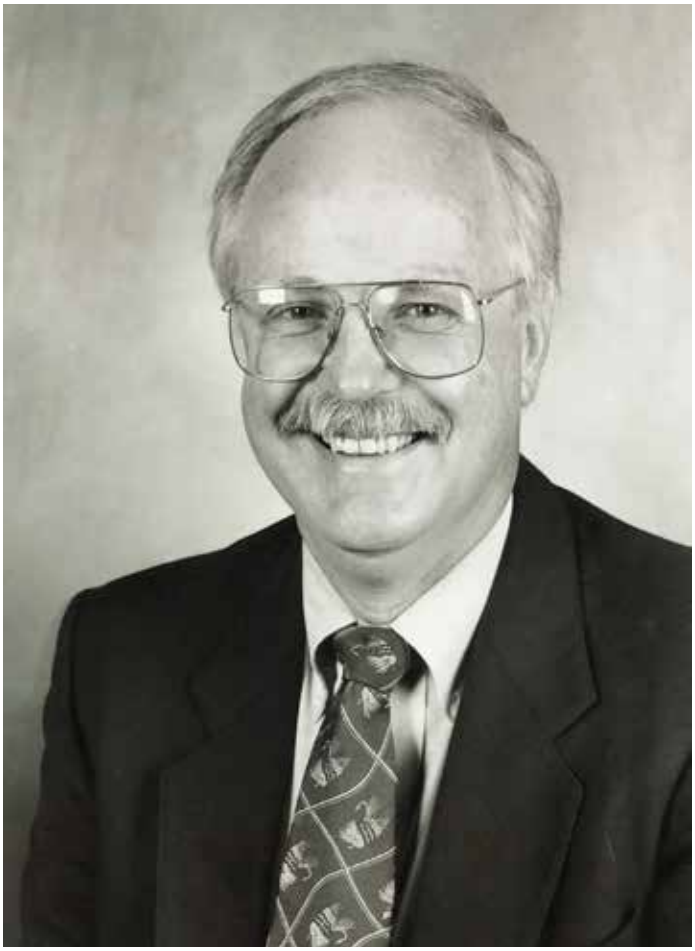
You enrolled in The Ohio State University's industrial education Doctoral Degree programs. Many IA (later Technology, and Technology and Engineering) programs have been directly influenced by that program. Who did you study under, and what was their influence on you (and the profession)?

The first time I walked into Don Lux's office, I felt like I was standing before a god. I had read so many of his writings and heard so much about him from the profs at Trenton State that I could hardly believe that I was in his office and that he was going to be my advisor. I couldn't wait to get started.

The three years I spent at The Ohio State University were three of the best years of my life. There was an atmosphere of creativity and exploration led by some of the biggest names in our field. I ended up with Willis Ray on my committee along with my chair, Dr. Lux. Watching the two of them in various settings, making philosophical arguments, was fascinating. At times they seemed to be working as a "tag team," with one building off the other's remarks. These observations shaped my philosophy of Industrial Arts and taught me the true meaning of professionalism.

Once you left The Ohio State University program, how did your view of industrial arts education programs change? Did junior/high school programs reflect the philosophical approach you learned at Ohio State?

My professional philosophy was shaped primarily by Don Lux. I feel that the principle contributions of "industrial arts" remain as they've always been, namely to lend intelligibility to general education, provide for prevocational education in certain fields, and contribute to avocational interests of the students. However, many industrial arts programs prior to the curriculum development efforts of the late 1960s – early 1970s truly were not much more than "shop," with very little discernible structure other than building projects. What was originally intended to serve as a vehicle or motivator for learning had been transformed into the outcome. Although most professionals viewed industrial arts as general education, the reality in the schools was another story. The college-bound students had little or no time in their schedules to take an elective such as industrial arts, and the guidance counselors did not view the course as being of value for the "academic" students. However, one group of learners benefited greatly from industrial arts…those who were concrete learners. An unintended consequence of the movement towards technology education was that there was no longer a course in the high school curriculum that appealed to those concrete learners. All the simulations and so forth in the modular approaches that vendors marketed to the schools were as abstract as most of the other subjects in the curriculum.



You taught high school industrial arts and were a university professor for over 30 years. What would you consider your biggest accomplishments to students and the profession?

One of my most satisfying professional experiences was the time I spent on the ITEA (now ITEEA) Board of Directors as the TECA (now TEECA) Director. It was an opportunity to voice the concerns of the students studying in our field to the board and to work closely with student leaders from across the country. I came away from that experience with renewed confidence in the capabilities of the generation entering the field behind us.

What are some of your thoughts concerning what students learned in industrial arts programs and what technology education/technology and engineering education programs present students today?

I once gave a speech at an initiation of the Alpha Chapter of Epsilon Pi Tau at The Ohio State University where I compared what had happened to industrial arts in its transformation into technology education to what has happened to roses and tomatoes.

Just as roses have been genetically engineered to look better but without their signature aroma, and tomatoes have been modified to be huge but without their unforgettable flavor, industrial arts was made to "look" better but lost its soul in the process. In an effort to make the subject more academically appealing, the very essence of the course was eliminated…no more working with the noisy and messy machinery.

Thank you Dr. Lovedahl for sharing some of the highlights of your service to our profession. It is beneficial for 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 Dr. Moye with that person's name and contact information.

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