

A HISTORY OF
Samuel Cunningham Wray
MISSISSIPPI VALLEY CHAPTER 123
ASHRAE

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Sam Wray retired from KJWW Engineering Consultants in Rock Island, IL, in January 1996. After a long, successful career as a consulting engineer, Sam has earned the right to kick-back and enjoy his retirement years. The Mississippi Valley Chapter does not want to let this occasion slip by without notice. This brief history is intended to document some of the facts and figures regarding Sam Wray, before they are forgotten...or exaggerated beyond belief.

Samuel Cunningham Wray was born on July 18, 1935 in Warsaw, Missouri, to Harold Riley Wray and Edith Pauline (Linn) Wray. He has one sibling, a sister Quintella living in Florida. Riley, as his dad was known, was a construction supervisor for Stone and Webster Construction of Boston Massachusetts. His work caused the family to move continuously from one construction site to the next. In fact, Sam attended 20 different grade schools before finishing high school in Rockville, Maryland.

One of the family stops was in third grade, in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Stone and Webster had assigned Riley to Oak Ridge, where the company literally has six months to build up the entire city during the military development of the atomic bomb. Schools had to be provided for 1,200 new students of military families, so any available products such as plumbing fixtures were requisitioned for the new schools. Sam had not developed his engineering talent by the third grade, however he does recall building a four-story tree house in a stand of pines near Oak Ridge, with the help of the Grimes brothers.

Sam's biggest influence on his eventual career choice was his father. By age 14 he was definitely leaning towards an engineering future. After high school, where he participated in gymnastics and swimming, Sam attended Purdue University, graduating with a BSME degree in 1957. (While at Purdue in the ROTC program, Sam was an acquaintance of an upper-classman, Robert E. St. Peter, this writer's uncle.)

Following graduation from Purdue, Sam took a brief position with Stone and Webster. He married Hildegard Rogge in 1957 in Rockville, her hometown. Three years of military service followed, of which 20 months were spent in Germany with the Army Intelligence division. Sam recalls being on active duty when the U.S. received the encrypted message informing of the shooting down of pilot Gary Powers over Russia. According to reports, Powers was flying at an altitude where he was out of range of

Soviet jet capabilities, but was running low on fuel and dropped to a lower altitude to save on fuel.

While in Germany, the first of Sam and Hilde's three sons, Matthew, was born. Today, Matt is Sales Director/financial analyst for Parvus Corporation, residing in Park City, Utah. Their next son, Tim, is currently the ASHRAE Mississippi Valley Chapter President, and mechanical Project Manager at KJWW Engineering in Rock Island, IL. Their youngest son, David, is an electrical engineer at KJWW in Des Moines, IA.

After his military service, Sam entered the building industry in 1960 as a sales engineer for Powers Regulator Company, where he developed his keen understanding of pneumatic control theory and application. This prepared him well for his next career move, to a small consulting firm Kimmel-Randolf-Jensen in Rock Island, IL. In 1967. Sam was soon named an Associate in the firm, then became a partner and Vice-President to form Kimmel-Jensen-Wegerer-Wray in 1970. This was the beginning of Sam's career as one of the most knowledgeable and respected mechanical engineers in the area. Sam was awarded the honor of Engineer of the Year by the Quad Cities Engineering and Science Council in 1987. During Sam's tenure with KJWW, he has seen the firm grow from a handful of employees to more than 100 in four cities.

Sam says he has had too many projects to single out one as his most memorable, but one area that does stand out is his involvement in developing the first variable air volume HVAC systems for use in hospital surgery suites in Illinois. In 1976, a hospital client in Sterling, IL saw a need to expand their operating suite to include additional surgery rooms. Sam designed a solution that involved variable air volume strategy to take advantage of diversity in the system. The modified system allowed the client to complete the expansion without totally replacing the air handling system. Later, in 1980, while working

for another hospital client in Macomb, IL, Sam received approval from Jim Linder at the Illinois Department of Public Health to provide a similar VAV design for an entire new surgery suite. These two projects were monitored by the IDPH, and led to re-writing of the Illinois Hospital Licensing Act to allow variable air volume systems in surgery suites. Sam was invited to sit on the committee that wrote the new code for ventilation and filtration requirements in hospitals.

Sam's service to his local ASHRAE chapter included serving as Treasurer during the first year of operation in 1974, committee work, and guest speaker on various engineering topics at chapter meetings and educational seminars. In 1975, Sam toured the Midwest conducting an 8-hour seminar as part of the Region VI effort to promote and explain the ASHRAE energy policy Standard 90-75. This team included now-retired ASHRAE Fellow John Freund of Deere & Company, Moline, IL, as well as Wayne Jennings of Iowa-Illinois Gas and Electric Company, and chapter member Robert Lundholm. In recent years, Sam has served four years as a judge for the Society's Energy and Technology Awards program, where he has earned the reputation as a tough critic.

Sam's dedication to the industry has led to the training of dozens of young engineers who will carry on at least part of his expertise. His well-known intolerance for non-thinking (or stupidity, as he likes to refer to it) may have offended some deserving souls over the years, and certainly has caused a few contractors, inspectors, sales reps, and architects to seriously re-think their respective career choices.

Sam says his current retirement plans include spending time with his wife and family, traveling, golf, fishing, consulting work, and serving on Illinois Governor Jim Edgar's Task Force of State Building Requirements. He adds that his future plans include all of the above, except for the consulting work and the Task Force work.

We wish you well.