

HISTORY OF A PERSON – LOUIS F. FLAGG

Submitted by the

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

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Lou Flagg began his life in Augusta, Maine on April 12, 1914. His schooling from kindergarten through the 12th grade was in Washington DC where his family moved to when he was four years old. Lou had a difficult childhood, starting in preschool with severe pneumonia. He was overweight and sickly through High School. A kid headed for trouble, the Boy Scouts turned him around and he gained valuable life skills. You could say that his principals and whole life skills were formed in scouting. He developed a talent for leadership and more importantly he realized that helping people was most rewarding. Lou became an Eagle Scout and spent five years as a Scoutmaster.

He graduated from Central High School in 1932. Lou had aspirations of attending MIT but the Depression was in full swing and he opted to attend the University of Maryland. In 1936, Lou graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering. His scouting ended when World War Two began.

While Lou was at the University of Maryland he became an ROTC Reserve officer. Lou spent 5 years in the army, entering as Reserve officer in the 39th Infantry at Fort Bragg in April of 1940. Beginning as a communications officer ranked at First Lieutenant, Lou was assigned to the Company Commanders Headquarters and became a Captain. He participated in the Invasion of North Africa at Algiers in 1942. Lou gained the rank of Major after transferring to the Signal Corps at Iran. Lou later transferred to the CO Signal Light Construction Battalion of the 5th Army stationed in Italy. Lou retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel after spending three of his five years overseas.

Lou Flagg was employed right out of collage by Construction & Service Inc, a Honeywell Distributor in the Washington DC area. In his five years as Assistant Supervisor, Lou oversaw many big projects, including Bethesda Navel Hospital, where he got a great education and became a systems expert. After World War Two, Lou became a Sales Engineer at Honeywell DC for two years in the Residential and Commercial division, then moved to the New York area as a regional Sales and Installation Manager handling thirteen branches from Maine to Virginia. His next move brought him to Minneapolis as a National Training Director for Honeywell Commercial Division. Lou had many responsibilities throughout his Honeywell career including Application Engineering, Technical Publication, Customer Service, Traffic and Administration as well as setting up and managing seven Distribution Centers around the United States. Lou did not retire until he was 70 after nearly a half century in the business.

Lou contributed to the original and two revisions to the IEEE Gray Book (an IEEE standard) and also the UA (pipe fitters) Pneumatic Controls Book. He also taught for thirty years as a UA Teacher, Training one week annually at Purdue University.

Lou joined ASHRAE in Washington DC in 1947 when he was a Sales Engineer for Honeywell. He first worked at Society in 1953 on Controls in the ASHRAE Guide. In 1957 he worked on the program for the Murray Bay Annual Meeting. Lou worked on the 58/59 Guide committee and chaired the IC 10.1 Control committee. At age 66, Lou was elected to the Board of Directors in 1980 and 1981 as the Director at Large.

On a path to the presidency Lou participated in several committees including the Guide and Data Book, Journal, Publishing, Finance, Program and R&T. After being Director at Large he was on the Technology Counsel then the Executive Committee at age 71, a year after retiring from Honeywell, when some of the Nominating Committee's members expressed concern because of Lou's age, the Minnesota delegate pointed out the many activities and accomplishments Lou performed and his robust energetic attitude, there was no doubt who deserved the nomination, and he was unanimously nominated. At a youthful 74 years old, after forty years of ASHRAE service, Lou went on to be a great Society President. In a speech at Kansas State University he uttered the slogan "If it can happen to me, it can happen to you.". His great vision for the future of the Society and his wonderful sense of humor gave the Society terrific leadership at it time when it was most needed. His main presidential theme was "Communication, the Formula for Success".

As president, Lou made forty trips on behalf of ASHRAE including four to Europe. The year before becoming president he began planning for his presidential theme (Back to the Basics) Lou instituted a 'Let the process Work' plan that allowed the Councils and Committees to do their jobs and make positive progress. He forged strong ties to the refrigeration Industry and their Sister Societies and the CFC conference no 2. He negotiated much better contract for the ASHRAE/ARI Exposition. Lou saw the completion of Standards 62(IAQ) and 90.1 (Energy Conservation during his term. During the open committee meetings Lou recalled the pressure exerted by special interest groups to tone down the effects that these standards would impose on those interests. Through the process the committees resisted the outside influences and "did the right thing for the industry and the world in general."

Lou's involvement in ASHRAE did not stop when his presidential term ended. He was involved with the Centennial Committee for at least three years, Endowment Committee and History Committee Consultant for two, the Society Historian for two and chaired the Nominating and Long Range Planning Committees for two and three years respectively.

Lou's commitments were not limited to ASHRAE alone. He spent five years as a Scoutmaster and performed in multiple church activities such as a Moderator at a local church for two, two year terms, and Area Association, UCC, Acting Conference Minister at the Minnesota UCC Conference and a member of the Personnel Committee of the UCC Minnesota Conference for eight years.

During Lou's career he was involved in many key projects, solving serious problems and discovering important control strategies. These helped him to advance and grow within his company and this industry. From his long association within ASHRAE he taught us that "If it can happen to me, it can happen to you". Lou gained much from those around him at Honeywell and ASHRAE. One philosophy Lou had was all you have to do is let people know you are interested and pretty soon you will get involved. Lou interfaced very well with many people and invited them to get involved. By enabling and involving committees he energized ASHRAE to move forward into the information age.

We will miss the man while we savor his legacy.