

## Donald Maley



## Donald Maley- Being All That You Can Be! \*

**M**any 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 a responsibility to continue and build upon.

This is the 22nd 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. Donald Maley as remembered by three of his colleagues.

by  
Johnny J Moye,  
DTE, Thomas  
P. Bell, DTE,  
and Richard P.  
Bray, DTE

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*\* Dr. Donald Maley's career occurred mostly during the second half of the 20th Century. He is arguably one of the top higher educators in the field of industrial arts/technology. Dr. Maley's speeches, articles, and books may be found in ITEEA's Archives at Millersville University (Pennsylvania). His obituary can be found at ZoomInfo: <https://www.zoominfo.com/p/Donald-Maley/1417744004>.*

# Dr. Donald Maley

Professor and Head, Industrial Education Department, University of Maryland

**Place of Birth:** Buena Vista, Pennsylvania

**Degrees:**

- Bachelor's degree with a major in Industrial Arts from California State Teachers College (1944)
- Master's degree (1947)
- Doctorate degree (1950) in Industrial Education from the University of Maryland

**Occupational History:**

Occupational History: Dr. Maley held various positions during his lifetime including Foundryman/Musician (1936-1940), Teacher (1943), PT 106 - Ensign/Executive Officer/Captain (1943-1945), Instructor (1946-1951), Associate Professor (1951-1953), Professor (1953-1957), Professor & Chairman (1957-1974), Acting Dean (1974-1975), Professor & Chairman (1975-1987), and Professor Emeritus (1987-1993). Dr. Maley was internationally known for his innovation in Technology Education and Vocational-Technical Education (Zoominfo, 2009).

**Donald Maley** (1918-1993) was certainly a product of the times in which he lived. Those were times when the great industrial revolution was going full speed ahead, when our nation was in one of the great wars of all time, and when the nation was positioned to be a world leader for generations to come. He was the son of a coal miner in western Pennsylvania just outside of Pittsburgh with five siblings who became outstanding in their own occupations. The Maleys were a strong family, products of challenges and opportunities that shaped their lives. In turn, they were able to touch the lives of many others through their work. The family was hard working, community- and nation-builders, and with a strong sense of commitment to help others through their work. Each family member was known for trying to do their very best in whatever they attempted to accomplish.

The Maley siblings lost their father to black lung disease due to his occupation as a coal miner. The loss left their mother with six small children to raise in Buena Vista, Pennsylvania. They lived in a small, four-room floodplain house on the banks of the Monongahela River. When the rains came and flooded the riverbanks, the Maley house flooded. The family carried their furniture to the second floor and then traveled up the hill to a neighbor's house to stay until the river receded. The family would then return home and scoop the mud out of the house, dry it out, and eventually move their furniture downstairs until the next flood threatened them. The family lived in that house until they became adults and moved on with their lives. The neighbor who so graciously let them stay in his house willed the house to Mrs. Maley upon his death so that she no longer had to worry about the floods. These times and challenges did a lot to shape the kind of person that Donald Maley eventually became.

School was important to the Maley family, and teaching was a highly respected occupation. Donald attended McKeesport Technical High School, which today might be known as a vocational or career and technical education school. Upon graduation, he worked for five years at the Fort Pitt Steel Castings Company in McKeesport, accumulating enough money to attend college. His major occupation was steel-mill work where he became a pattern maker. This hard work in a dangerous occupation helped to make him into an even stronger person.

Maley never played golf, but he caddied at the local golf course on weekends to make extra money. He worked for tips, and if he had a good day, judged by the amount of tip money, he would allow himself one nickel to buy an ice cream cone on the walk home. That became the reward he would give himself and others after what he judged to be a good day.

Maley's beginning college experience was one to remember. He traveled to California, PA to enroll at California State Teachers College (CTSC). The college was small, with only a few buildings that included administrative offices and classrooms in the same location. He went to the registration office and was told by the registrar that he could not attend college because he had not gone to the right high school in preparation to be a college student. Maley became very angry and loud in his response to this news because he had worked five hard years to make enough money to get an education. He was so loud that the college president came into the office to find out what was happening.

The president discovered what Maley had done to finance his planned college education. The president asked Maley what he planned to study or have as a major. Maley replied that he

thought he would study business. The president asked if he had ever considered being an industrial arts major. Maley responded that, if he was allowed to attend the college, he would become an industrial arts major. This marked the beginning of Maley's journey to becoming a major player in the industrial arts, technology/engineering education fields for the rest of his career.

The president ensured that Maley had a room and one meal a day at the boarding house next to the college. Maley responded by taking a course overload each semester that resulted in his graduating with honors in three years. He was not present for his college graduation. World War II was in full force, and Maley was already assigned to a PT boat in the South Pacific. Due to his diligence and intelligence, he became Captain of that boat before the war's end. The college president invited Maley's mother to walk across the graduation stage to accept the diploma for her son. As the war and his naval career came to an end, Maley was assigned as a medical hospital administrator. He was deeply influenced by his naval experiences, which served him well during his career.

Maley left the navy to attend the University of Maryland for both masters and doctoral degrees. He was fortunate to arrive at Maryland when Dr. R. Lee Hornbake (also a CSTC graduate) was beginning a long and very respected career. He was Maley's mentor for the rest of his life. Hornbake eventually went on to become Vice President of Academic Affairs, and today the Hornbake Undergraduate Library is named after him because of his dedication and excellence at the university. Hornbake received his doctorate at The Ohio State University studying under Dr. William E. Warner, a noted professional of the time. Warner started Epsilon Pi Tau and the American Industrial Arts Association (AIAA). The two organizations were known for their leadership capabilities. AIAA is known today as the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA).

Warner was also known for his philosophy to include industrial arts as a part of general education, not just subordinate to vocational education. Warner had studied under John Dewey at Columbia University when Dewey was promoting and became famous for his "learning by doing" philosophy. Emphasizing the learning by doing philosophy made Warner a hero in some camps and disliked in others.

Hornbake influenced Maley's philosophy that promoted the qualities of industrial arts as being a part of both a solid general education and a strong place to gain the beginning skills for a vocational, career, or technical education. Hornbake had the ability to attract outstanding graduate students to the university. Hornbake's graduate students and Maley's classmates included Dr. Stanley Drazek, who later became the Vice President of Uni-

versity College at Maryland when it had courses taught in U.S. military bases around the world. Another student was Dr. Walter B. Waetjen, Vice President of Research at Maryland and later the President of Cleveland State University for over 18 years. Waetjen was known for implementing Maley's "Group Project" ideas into his junior high school inner city Philadelphia schools through industrial arts classes that he taught. Hornbake and Maley's fellow graduate students had a lot to do with shaping the philosophy that he espoused for the rest of his career.

As Hornbake rose through the university administration, Maley became the Department Chair in Hornbake's former position. Maley would hold that title for the rest of his career, leaving only to assist the university as Acting Dean of the College of Education. He always returned to the field and the position that he loved most. His career at Maryland provided educational leadership that lasted over 47 years.

A resumé of his many educational activities notes more than 160 articles, speeches in print, six movie productions, and thousands of speaking engagements that included dedications of new facilities or colleges, graduation ceremonies, and philosophical directions—each promoting industry and technology education in some way. People attending a Maley presentation got their money's worth whether it was a speech, class session, or any other type of presentation. Most often, his presentation was available in written form. He believed that listeners would implement more of his ideas if they had the actual material in writing.

Maley became a leader within the industrial arts (and later technology education) profession because he had a vision and direction for the field. Many of his writings, over decades, outlined a profession that would lead education through human growth and development characteristics, the basis for his ideas. Maley's philosophy led to his development of junior high/middle school courses. He titled them *The Anthropological Approach*. This approach used the history of industry and technology as a basis for content in his program. He later developed a high school program that became known as a *futuristic approach*. This approach used the study of advanced technology to solve major technological problems facing society. Using woods, metals, and drafting technical labs, students learned the skills used in industry and technology.

As Maley promoted his ideas about industrial arts/technology education, he was also a recognized leader in the vocational education community. He was known for *The Cluster Concept Approach* to vocational education (Maley, 1975). His ideas were outlined in a book he published with that title. Much of his work can be found in the ITEEA Archives.

Maley's name became synonymous with *The Maryland Plan*, a Grades 7-12 curriculum for industrial arts/technology education based on human growth and development concepts (Maley, 1973). The leading major university departments of the time advocated unique programs to advance their professional philosophy. The philosophies became the reason that graduate students might be attracted to a particular department and program. Maley's *Maryland Plan* was as well known and as competitive as any during those times and attracted outstanding doctoral students nationwide and later worldwide. His department eventually produced over 100 doctoral graduates and thousands of undergraduate and graduate students. Three of those graduates became university presidents. Many others became university deans, department chairs, association executives, Department of Education leaders, as well as other leadership positions.

He was known for promoting his philosophy and profession in any way possible. He was very much a humanist in that he cared deeply for each of his students, encouraging them to exceed their current achievements. He was more interested in their success than he was in his own. He would call his students his "boys" or "girls" and would speak of them with great pride. He exhibited this pride at conferences where he would introduce his students to the leaders of the profession, bragging of their qualities. His students often could not believe how much he cared for them, promoting their careers. Back in the department, he constantly urged them to be even better, but outside the department they could do no wrong.

Maley's sayings were a big part of his teachings, which shaped the philosophy of his students. One example is, "It is not what the student did to a project, but what the project did for the student." He professed that "Teaching starts with the interests and needs of the student to make their education more meaningful." He encouraged industrial arts to be a strong part of general education for ALL students. He also noted that "Students should not be limited to what the teacher knows, but have teaching structured so that students are guided to go beyond their teacher's knowledge."

Maley's philosophy and curriculum required teachers to understand human development concepts. Implementation of these concepts in the classroom required an average or better teacher. His curriculum also offered the profession a step beyond the teaching of woods, metals, and drafting, the main technical courses of the time. Maley had his students study the use of technology to solve major societal problems facing humankind. He wanted his students to know about technologies related to manufacturing, construction, power generation, waste and junk disposal, energy, communication, and more. Studying the history of technology was part of Maley's *Anthropological Approach*. His *Research and Experimentation Approach* was one of a kind in the

profession. It was unique in the way it attracted gifted students to use the scientific method to solve problems.

The influence of *The Maryland Plan* spread throughout the United States as graduates became leaders in school systems and teacher education institutions. The strongest influence was in the State of Maryland. Incidentally, Maley did not give his program a name. Others referred to his work by referring to it after the university and state where it was created, tested, and implemented.

However, the strongest implementation of his program was in the country of Greece. At one time, it was a requirement for all middle school students. One of Maley's Greek doctoral graduates became a member of the Greece national education body and was influential in making *The Maryland Plan* a country requirement. Greece also sent a student delegation to study with Maley to learn his philosophical ideas. Many of Maley's publications were translated into Greek during this period of history.

Maley was a tireless worker. He never took a vacation, but he did go to his Severn River, MD cottage during the weekends to relax and enjoy boating. He would sleep on the boat deck, which reminded him of his navy experiences.

Maley exhibited all the desired qualities used to describe a real gentleman. He was trustworthy, ambitious, supportive, rich beyond money, and courteous. He could outwork his entire faculty simply because he worked around the clock. He was fond of asking his students "What are you doing at midnight tonight?" The response was usually, "nothing" or "sleeping." The question usually came after he had requested something to be done. He would say that "We'll have plenty of time to sleep after we die." His professional production was phenomenal in an era before computers were available. At one point, in addition to teaching, he was responsible for and supervised over 75 people working in the building or department.

Few people on the University of Maryland campus had the political power that Maley acquired over the years. It may have helped that his close friends were classmates and Vice Presidents of the university. However, he had political relationships that were far beyond the university. For example, he was once President of the Maryland Parent-Teacher Association and served on various education-related committees around the state. He acquired funding from Maryland Governor Mandel and state legislators to renovate and expand his department's building. Maley accomplished this in a year when no other building funds were appropriated through state legislation.

His stature within the field of education resulted in his receiving almost every award given by his profession for excellent, respected work. He was also honored by many different national groups

for his promotion of education. The University of Maryland recognized him as the first professor to ever receive the Chancellor's Medal for Excellence as an Educator.

When his former students gave conference presentations, Maley would be in attendance as a supporter. He knew what it meant to be supported and returned his support whenever possible.

Maley hosted a Maryland Breakfast at AIAA Conferences. Former students and graduates were invited to a presentation about Maryland (he was the speaker). He asked invitees to bring their outstanding students so he could meet them. The breakfast became a recruitment tool, but also like a fraternity gathering because everyone was featured even though Maley was the draw for the attendance. Attendance ranged from 75-100 people depending upon the conference location.

Maley always had time for students. At one particular conference, an undergraduate student asked Maley if he could ask him some questions for a class assignment. It was the end of the day, and the student was shy about his request. Maley's response was, "Sure if you will let me buy you dinner while you ask the questions, and we have got to have ice cream for desert!" Maley proceeded to make the student the most important person at the dinner that included other university professors. The other person was always Maley's focus.

He was single, but his extended family was broad. He loved children, was extremely close to family members, and especially nephews who visited during the weekends. He would play with toddlers on his office floor, attend important events for other families, and gave support to their family structure. He knew what family meant and how to help when it was needed. He often responded with such humility that those who received his help never knew that he was the one who provided it.

It has often been said that a good teacher is known by the students they have influenced. During Maley's tenure at Maryland, more than 100 students received their doctorates from the department that he led. The number of students who received bachelors or master's degrees were in the thousands. He was just as proud of the bachelor's degree students as those with higher degrees. He definitely knew the sacrifices needed to receive an education. Maley's chief concern was always THE STUDENT.

Maley's graduates became public school teachers, department heads, secondary and post-secondary school administrators, university deans and department chairs, as well as many different positions in business and industry. Some of his graduates became leaders around the world. He spoke in countries such as

Greece, China, and others in South America when international travel was not as frequent or as fast as it is today.

Maley's proudest accomplishments were his students. No professor in his department demanded more from their students. At the same time, there was no professor who was as close to his students. Graduate assistants and instructors knew that he was always there for them. There were situations when he would loan money, buy plane tickets, or provide a job (his house was painted many times more than needed) so that they had enough money to survive the summer. He never gave something for nothing, but the students never expected it either.

His dedication to teaching was seldom matched by anyone at any level. When a student took any of his courses, he or she could expect Maley to teach every available minute allotted for the course. Students expected assignments that required utilization of the library to conduct a thorough review of the literature, to create solutions to problems, and be involved in class discussions. There was no such thing as a passive student in Maley's classes. Each class presentation was as if he was addressing a major session at a huge conference. You got your money's worth whether you were expecting it or not.

Few people in the industrial arts/technology education profession have ever attained the level of excellence that Maley achieved. The love for his profession translated into a passion for teaching that was always evident. He was one of the few professors and department chairs who taught undergraduate and graduate classes, laboratory and professional courses, and both main campus and University College off-campus courses during the same semester. Upon his retirement from the University of Maryland, he continued teaching classes on a gratis basis. His work did not stop until he died.

The department he built slowly deteriorated over a five-year period following his retirement. The program terminated, and adjustments were made to the building facilities to support the campus engineering curricula. Maley knew this was happening but was powerless to stop the effort. One can only imagine the great disappointment that he must have felt as he watched his life's work slowly eroding. Today, other than selected places in university archives, there is no physical evidence that Maley or his work ever existed at the University of Maryland.

Maley paved the way for change from industrial arts to technology education and played a role in the future development of his profession. His legacy as an outstanding educator will live on through the students who worked with him over the years. His many contributions will probably never be matched or duplicated. He tried to "be all that he could be" and urged others to do likewise.

## References

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*The Legacy Project has now interviewed 21 very influential leaders. 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 the author with that person’s name and contact information.*



**Johnny J Moye, DTE** recently retired from his position as a Supervisor of Career and Technical Education at Chesapeake Public Schools, Chesapeake, VA. He can be reached at [johnnyjmoye@gmail.com](mailto:johnnyjmoye@gmail.com).



**Thomas P. Bell, Ph.D., DTE** earned his industrial arts bachelor's and master's degrees from Millersville University where he currently serves as professor in the Department of Applied Engineering, and Technology. Studying under Dr. Maley, he earned his Ph.D. in Technology Education at the University of Maryland – College Park. Dr. Bell is an EPT board member and former ITEEA President. He can be reached at [Thomas.Bell@millersville.edu](mailto:Thomas.Bell@millersville.edu).



**Richard P. Bray, DTE** was a classroom technology education teacher for 38 years and also served as AIAA Past President. As an active AIAA member and former President, he worked with Dr. Maley on numerous projects over a long period of time. During his presidency he also took a sabbatical that allowed him to visit 23 states to speak and advocate for technology education students. He is now retired and lives in Maine.