

History of Lou Flagg

Louis F. Flagg was born in 1914 in Maine, prior to World War I, but his family moved to Washington D.C. when he was four years old. He grew up in D.C. and, like so many do, decided to become an engineer because he was good in math and science. He had his sights set on attending MIT but the Great Depression prevented that from becoming a financial reality. As a fall back, he attended the University of Maryland right there the greater D.C. area.

Lou graduated with an Electrical Engineering degree in 1936, and with the depression still lingering on, he felt fortunate to find a job when he started working for a Honeywell distributor in D.C. as a Sales Engineer of electrical control systems. He shortly was moved into pneumatic controls sales, which were new at the time, and quickly became a controls authority, working on some of the largest pneumatic controls jobs in the world.

The U.S. was thrust into World War II in 1941 and Lou became a Communications Officer in the Army's 39th Infantry. Things moved rapidly and he ascended to rank of Captain and ultimately lead a Company of soldiers in the invasion of North Africa. As a lieutenant colonel, he left the Service after the war and applied to Honeywell for a position as a Sales Engineer in the D.C. office. He was rehired, and with his five years of previous controls experience before the war and his leadership experienced gained in the Service, he was promptly promoted to Manager of service and installation over 13 branch offices on the east coast.

Lou joined ASHVE (the original name of ASHRAE) in 1947 and was a member of what's now the National Capital Chapter in D.C. After a few years traveling the east coast managing the branch offices, he transferred to the Honeywell headquarters in Minneapolis and shortly was put in charge of the training program. Around 1953, Lou was asked to co-author the chapter on controls in the ASHVE *The Guide* (the forerunner to the current ASHRAE Handbook series).

ASHVE changed their name to ASHAE in 1954 and Lou started to become more involved in Society activities. He was soon promoted from *Guide* controls chapter author to a member of the committee over the entire handbook. When ASHAE and ASRE combined to form ASHRAE in 1959, the ASHAE *Guide* and the ASRE *Data Book* were combined to form the ASHRAE *Guide and Data Book* and Lou was chairman of the handbook committee during through the merger. Later he moved from chairman of the handbook committee to chairman of the ASHRAE Journal committee establishing himself as a leader in ASHRAE publishing.

Lou retired at age 70 from Honeywell as manager of product distribution and administration, but continued on in ASHRAE, always being on at least one Society committee since 1958. Lou moved through publishing, finance, programs, research and technology, board of directors, and eventually was elected to Society President in 1988-89. His presidential theme was "Communications: A Formula for Progress". Lou also had a slogan that he lived by: "Let the process work." Lou would use that slogan whenever someone wanted to prematurely change things up without letting prior plans and processes have a chance to succeed. While President, Lou made forty trips on behalf of ASHRAE including four to Europe.

Starting as an engineering graduate with no connections, Lou soared through the ranks in the Army, at Honeywell, and in ASHRAE, giving evidence of his intelligence, leadership abilities, persistence and hard work ethic.



Louis F. Flagg passed away in 1999 at the age of 85. In 2002, ASHRAE established the annual Lou Flagg Historical Award to recognize the vital role historians play in identifying and preserving the accomplishments of its members and the industry. It is presented at the Society annual meeting to the individual who prepares the most outstanding historical presentation nominated during the current society year.

Dusty Stoabs, PE

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