

the legacy project:

Ronald Yuill

by Ronald D. Yuill, 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 Mr. Ronald Yuill.



taught middle/high school industrial arts for 42 years, from 1965 until 2007. During that time, I was very active with the Indiana Industrial Arts Association/Technology Education Association. I served the Technology Educators of Indiana as President and Board member, Treasurer, member of many committees, and attended 43 consecutive conferences. I was the ITEA President in 1998-99. I also served on many committees and Boards. I attended 37 ITEA/ITEEA conferences, made presentations, and wrote many articles.

I feel honored to have been a teacher, and while in retirement now, I spend most of my time with our two granddaughters, ages 5 and 7. They keep Janie and me moving, and we are learning a lot from them. We love it!

I am honored to be included in this Legacy Project and humbled to be included with so many legends of our profession. Every one of us is influenced by others who have taken the time to lead and teach us. In my opinion, I learned from some of the best.

Recently Janie and I went to California to see our son Derek, a speech teacher and coach. His team has been first in the Nation in the National Forensic League! While there, we had lunch with Don Lauda and his wife, Sheila. When Don and I were on the ITEA Board together, we often accompanied each other to dinner. Just about every time we went out, he would tell our waitress that it was his birthday so he would get something free. During the Indianapolis conference, I was the Indiana association president, and I presented him with a cake with his picture in the icing (pg. 4). Don was a great leader.

After making a presentation at an ITEA conference, Don Maley told me that it was very good and took me out for ice cream. Later I told Kendall Starkweather of our venture and he shared that going out to eat ice cream with Don was really special. When Don grew up, he lived on the banks of a river that frequently flooded out of its banks. When it did, he and his family had to find another place to stay. Rarely did they have ice cream at home. So, when Don had the chance for ice cream, he took it. I was happy to have had ice cream with the great Dr. Donald Maley.

Another time with Don Maley at his lake house, he took several of us for a ride in his boat. He was an excellent captain. He told us that when he was in the service his boat was the PT 108. Referring to President John F. Kennedy leading the PT 109, that meant Don was one boat short of being the President! As we cruised across the water, he told me to speed up the boat a little. As I sped up, the wave splashed over the bow and the person up front quickly moved back. He accused Don of speeding up the boat just to splash him. Don said, "I did not speed up the boat." He didn't lie, I did it. Soaking wet, that person went below and turned up the stereo. Don smiled. Don Maley was an outstanding educator and leader, who possessed a keen sense of humor.

Ronald D. Yuill, DTE

ITEA President 1998-99

Place of Birth:	Lafayette, Indiana
Degrees:	1976 Purdue University Assoc. AV. Tech. 1967 Ball State MA I-ED 1965 Purdue University BS I-ED Plus 32.5 hours over Master's Degree
Occupational History:	I started my working career at an Alcoa aluminum plant where I worked for one and a half years. I then spent two years at Fairfield gear manufacturing plant, full time in summer and part time in winter. I then worked one summer at National Homes Buildings, constructing modular homes. While working in other areas, I spent some of my summers in various areas of construction. I did my student teaching at Tecumseh Junior High in Lafayette, IN with Charlie Alm. He was a president and journal editor for our state industrial arts association. It was challenging, but I taught all areas my first year at Rossville High School in Rossville, IN. I then returned to Tecumseh with Charlie and taught at the Lafayette, Indiana School Corporation for 41 years at Tecumseh Jr. High, Tippecanoe Jr. High, and Lafayette Jefferson High. I taught Introduction to Technology, Communications, Construction, Driver Education, Manufacturing, and Transportation. I taught part time at Purdue for five semesters and worked with student teachers. Married to: Janie Yuill, a retired school secretary. Our sons Derek and Ryan are both teachers.

A number of years ago, Gary Wynn and I set up ITEEA's *Ideagarden*. It was a fun project, but it took quite a bit of effort to set it up and get it running. During the 2001 ITEA conference, we had a session to place names and faces with the Gardeners. It was fun to meet the people who took the time to place information on the



Ron with Don Lauda's birthday cake.

Garden. To illustrate how the *Ideagarden* supported technology education teachers, I remember a new teacher who needed a part for a bandsaw. Two hours after he placed his question on the *Garden*, a member called him and told him that he would send him the part. This is just one example of how the *Ideagarden* helps technology teachers work together. One of the greatest things I got out of the *Garden* was measuring worksheets. They were excellent tools to teach students to use a ruler to measure. My students loved using them.

Why did you become a teacher, and what are some of the highlights of your teaching career?

After I graduated from high school I worked at Alcoa in Lafayette, seven days a week for eight months. They cut my time to five days for two weeks and then laid me off. I then enrolled in Purdue's Aviation Technology program. I felt it was an excellent program until I had to adjust the carburetor on a DC3. To make that adjustment, the technician had to stand on the wheel—with the engine running—and use a very long screwdriver to turn a screw. If a technician fell forward, he was dead. I quickly learned why there was a need for those technicians. I stepped down, and the instructor told me that I didn't successfully change the engine speed. I told him that I wasn't going to do it and went to an advisor to change my major. He told me that my credits would transfer to being a technology educator. I also learned that I needed to think about the

job that I was going to start. Teaching was a bit safer than being an aircraft mechanic. It was much more enjoyable, too.

I spent my first year of teaching at Rossville High school, in Rossville, IN. My lab was located under the gym. It was hard keeping students and equipment working through five different classes. I was lucky that there were some teachers in Lafayette who helped me. I was a printing teacher using the system where each letter had to be placed in a composing stick and then into a press and then printed. It was very time-consuming for me and my students. Each year our department printed programs for the athletic department for free. One of my students suggested that we sell ads in the flyer to make some money. The influx of money was good until the principal found out we made money printing the programs. He politely asked us to stop, and we did. Another good idea foiled by bureaucracy.

One of my Rossville students, let's call him Johnny, caused a lot of problems in the school. He also didn't do work assigned in other classes. During one particular class project, students were to create something with an epoxy finish. Johnny decided to turn a wooden lamp on the lathe and then epoxy crushed beer bottles on a lampshade. I told him that would be a big undertaking and I that wasn't sure about the bottles coming into my class. The principal said it would be okay as long as Johnny caught up his work in his other classes and stopped causing problems. Johnny was happy. When

a teacher saw Johnny passing through the cafeteria, beer bottles in hand, she immediately came to my classroom. I asked Johnny to explain to her what he was planning to do with the bottles. Although a bit uneasy, she acknowledged Johnny's plan. In class, Johnny broke the bottles and epoxied them to the shade. He did an outstanding job! Later I had him show all my classes his work. Johnny perfectly and proudly explained the process. Later, at a staff meeting, one of his teachers told the whole staff about his outstanding project. She also said that Johnny's attitude and behavior improved. He continued to do well in all his classes. Stories like this make me proud to have been part of improving someone's life.

I taught wood shop at Tecumseh. We had large classes and used many jigsaws. I spent much of my time replacing broken blades. One of my students, let's call him Tommy, was terrific at replacing blades. The problem was, Tommy couldn't do his own work because of the time he spent helping other students replace blades they had broken. While talking with Tommy's math teacher one day, she told me that Tommy would fail her class unless he passed the next test. I asked Tommy about the situation. He told me that he didn't understand the math. Tommy told me that there were two girls in my class who were also in the class that he was failing, and that they were doing well in that class. I asked the two girls if they would help Tommy so he could pass the test. They agreed to help. Later, I asked the teacher how Tommy did; she said that he didn't miss a question on the test. She felt that Tommy somehow cheated. I told the math teacher that the two girls had helped Tommy prepare for the test, and that if she thought he cheated, to ask him to do the problems in person. She did, and Tommy again got a perfect score. The math teacher then moved the two girls next to Tommy in the class, and he continued to do well. I felt good that Tommy had been successful. I only did what any good technology teacher would do: assess the needs and know and use all available resources.

One of the years that I coached freshman football at Tippecanoe Junior High, the high school came out with a new way to call the plays. We had to learn and use them. It was a numbering system where the back getting the ball had a number, the side he was to run to had a number, the hole in the line had a number. Everything totaling four or five numbers. I called the plays and had trouble thinking what was to happen. During one of our games we were not doing very well. The running back, Ron Alting, called a time out! He said, "We do not know what is happening and who is to get the ball. Can we make this simple and just say who gets the ball and to which side he goes?" Let's keep it simple, "Alting, right means that Alting gets the ball and goes to the right." I agreed and said "OK." By keeping it simple, we won the game. Incidentally, Ron Alting is now our Indiana State Senator and does a great job! He has reminded me a few times to keep it simple. That approach worked in our classes, associations, and other places! I am happy to have helped someone who has been elected to help others.

Another fantastic Tecumseh classroom event happened in a special education class I taught. One of the girls in my class had

not spoken one word all year, in any class. She didn't cause any problems; she just didn't talk. While discussing possible classroom activities, Mike Fitzgerald, our state supervisor, told me about a game he bought for his children. Items in the game were 36 colored dowel rods in different sizes, a ½" tall ring cut from 2 ½" round plastic pipe, and a pair of dice, with a number on three sides, and a color on the other three sides. I did not have the instructions for the game and asked my students to create their own. The students developed their individual instructions and wanted theirs to be selected for the game. Testing how they worked, we played games using everyone's instructions. As we were ready to vote to select which instructions we would use, the girl who had not spoken all year told the class they should vote for hers because it was fun. All the students in class clapped for her. She was happy. She went on to explain her instructions for the game. After that day, she started to speak in all her other classes. There are only a few other stories that warmed my heart as much as this event did.

During the same class project, one of the students spilled paint on the pile of dowel rods. He wiped them off and said they were as good as the ones we painted but it was faster and easier. He was correct. That project was fun. My students learned a lot making the games. All my students are special to me!

I had the opportunity to remodel four schools. It was beneficial to see other schools and witness what they offered their students. I may have helped remodel those classrooms, but I also learned quite a bit as I saw their programs and listened to their suggestions.

Working for ITEA and Professional Highlights

My roommate and I were late for a Board meeting in Salt Lake City. When we arrived, we were questioned about why we were tardy. We told them we were late because we were talking to Billy Joel and Christie Brinkley. No one believed us. A short time later, during the meeting, a person from the convention bureau came in and asked if we would like to get tickets for Billy Joel's performance that night. We did not go, as we were too busy. The other board members, however, believed our story. *Board meetings are interesting, fun, and sometimes surprising!*

During the Albuquerque, New Mexico conference, we rode the Sandia Peak Tramway to the top of the mountain. It was a real experience. When we started back down, all we could see were clouds. It was a frightful experience. Eventually we could see the lights of the city as we broke through the clouds. That was beautiful! *As you do your job, do everything you can do to make it clear and pleasant for all!*

The Indiana Technology Education Association was very busy preparing for the 1990 ITEA conference. I served as the promotions chair. My wife Janie was the spouse's program chair. A member from Nova Scotia told me that Janie had suggested that he and his wife visit the Indianapolis Speedway. He said they had an out-



For many years Ron was a faithful volunteer in the Resource Booth at ITEEA's Annual Conference. He is pictured here in 2004 with ITEEA Executive Director, Kendall Starkweather. Photo Credit: Bill Downs.

standing time. As they were leaving, while waiting for a ride, police cruisers and a fancy car passed them. A person in that fancy car waved out of the window at everyone. It just so happened that it was the Vice-President of the United States. In addition to enjoying the sessions and commercial exhibitors, our Canadian friends caught a glimpse of a very important person at a very important raceway. He took some good stories home with him, too.

One night after meetings at Stout University, we walked across the campus and were stopped by a police officer. He wanted to know where we had been and where we were going. We told him that we had heard about some good root beer on campus and had to try it. It was fantastic, we told him. He knew of that root beer and agreed with our assessment. As we talked, the officer told us some interesting points and history about the university. A few days after I returned home from the same meeting, I received a thank you letter from John Monroe. It was a great way of making a person feel good. He congratulated me for what I had done and reminded me of things I still had to do. Kendall Starkweather was also one who sent notes thanking us for our service to the profession. He also reminded us of items we needed to complete. Acknowledging people and their work is important. I also sent many notes!

I helped ITEEA develop *Standards for Technological Literacy (STL)*. That project took a lot of time and effort. Once complete, we worked on technology standards in Indiana. At one of our local teachers' meetings, the teachers were very upset; there was so much work to do. One teacher asked me if I knew about standards in our profession. I said yes, and showed the group what we had developed at the national level. Our teachers went through all the ITEEA publications and used them to guide the Indiana technology education standards. With such great resources available, the Hoosier teachers were happy!

After my duty as ITEEA President, I worked in the ITEEA Resource Booth during conferences. I enjoyed helping teachers find materials to support their students' education. Each year more materials became available. It took quite a bit of time setting up and breaking down the booths. It was worth it though. It was exciting to help other teachers successfully teach their students.

Another good idea is to talk to the vendors we have at our conferences and see what is new and listen to their suggestions. Another thought is having them set up and operate the equipment that you purchase.

I taught a New Teacher course at Purdue University. I gave my students a quiz at the end of the week. I explained to them that I ran the course, and it was my choice to evaluate and reinforce what they had learned during the week. One week we discussed designing valid tests to evaluate whether the students learn what we are trying to teach them. I wanted to reinforce the idea that the teacher writes the test. I designed one test where the answer to all true and false questions, was "true." I thought that they might learn something from this test. Becoming upset, one student didn't appreciate my approach. He yelled and cursed at me. I told him it was very easy to grade and covered the content we learned about when designing our tests. He took a deep breath and said, "I see what you mean!" That was great! I saw him at two conferences,



sufficiently accomplish things in life.

We accomplished quite a bit at our AIAA/ITEA/ITEEA Board meetings. Board members must work together to communicate thoughts and ideas, to plan and accomplish things for the profession, and teachers. At one particular Board meeting, we were to discuss changing the profession's name from AIAA to ITEA. Many members had heard that it was on the Board's agenda and were concerned. They did not understand why we were proposing the change. A past president suggested that we wait until our next meeting to discuss the potential change in order to be more prepared to address it. By the Board waiting, and getting better prepared, we were able to address members' concerns. Becoming better prepared worked!

Creating meeting agendas, and especially adhering to time constraints, can be very difficult. As President I placed time limits

on each item that we were to address. I hoped that it would help speed up each meeting, giving us time to address new items, and to finish the meeting in a reasonable amount of time. It is necessary to work each item in a timely fashion. Our meeting in Louisville, Kentucky was an example of doing it right. Rather than dragging out the meeting, we accomplished everything on the agenda and still had time to visit the Kentucky Derby Track. I guess you could call it a win-win situation.

Ron and his wife, Janie, at the 1990 ITEA Conference.

and he spoke about the quiz both times. The last time he spoke to me about it, he told me that he made the same type of test. His students loved it! I am not sure if he actually got my message.

My mother-in-law was very sick while I was to attend the Salt Lake City Conference. I asked her if it was okay if I attended the conference. She said yes, as long as I took and gave her a picture of Karl Malone's statue. It was difficult to find his statue, but with some help I got the picture. Our return home flight was cancelled, and it seemed like we would have to wait a long time for another. Gary Wynn talked to someone and quickly found us another flight. I safely made it home and printed the picture of Karl Malone and gave it to my mother-in-law. Thank you, Gary, for helping me get it to her sooner rather than later. These events show how small things can matter a lot. We all just have to work with each other to

Many years ago, three or four Board members needed to talk before a Board meeting. While we were all still at home, Kendall Starkweather somehow arranged a phone conference that included us all. We were able to complete our business before the Board meeting. It is common today that teachers and students communicate via computers and mobile telephones. Back then, we were introduced to and used cutting-edge technology. Technology is great! You just have to know how to use it!

Serving on committees is sometimes difficult. It takes time and effort to determine what needs to be done and to get other members to help. I remember trying to get members to run for different offices and committees. As there were always questions, I had to explain what the job entailed and what prospective candidates had to do to run for office. If I didn't know the answer to a question, I sent that person to someone who did. One evening during the 1993 conference I asked John Monroe if he would run for ITEA President. He told me that he would have to think about it. John knew that he had to give me an answer. I saw him the next morning, and he told me that he had trouble sleeping the night before. Sometime during

the night John called his wife, and she told him, "if Ron wants you to run for President, do it!" I am glad she gave him that advice. John was an outstanding educator. He served equally well as ITEA President.

I was one of the first group of classroom teachers scheduled to receive my Distinguished Technology Educator designation at the ITEA conference. Due to illness, I could not attend that conference. Showing the great camaraderie between technology educators, many members signed a get-well card and sent it to me. In addition to the signatures, some wrote me sincere and sometimes comical messages. That card meant a lot to me. I still have it. Receiving that card almost equaled receiving my DTE.

Teachers, especially technology teachers, are good planners and troubleshooters. During the Iowa conference I had to catch a flight directly following my presentation in order to meet my wife on another flight destined for our Florida vacation. With all the facets of being a technology teacher, I learned how to juggle responsibilities, at school, conferences, home, and vacations as well. I hope some of those troubleshooting skills rubbed off on my students.

Ten events in the profession I am proud to have been a part of are:

1. Drafting ITEA's Professional Improvement Plan to move industrial arts to technology education.
2. Changing the names of the national and state associations to reflect technology education.
3. Helping Indiana host the 1990 ITEA Conference by serving as state president and conference promotions chair, all while serving on the ITEA Board.
4. Helping Indiana's DOE develop the 18 ITE Curriculum Guides, Standards, Benchmarks, and their continual updating.
5. Developing the structure to plot the course of the profession and international association from 2000 to 2003.
6. Helping with Purdue's Technology Education Program.
7. Assisting the development of the National Technology Education Standards in many different roles.
8. Helping in the remodeling of Tecumseh Middle, Tippecanoe Jr. High, Sunnyside Middle, and Rossville High Schools.
9. Helping the DOE write technology education activities that reflect the core standards.
10. Serving as a co-leader of ITEA's *IdeaGarden*, a listserv for the membership, and sharing ideas with the membership.

Thank you, Mr. Yuill, for sharing some of the highlights of your service to our profession. It is obvious that you were an outstanding teacher and Board member. Your service is greatly appreciated.

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 Johnny Moye with that person's name and contact information.



Ronald D. Yuill, DTE is a retired classroom teacher and Past President of ITEEA. He studied at Purdue and Ball State Universities to become an Industrial Education Educator, taught for 42 years, coached some football, worked with student teachers, and taught some university classes. He worked with the Technology Educators of Indiana in many different positions over the years, including association president. He also worked for ITEEA, chairing many committees, helping start the IdeaGarden, serving on the Board for five years, and as President of the association. He also made presentations, wrote many articles, worked on Standards and curriculum materials, and helped others in the profession in many ways! He also repaired furniture in his free time. Ron Yuill may be contacted at ronyuill@comcast.net.



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