

the legacy project

William David Greer, Jr., DTE

by William David Greer, Jr, DTE and
Johnny J Moye, DTE

I have had the privilege to rub shoulders with educational leaders from around the world, to be involved in major changes in our profession, and to watch others grow and take up the torch where I have left off.

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 a responsibility to continue and build upon.

This is the sixteenth 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. David Greer.



Dr. William David Greer, Jr., DTE

**Industrial Arts Teacher, Program Director - Industrial Arts and Trade and Industrial Education,
Adjunct Professor University of North Texas, United States Air Force Reserves**

Place of Birth: Amarillo, Texas

Degrees:

- B.S. in Industrial Arts, 1966 – North Texas State University
- M.Ed. in Education-IA minor, 1969 – University of North Texas
- Doctor of Education – College Teaching of Industrial and Technical Education, 1991 – Texas A&M University-Commerce

Occupational History:

- Industrial Arts Classroom Teacher (Grades 5-12), 1966-1984
- Program Director, Career and Technical Education, 1984-2004
- Adjunct Professor, University of North Texas – Teacher Preparation, 1992-2003

Married to: Lana Lee Greer

William David Greer, Jr. was born on August 28, 1944 in Amarillo, Texas. The son of an Industrial Arts teacher and a Home Economics teacher, he grew up at his father's elbow learning the proper use of tools and machines. As a student in his father's classes in high school, he continued his education in the finer aspects of craftsmanship and attention to detail. After graduating from Highland Park High School (1962) in Dallas, he went on to receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Arts (1966) from North Texas State University and a Master of Education (1969) from the University of North Texas, Denton. He received his Doctor of Education from Texas A&M University-Commerce in 1991 and also holds an All Level Administrator Certificate, Vocational Supervisor Certificate, and Professional Teaching Certificate in Texas.

David is married to Lana Lee Greer and has two stepchildren, Diana White and Scott Erwin, and four grandchildren, Ty White, Trent White, Andrew Erwin, and Addison Erwin. Now retired, David enjoys working on his two ranches, traveling the U.S. and Canada in his motor home with his wife, and hunting and fishing with his grandchildren.

Like most people in the field of industrial arts, you started by being a teacher in the public schools. Please describe your teaching experience so that others will know what was being emphasized during that time in history.

In 1966 I began my teaching career in the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD). At that time the schools in the state were not integrated, but two years later education took a major shift with the introduction of integration. Thanks to a strong superintendent and dedicated school board, FWISD sailed through the rough seas with little change in the classroom. Over the next 18 years I taught traditional woodworking, metalworking, drafting, plastics, electricity/electronics, and crafts in Grades 5 through 12. During that time, I also served in the United States Air Force Reserves for six years.

In 1996 FWISD hired an innovative and very supportive Superintendent, Dr. Don Roberts. He saw his role as one of support of his staff and teachers. His philosophy was that his job was to provide the resources, and your job was to implement the changes. If those changes did not work, his job was to "pick you up, brush you off, and send you out to try again." It was under this atmosphere of support and innovation that the district started many new and innovative programs. Dr. Roberts was a master at getting the community, business, and industry involved in the district. As a result, he was able to pass several large bond packages that

insured that funds were available to implement new programs. The implementing of Technology Education was one of these successful programs.

After teaching, you became an industrial arts administrator for a very large school system, the Fort Worth (TX) Independent School District. What were your responsibilities (such as curriculum development, etc.), the size of the system (number of teachers, number of students in I.A.), your nagging problems, and your successes?

In the fall of 1984 I was promoted to the FWISD Administration as a supervisor for Industrial Arts and Vocational Education. Just prior to the promotion, I had been nominated for the position of president-elect of AIAA as a classroom teacher. After discussing the situation with the AIAA Executive Director and Executive Committee, it was determined that I could continue to run for the office and, if elected, serve out my term since I was a classroom teacher at the time I was nominated. Having served as Region III Director of AIAA the previous three years, I was well aware of the changes coming in the field. Much was being done around the country to indicate a major curriculum shift in the profession. Prominent professionals like Dr. Tony Schwaller (MN) and Dr. Ron Jones (IL) were leading technology symposiums. Dr. Gene Martin (TX), representing the Technical Foundation of America, held the Camelback Symposium

in Arizona, which explored the possibilities of a new direction. Vendors began providing instructional materials to support the concept(s) and formative model(s) of Technology Education, and companies such as Pitsco and Creative Learning were developing full technology education programs like the Tech Lab 2000.

One evening during the AIAA conference in 1984, while sitting with Kendall Starkweather, Bill Dugger, Tom Hughes, and Ron Foy, a casual conversation began regarding the possibility of a name change for the association. The focus of the conversation was Technology Education. I recalled a discussion during the day's board meeting about the number of members and attendees from other countries, suggesting that this might be a good time to also consider changing "American" to "International". They all agreed. After a vote by the AIAA membership, the result was a name change from American Industrial Arts Association to the International Technology Education Association (ITEA). The change process began under the leadership of Dr. Bill Dugger and was completed during Tom Hughes' term as president. Other top leaders in the field who made important contributions to the discussions were Dr. Paul DeVore (WV) and Dr. Don Maley (MD). The one thing that stands out most in my mind is that, in all the time that I worked with these highly respected professionals, everyone regarded one another as if their opinion were important and that each individual was making a major contribution to the issues being discussed. It was in this atmosphere that progress was truly made.

After finishing my term as ITEA president, and with the encouragement of those with whom I had worked and served, I completed my work towards my doctorate at Texas A&M-Commerce. It was also during this time that a new superintendent, Dr. Don Roberts, came to FWISD. In my opinion, Dr. Roberts was one of the finest school superintendents in the nation. He brought financial stability to the district and encouraged all of his administrative staff to be innovative in their curriculum areas. I discussed with Dr. Roberts the new trend in industrial arts and, with his help, was able to obtain \$6.5 million to transition the Industrial Arts program in FWISD to a full-blown Technology Education program.



I planned and directed the program to include not only the remodeling of the labs, but also teacher training and creating a new mindset with teachers, counselors, and administrators. I was amazed and gratified to watch the enthusiasm grow as more and more teachers became involved. As a result of the program's success and growing reputation, students, and educational professionals from 6 countries, 24 states, and hundreds of school districts visited to observe and learn. Teachers from FWISD gave presentations at professional conferences, served as consultants to other school districts, and made many presentations to various businesses, industries, civic groups, colleges, and governmental organizations.

After Dr. Roberts retired, a new administration radically shifted focus and failed to support many of his excellent programs, including the Technology Education Program. Eight years later most of these programs were significantly diminished, and yet another administrative leadership team was put in place. Even so, the principles that I instilled in the program endure and have an impact on the quality of teaching in the district today. I continued my career as a respected FWISD administrator and retired in August 2003.

One of my biggest regrets was seeing the Teacher Education programs around the state dwindle. When I began teaching, there were nine Industrial Arts/Technology Education teacher preparation institutions in Texas. Today none remain. Without good teacher education programs, there can be no new public school Technology Education programs. It is practically impossible to hire a Technology Education-prepared teacher in Texas today. Once a program is closed, it will likely never reopen. When I began teaching in 1966, there were nearly 150 Industrial Arts Teachers in FWISD...today there are fewer than 50 technology teachers. Technology Education is no longer identified as a curriculum area but has been merged with other areas of instruction at both the state and local levels. I see this trend as a swing of the pendulum in general education. It is a move to a more Liberal Arts education brought about by the lack of understanding of the general public for the need of more engineering-based and practical education. I hope that, in the future, the pendulum will swing the other way with a renewed call for more Technology and Engineering Education. It

will be up to future leaders in the profession to be prepared when the need arises.

From 1992 to 2001 I was employed as an adjunct professor at the University of North Texas in its teacher certification department.

Over my career I participated in a wide range of professional activities, including: Curriculum writing team for technology education, University of Houston, 2003; National Science Foundation proposal reviewer, 2002; National Tech Prep Planning Committee member; Developed curriculum for Technology Education Teacher Certification, Collin County Community College District, 2000; Council on Technology Teacher Education Yearbook contributing author, 2000; Educational/International Study Tour of China participant, 1998; International Technology Education Association General Conference Chair, Ft. Worth, 1998; Technology for All Americans Project National Reviewer, 1996-02; Developed Computer Numerical Control Curriculum for Anchorage Public Schools, AK, 1997; Texas State Board of Education Review Committee, Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills; Texas Education Agency, Represented Career & Technology Education and Technology Applications Chairperson, 1995-1997; Critical Issues in Career and Technology Education, Maui, Hawaii, Presenter, 1996; National Science Foundation proposal reviewer, 1996; National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Presenter (Ideas for Implementing a Sound Tech Prep Program), 1995; Developing Leadership in Career and Technology Education, Orlando, FL participant, 1994; National School Board Association, Technology & Learning Conference presenter, 1994; Camelback Symposium – Critical Issues in Technology Ed., Scottsdale, Arizona, 1992; Designs for a New Generation of American Schools, NASDC, Grant Study FWISD, 1991.

In addition to my educational involvement, I also served in a variety of professional leadership roles. I served as: President, Career & Technology Administrators of Texas (CTAT), (2002-03); International Technology Education Association Conference Program Chairman, 2000-03; Board of Directors, Career & Technology Administrators of Texas (CTAT), 2000-01; President, Career and Technology Educators of North Texas (CTENT), 2000-01; President, Association of Texas Technology Education, Council of Supervisors, 1999-02; Career and Technology Administrators of Texas, Registration Chairman, 1997-98; Career and Technology Education State Inservice, General Chairman, 1993; International Technology Education Association, Council of Supervisors Board Member, 1989-1990; International Technology Education Association President, 1986; American Industrial Arts Association Regional Director, 1983-1985; Texas Industrial Arts Association President, 1981; North Texas Industrial Arts Association, President, 1975; Fort Worth Industrial Arts Association President, 1972; Southern Association Evaluation Teams, 1988 & 1990; State textbook advisory committee, 1985-1994; Texas Education Agency, Long Range Planning Committee, 1988-1993; Technology Student Association Competition Management Committee, 1988-1993; Technology Education Agency Advisory Committee, University of North Texas, 1988-1994; State Inservice Committee for Technology Education 1988-1994.

Because of my efforts and work I received numerous recognitions and honors over the years, including: Administrator of the Year, Career and Technology Administrators of Texas, 2002; Named Fellow by Technical Foundation of America – Established \$10,000 ITEA scholarship, 2000; Outstanding Administrator, Association of Texas Technology Education 2000; "Ambassador Citation" – Outstanding Alumni, Texas A&M University-Commerce, 1998; Special Recognition Award, International Technology Education Association, 1997; Laureate Citation, Epsilon Pi Tau, 1996; Foundation for Technology Education Grant for the promotion of Technology Education, 1995; Association for Texas Technology Education, Hall of Honor Award, 1995; Distinguished Technology Educator (DTE), International Technology Education Association, 1993; Presidents' Award, North Texas Industrial Technology Association, 1993; Outstanding Local Supervisor Award, International Technology Education Association Council of Supervisors, 1992; Outstanding Alumni, University of North Texas, 1989; Service Award, Association of Texas Technology Education, 1988; Leadership Award, Texas Industrial Arts Association, 1987; President's Award, North Texas Industrial Arts Association, 1986; Outstanding Program of the Year, American Industrial Arts Association, 1984; President's Award, Texas Industrial Arts Association, 1983; Outstanding Teacher, North Texas Industrial Arts Association, 1981 and 84.

I am blessed to have had such an enriching and fulfilling personal and professional career. I have had the privilege to rub shoulders with educational leaders from around the world, to be involved in major changes in our profession, and to watch others grow and take up the torch where I have left off. I hope others have the same rewarding experiences.

Thank you Dr. Greer for sharing some of the highlights of your service to our profession. Your contributions to the profession can still be seen today.

The Legacy Project has now interviewed 16 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.



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