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The Presidential Address

Professional development through participation

The text of the inaugural address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers Inc., in St. Louis, Missouri

ASHRAE members and friends, I am deeply honored to stand before you tonight.

ASHRAE is a unique organization. It is unique because of its level of membership participation, its tradition, and its relevance to today's world. Together, these characteristics permit ASHRAE to make untold contributions to our industry and to the well-being of mankind.

Who are ASHRAE members? We are educators, consulting engineers, contractors, building operators, service technicians, code officials, researchers, equipment design engineers and sales engineers, among others. We belong to ASHRAE to enhance our technical skills, thus developing professionally.

As members, we have the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with individuals representing an entire cross-section of our industry.

When I first became an ASHRAE member, I was impressed with the quality and dedication of the membership. I am even more impressed today. Every time I have been on a committee, there has been someone who has taught me something new. The more I participate, the more I learn, proving the axiom that you learn more by doing and trying than by observing.

The opportunity to participate in our industry, and therefore the opportunity to learn, is ASHRAE's greatest strength. It is the focus of this year's presidential theme:

Professional Development Through Participation

Gerald Wilson, dean of engineering at MIT, says that too often engineering takes place in isolation. He calls it the "throw it over the wall syndrome." Design engineers working independently from manufacturing engineers. Manufacturing engineers working independently from sales engineers.

Wilson says, "Engineers were not meant to be merely analyzers working in isolation. They were meant to be synthesizers, organizers, integrators, and above all, builders."

Our industry achieves integration through ASHRAE. Because of ASHRAE, no one in our industry needs to work in isolation. And through ASHRAE, each one of us can reach his or her full potential.

The second characteristic that makes us unique is our tradition. This tradition is that of technological leadership and is built upon ASHRAE's main objective: advancing the arts and sciences of heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and refrigeration for the benefit of the general public.

Manufacturers and trade associations in our industry rely upon ASHRAE research and standards. Manufacturers and associations do this because first, ASHRAE is a Society of individuals, removed from commercial bias. This in turn creates technical credibility. Second, ASHRAE is an interdisciplinary organization. Through ASHRAE, manufacturers and trade associations have a mechanism to invite constructive debate and later to achieve industry-wide consensus. Third, as a nearly



ASHRAE President Damon Gowan MARDEP000406