

Launching the SME Foundation

How did the SME Education Foundation get its start? Ralph E. Cross, MEEF's first president, recently recalled the launching of the Society's educational grants program.



Cross

"In 1979, R. William Taylor, then SME executive vice president and general manager, made an appointment to visit me about a new SME undertaking," says Cross who's been an SME member since 1945. "Bill explained the SME Board of Directors had authorized an expenditure of \$1 million over five years to launch the SME Manufacturing Engineering Education Foundation. My help was needed to be MEEF's first president and to recruit a prestigious board of directors.

"I discovered that a close friend, Phil Marsilius, president of Producto Machine Co., had already agreed to serve on the board. Also involved were Dr. Merrill Ebner, chairman of manufacturing engineering at Boston Univ., Dr. John Bollinger, dean of engineering at the Univ. of Wisconsin, and Dr. Warren Worthley, engineering dean at Indiana Univ.-Purdue Univ."

Using this knowledge, Cross went to work and helped recruit a high-powered group of directors. They included E.M. Estes,



Merchant

president and COO of General Motors Corp., President Malcolm Stamper of Boeing Co., President Joseph Clancey of Bridgeport Machines, President Melvin Verson of Verson Allsteel Press Co., and Robert D. Seamans, dean of engineering at MIT.

"One of my most vivid memories is my visit to recruit Pete Estes. He didn't know the purpose of my appointment, but he accepted right on the spot. We all agreed to help in any way we could by lending our expertise but thought we would not solicit funds."

Cross took his assignment very seriously and made a sizeable personal endowment gift. He and Marsilius also made a personal appeal to the board of directors of the National Machine Tool Builders' Association (NMTBA). "Bill Taylor desired to build a better relationship with the NMTBA, and he asked Phil and I to make an effort to obtain funds for MEEF's educational grants program. Our presentation to the NMTBA board was successful and we obtained a \$100,000 commitment to be paid over two years.

"Our board found fund-raising for MEEF was difficult because many corporations

viewed MEEF as a third party, and they didn't make contributions to third parties. Nevertheless, our fund-raising efforts enjoyed some successes, and the grant-making programs began to grow.

"I have the deepest respect for Dr. M. Eugene Merchant, because he helped organize an outstanding group of volunteers from industry and academia to review annual proposals. This is extremely tough work, but Gene's group always performed well and many good projects received MEEF grants.

"MEEF has grown a great deal since those early days," says Cross, retired chairman emeritus of Cross & Trecker Corp. "Every year its programs enjoy greater funding and more recognition. Programs like MEEF really bolster SME's image and support the manufacturing engineering discipline effectively." ■



Ralph E. Cross, FSME

SME-EF Past President 1980-1983

SME-EF Board Chairman Emeritus 1984-2003



SME MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout much of its history, America has led the world in technological innovation and advancement. American productivity was high—so high that the rest of the world sent its engineers to America to see how it was done.

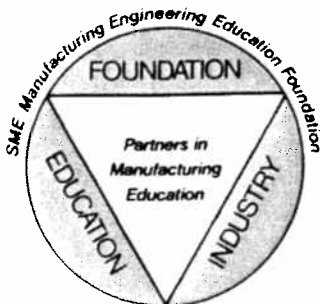
In recent years the picture has changed. American productivity is no longer soaring. The annual increases in productivity, which provide national growth and an increasingly higher standard of living, have fallen behind the productivity increases of most of the other industrialized nations of the world.

In productivity growth, we have surrendered our leadership position and have become a follower.

In 1979, I was asked by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers to become the first President of the SME Manufacturing Engineering Education Foundation. I gladly accepted because I feel that the Society is in a unique position to assist in solving the national productivity problem. I feel that it can provide this assistance through its direct link to the nation's colleges and universities, and to industry and the business community.

In my opinion, a two-pronged solution to the problem is indicated. First, we must encourage the academic institutions to make a greater commitment to the teaching of manufacturing engineering and engineering technology. Second, we must attract the best and brightest of the nation's young people to careers in manufacturing. To do both is the primary objective of the Foundation.

We ask that you give careful consideration to our case as we have presented it in this brochure, and that you study our premises and projected programs. If you believe that we are on the right track, we ask that you help us—and in so doing, help America regain the productivity leadership position that is traditionally and historically ours.



Ralph E. Cross, President
The Board of Directors



SME MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING EDUCATION FOUNDATION

· '81 FALL NEWS BULLETIN

NEWS BULLETIN

DON BURNHAM, ENGINEERING AWARD WINNER, DONATES \$5,000 PRIZE TO SME EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The 1981 recipient of the National Engineering Award has donated his \$5,000 prize to the Society of Manufacturing Engineers' Manufacturing Engineering Education Foundation.

Donald C. Burnham, Past Chairman of the Westinghouse Corporation and a Foundation Board of Director, received the award and \$5,000 honorarium from the American Association of Engineering Societies (AAES) at its international Engineering Awards Presentation and banquet in Pittsburgh on September 16, 1981.

The National Engineering Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the benefit of mankind and is presented on behalf of AAES's 39 organizations representing nearly one million engineers. Previous recipients of the award, AAES's highest, include former astronaut, now Senator, Neil A. Armstrong, and former Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown.

Upon receiving the Award, Burnham called SME Education Foundation President, Ralph Cross, to the podium and turned the \$5,000 check over to him.

Burnham explained: "The bottleneck in use of new technologies in our factories, like robots and computers, is probably the lack of engineers who can apply and operate the new methods. The SME Education Foundation is supporting the education of more engineers who can put the technologies to work. So I am pleased to present this check to Ralph Cross, the President of the Foundation."

According to Cross, since the \$1 million SME Education Foundation was launched in May, 1979 it has distributed over one-half million dollars in grants to more than 70 universities and technical institutions. Specifically, these grants are being

used to purchase capital equipment, to fund new programs in student and faculty development (scholarships and fellowships), to develop new college level courses and curricula in manufacturing engineering technology, and to fund research.

The Foundation will announce additional grants on November 5, said Cross who is Chairman of the Cross & Trecker Corporation, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

"Industry contributes heavily to the Foundation," Cross continued, "both in terms of cash and equipment. Because of the need for updated equipment in engineering programs, we encourage companies to donate new and used capital equipment. Schools seeking grants can also request specific equipment items which allows us to tailor our grants to meet their individual needs."

Cross said that by 1984 the Foundation's goal—with the support of industry and other donations—is to allocate \$1 million annually.



Donald C. Burnham