



News from Holden Hall

Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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Spring 2011

The Mill Report —*Dr. Greg Adel, Professor and Department Head*

Greetings from Blacksburg! Another academic year has come to a close and another 36 graduates have joined the ranks of alumni. Summer sessions are beginning, and it is time for the latest issue of *News from Holden Hall*. I continue to be amazed at the interest shown by the alumni in this simple little publication. There is clearly a sense of pride out there in the old alma mater.

Let me provide you with a few figures to add to that sense of pride. According to the *2011 SME Guide to Mineral and Materials Science Schools*, Virginia Tech continues to lead the nation in the production of new mining engineers, with over 25% of all new mining engineering graduates in the U.S. coming from Virginia Tech over the past ten years. As mentioned, we graduated 36 new mining engineers in the Class of 2011, and although we are looking at a smaller graduating class for 2012 (projected at 24), the future looks particularly bright with 60 students signed up for junior-level courses and 76 students currently signed up for Introduction to Mining Engineering. Our undergraduate enrollment this past year was approximately 140, and we are projecting an enrollment of around 165 for 2011-12.

Our research and graduate programs are also bursting at the seams. This past year we topped 30 graduate students in the program for the first time in our history, and we expect to remain over 30 in the coming year despite having recently graduated 1 Ph.D. and 6 M.S. students. The Department generated over \$500,000 in research expenditures per faculty member for the second year in a row, and we are on pace to continue that mark for Fiscal Year 2011.

Of course the measure of a program is not just about quantity, it is also about quality, and our students continue to demonstrate the quality of this program through their achievements. This year the Burkhart Mining Society was honored at the SME Annual Meeting in Denver as the first place winner in the Outstanding Student Chapter Competition. They were also recognized as the grand prize winner in the SME Student Membership Challenge for signing up the most new members and returning members out of all the student chapters around the world. Our SME/NSSGA Student Design Competition team came in second in a very close competition this year, after finishing first for the past three years. It should be noted that in the seven years of this competition, Virginia Tech has finished first three times and second four times. No other school can begin to touch this record.

Ultimately, none of this excellence would be possible without the hard work of the faculty. In this issue of *News from Holden Hall*, you will learn about the latest addition to our faculty ranks, Dr. Emily Sarver. Dr. Sarver received her B.S. degree from this Department in 2004 and was named the Outstanding Senior in the College of Engineering that same year. She went on to get a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Virginia Tech and she hopes to help address some of the challenging environmental issues faced by the mining industry. You will also learn about the continued progress of Dr. Kray Luxbacher who was recently named an Outstanding Assistant Professor in the College of Engineering and who in three short years has become a rising star in this Department. Of course, our senior faculty members continue to provide the foundation for this Department, and you will learn about the Appalachian Research Initiative for Environmental Science (ARIES), a \$12.5 million multi-institution collaboration directed by Dr. Michael Karmis to address the environmental impacts of the discovery, development, production, and use of energy resources in Appalachia.

In addition, our alumni continue to be a great source of pride and a reflection of the excellence of this program. In this issue of *News from Holden Hall*, we recognize the latest inductees into our group of Distinguished Alumni, G.T. Lineberry (Class of 1977)

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The Mill Report (continued)

and Don Vickers (Class of 1979). We also note the passing of E. Minor Pace, who was recognized in our last issue as a recent inductee into the College of Engineering Academy of Engineering Excellence. Finally, we pay tribute to the man who, until his recent passing, had been our oldest living graduate, Major General William E. Eubank Jr. (Class of 1934), commander of the first B-52 wing.

As always, the accomplishments of our students and faculty are a direct reflection of the financial help we receive from our alumni and corporate supporters. Those individuals and companies who support our program are acknowledged in "Thank You to Our Donors." Nearly everything we do from paying our phone bill, running our copy machine, to funding our Writing and Communications program is paid for in part by donations. If you would like to help us remain strong, please make sure to earmark your gift to **Mining and Minerals Engineering**.

Finally, please take a look at our latest "*Blast from the Past*." This photo was sent to me by an alumnus and features a number of current leaders in the mining industry, including one of our current faculty members. I need a lot of help from the alumni on this one to identify all the individuals in the picture. So please enjoy this latest issue of *News from Holden Hall*.

Dr. Greg Adel
Head, Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering
Virginia Tech

2011 Distinguished Alumnus Awards

Mining and Minerals Engineering Alumni **Don Vickers** and **G.T. Lineberry** are the 2011 recipients of the department's Distinguished Alumnus Award. The awards were presented during the department's annual Scholarship and Awards Banquet held on April 1st in Blacksburg.

The first recipient, Don Vickers, graduated from the department with a B.S. in Mining Engineering in 1979. Don worked as a resident engineer for U.S. Steel's Southern District and later moved to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he worked the next five years for P & M in engineering and operating positions. From there Don ventured to New Zealand to work in the Corporate Office of State Coal Mines. The intended three-year commitment turned into over 7 1/2 years "down under," where Don served as Chief Engineer, Project Manager and Mine Manager while making that country's first attempt at longwall mining. Don returned to the States in 1994 and quickly connected with Arch Coal, where he continues working today. His experience at Arch Coal includes locations in Central Appalachia, highlighted by Project Manager and Director of Process Improvement at the Mountain Laurel Complex in Logan County, West Virginia, prior to his assuming General Manager of the West Elk Mine in Somerset, Colorado in 2009. Don served 3 years on the Department Advisory Board and will be taking over as Chair of the board in 2012.



Don Vickers, '79, (left) and
Dr. Greg Adel

G. T. Lineberry, the second recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award, is a Professor of Mining Engineering and Associate Dean for the Commonwealth & International Programs at the University of Kentucky, College of Engineering. A native of Bluefield, WV, Dr. Lineberry holds an A.S. from Bluefield College ('75), a B.S. and M.S. from Virginia Tech ('77 and '79) and a Ph.D. from West Virginia University ('82), all in Mining Engineering. He was the first mining engineering Ph.D. at WVU, and is now completing his 29th year on the Mining Engineering faculty at UK. He has worked internships, a summer appointment, and a sabbatical with Consol, the Army Research Institute, and the former U.S. Bureau of Mines, and his research focuses on engineering education, mine excavating and bulk materials handling, and occupational health and safety. He has authored or co-authored approximately 70 journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, and government documents, and he has given over 140 conference presentations, seminars, and invited lectures. Dr. Lineberry is the recipient of the Stefanko Best Paper Award (SME Coal Division) and the PCMIA Educational Excellence Award, a Life Member of SME, and a two-time winner of the UK Departmental Tau Beta Pi Outstanding Teacher Award.

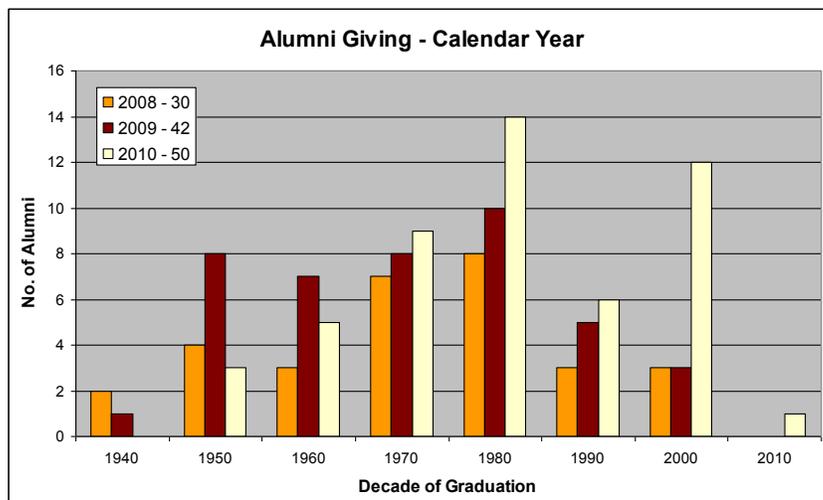


Dr. G.T. Lineberry, '77, (left) and
Dr. Jerry Luttrell.

Thank You to Our Donors

Each year we are fortunate to receive contributions from individuals and corporations to help support department operations and scholarships. We literally could not operate our Department without this support. During Calendar Year 2010 we received \$395,000 in donations (\$89,000 from individuals and \$306,000 from corporations). This was an increase of over 40% from CY 2009 (\$281,000), and the overall number of alumni giving to the program was up by nearly 20%! The figure to the right shows the number of alumni that have given to the Department over the past three calendar years by decade of graduation. It is simply overwhelming to see the continued increase in the number of alumni who are helping the Department!

The support we receive from individuals and corporations is truly invaluable to us, and we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following donors for their support.



Individual Donations

1950's

Barbery, Paul (Class of 1959)
Billings, Virginia (Wife of the late George Billings, Class of 1953)
Bucklen, O.B. (Class of 1959)

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Bucklen, Jerry (Class of 1962)
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Suboleski, Stan (Class of 1967)

1970's

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Bolton, Richard (Class of 1970)
Breedlove, John (Class of 1979)
Hibbitts, Charles (Class of 1974)
Kiscaden, Scott (Class of 1976)
Marcum, Ronnie (Class of 1970)
Ross, Timothy (Class of 1976)
Smith, Bryan (Class of 1979)
Snavelly, Charles (Class of 1978)

1980's

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Forrest, W.R. (Class of 1983)
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Lusk, Lacy (Class of 1984)
Mullins, David (Class of 1983)

Nicewonder, Kenneth (Class of 1981)
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1990's

Babcock, Jason (Class of 1999)
Barksdale, Drew (Class of 1998)
Boyt, John (Class of 1995)
Bush, Terry (Class of 1996)
Crutchfield, Kevin (Class of 1994)
Jablonski (Grotto), Dianna (Class of 1990)

2000's

Durnavich, Sam (Class of 2002)
Ellis, John (Class of 2005)
Fitz, Holly (Class of 2009)
Meador, David (Class of 2009)
Mitchell, Thomas (Class of 2007)
Murphy, Tyson and Crystal (Class of 2006)
Relyea, Caroline (Class of 2009)
Schaum, Adam (Class of 2006)
Smith, Joshua (Class of 2006)
Sprague, Nick (Class of 2009)
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Wiler, Marianne (Mother of Jeff Wiler, Class of 2007)

2010's

Pippin, Jonathan (Class of 2010)

Other Donors

Lucas, Eric (Son of the late J. Richard Lucas - Former Dept. Head)

Stephenson, Bill (Former Dean of the College of Engineering)
Taylor (Workman), Amanda (Ex MinE Student and BSE Class of 2008)
Thomson, Robert (Father of MinE sophomore Aaron Thomson)

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If you have donated to Virginia Tech during CY 2010, but your name is not listed above, it is possible that your donation did not come to the Department. Please be sure to specify "Mining Engineering" on your check. Donations made to any other entity may not come to this department. Likewise, if you have donated directly to the Burkhart Mining Society or one of our other student organizations, these donations do not come through the Department. Nevertheless, these donations are important to us, and we appreciate your helping with student activities. Finally, if you prefer to donate on-line, we have established a link on our website for giving to the Department. Visit <http://www.mining.vt.edu/sponsors/giving.htm> where you can donate on-line via credit card. Be sure to follow the instructions closely to ensure that your gift goes directly to the Mining and Minerals Engineering Department.

Dr. Michael Karmis Directs New ARIES Consortium to Address Environmental Impacts and Energy Resources in Appalachia

A consortium of major research universities has formed a new initiative to address the environmental impacts of the discovery, development, production, and use of energy resources in Appalachia. The Appalachian Research Initiative for Environmental Science (ARIES), under the direction of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research at Virginia Tech, will study both upstream and downstream issues related to the energy sector.

"The energy resources of Appalachia have long been critical to the economies of Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, as well as all the other states that depend on those resources to provide energy for their citizens," said Coal Center Director Michael Karmis. "ARIES provides the means by which we can explore new frontiers so that continued development of our energy resources occurs in a safe and environmentally protective way, backed by sound science and research."

ARIES will initially focus its studies on the coal industry, conducting scientific inquiry and research, publishing findings, and disseminating research results to all stakeholders. The initiative will engage established researchers, representing an array of disciplines and expertise, from Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, University of Kentucky, Ohio State University, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

"These universities have a track record of world-class research which has been sponsored by federal and state agencies and environmental and community organizations, as well as industrial partners," said Robert Walters, vice president for research at Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech President Charles Steger added that "The innovative researchers involved in ARIES bring together vast knowledge and experience from multiple disciplines. Multi-institution collaboration will provide the perspective needed to address such critical environmental and energy issues as protecting human health and quality of life and improving mining practices."

The technical scope of the ARIES research is multifaceted and covers four main areas: evaluating the effects of coal mining on streams and biological communities in the region; investigating methods for effectively minimizing water discharges through alternative water management practices and treating water prior to discharge; developing analytical tools to allow mine planners to locate, isolate, and manage strata that may generate releases of environmental concern; and assessing improved placement designs and spearheading development of mining engineering systems and practices that can improve environmental performance and accountability.

"We believe that good scientific research on natural resources, safety, and environmental issues is a key way to sustain the viability of the industry. Only by knowing what the facts are about the impacts of mining can elected officials then make sound policy decisions that support jobs and energy security while maintaining the health and well-being of the environment and communities of Appalachia. ARIES will provide the needed research to make that happen," said Kevin Crutchfield, CEO of Alpha Natural Resources.

ARIES was founded in cooperation with a number of industrial affiliates. These industry partners are committed to the goals of ARIES: the need to employ the best science to ensure the long-term health of the environment and communities throughout Appalachia, and the dissemination of the research results for the benefits of all stakeholders. Ben Hatfield, CEO and director of International Coal Group, said, "Every day we expect our employees to operate our mines based on proven engineering and scientific principles. We know that leads to the best performance in safety, environmental compliance, and productivity. However, the ongoing public debate about coal mining in Appalachia has raised many legitimate questions that can only be answered through independent investigation. The universities working together under ARIES will apply scientific rigor to the study of those important issues."

At its launch, ARIES' industrial partners include: Alpha Natural Resources, International Coal Group, Massey Energy, Natural Resource Partners, TECO Coal Corporation, Patriot Coal Corporation, Cliffs Natural Resources, Mepco, and Norfolk Southern. These partners have committed to fund ARIES with a \$12.5 million grant over the next five years. "Other companies are expected to join in the future, but work at the universities under ARIES will commence immediately," said Karmis.



Dr. Michael Karmis

New Faces in the Department: Dr. Emily Sarver

When it comes to problems of mining and the environment, Dr. Emily Sarver takes a clear and balanced approach to understanding them. “Like most everyone, I support improvements to quality of life,” she explains. “This requires access to the ‘stuff’ people need and want, courtesy of mining or agriculture; access to clean air and clean water, courtesy of environmental protection; and access to the decision-making systems, courtesy of fair government.”

With an equally balanced background in both mining and environmental engineering, Dr. Emily Sarver joins the department as an Assistant Professor and will work to address current environmental issues facing the mining industry.

“Mining Engineering at Virginia Tech is arguably the most progressive program of its kind in the US, and we should be leaders in tackling the most contemporary problems,” says Sarver, who joined the department in January. “My focus on environmental issues brings a unique interest area to the department in terms of research and teaching, and I believe it will broaden opportunities for our students.”

Sarver will teach the *Introduction to Mining Engineering* and *Environmental Management and Reclamation* courses in the fall and spring semesters, respectively, and she is looking forward to integrating environmental and sustainability components into them, such as field trips focused on mine reclamation.

She is also interested in developing a service-learning project geared towards sustainable mining. Such a project could allow students to face environmental and community well-being challenges head-on while contributing to resolutions. “Service learning is at the heart of our university’s mission, and it represents a wonderful opportunity for mining students,” says Sarver, who, as a teacher and mentor, is enthusiastic about giving students these opportunities. “This seems like the best combination,” says Sarver about teaching the sophomore- and senior-year courses. “I get the students just as they’re entering the department, and just as they’re graduating, so I expect they’ll be enthusiastic—even if for differing reasons.”

As early as high school Sarver knew she wanted to pursue a career in mining engineering, and Virginia Tech’s program was a natural choice. “My dad and I looked into engineering disciplines associated with minerals, and after one visit to this department, I didn’t want to apply anywhere else.” She received her B.S. in Mining Engineering from Virginia Tech in 2004, graduating with the distinction of Outstanding Senior in the College of Engineering, and within a year had completed an M.S. in Mining Engineering under an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship.

She took a different tack, however, by pursuing her Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech, which she received in 2010. “I specifically chose Environmental Engineering because there are a lot of environmental challenges inherently associated with mining and minerals production,” explains Sarver. “We need to tackle these challenges the same way that we tackle production, costs, and health and safety—as if our industry depends on it.”

In addition to teaching, Emily will serve as co-advisor for the Women in Mining chapter and work closely with the Burkhart Mining Society. She is also excited to take on recruiting and coordinating responsibilities for the European Mining Course (EMC), in which she participated as an undergraduate.

In terms of research, Sarver hit the ground running on a number of projects. She became involved with the initial vision mapping of the ARIES initiative (see pg. 4), identifying areas of research to be undertaken, strategic plans for each, and types of expertise needed. As the project moves forward, she will participate as a researcher, looking specifically at controlled weathering of overburden and refuse materials to minimize water quality impacts of surface coal mining. She is also pursuing projects with Freeport-McMoRan Inc., as well as projects related to metals processing and corrosion issues.

For Emily Sarver, the mining industry exists to meet the societal and economic demands for mineral and energy resources, yet there are also demands to protect the environments and communities in which the industry operates. “As a researcher, my aims are toward finding balance between the need for resources and sustaining our communities,” she says. “As a teacher, I hope to shape balanced and responsible mining engineers who can engage and solve problems for both the industry and our communities.”



Dr. Emily Sarver

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Dr. Kray Luxbacher Named Outstanding New Assistant Professor, Recognized for Research Efforts

Dr. Kray Luxbacher, assistant professor in the Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering, was recently named a 2011 Outstanding New Assistant Professor in Virginia Tech's College of Engineering and was recognized for her new and ongoing research in areas of mine safety, ventilation, and explosion prevention.

In her three years with the department, Dr. Luxbacher has established herself as a rising star in areas of mine ventilation and coal-bed methane research. She is currently involved in four funded research projects totaling approximately \$1.8 million and advises five Ph.D. and four masters students. She has more than 15 journal publications and conference proceedings, and she received the 2010 Outstanding Faculty Award from the department's undergraduates.

The driving force behind Luxbacher's research is mine safety, especially explosion prevention. She is now into the second year of a \$1.24 million project examining the use of tracer gases to remotely assess the status of underground ventilation systems (see *News from Holden Hall*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, pg. 6).

In April 2011 Luxbacher began work as Principal Investigator on a 5-year project aimed at assessing and developing current underground mine atmospheric sensing technologies. The project, *Real-Time Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring of Underground Coal Mines*, also aims to develop novel monitoring systems based on fiber-optic technology.

The research is divided into three stages, beginning with the immediate installation of current sensing technology to help mine operators better understand how to implement atmospheric monitoring. The second stage focuses on evaluating developing technologies presently in the MSHA certification process. The final stage involves development of a multi-component fiber-optic sensor specifically for underground coal mines. Results of the work will allow operators to mine and ventilate more safely since explosive or toxic atmospheres can be detected rapidly, and the resulting data can be used to optimize ventilation costs, which can account for 25% or more of a mine's operating budget.

Dr. Luxbacher also serves as Co-Principal Investigator on two funded *Methane to Markets* projects through the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCCER). A 2008 project looks at ways to optimize degasification in Chinese coal reservoirs for developing a domestic energy resource while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving mine safety. This summer, a second *Methane to Markets* project will begin to examine possible degasification strategies in lignite and bituminous reservoirs in Turkey.



Dr. Kray Luxbacher

Doctoral Student Awarded the Dean's Teaching Fellowship for 2011-2014

Aaron Noble, a doctoral student in the Department of Mining & Minerals Engineering, has been awarded the prestigious College of Engineering Dean's Teaching Fellowship for 2011–2014. He and one other student were selected from a competitive field of 17 highly qualified applicants.

The College of Engineering Dean's Teaching Fellow Program is designed to prepare interested doctoral students for the rewarding career of an academic in a university setting, with emphasis on the instructional aspects of being a faculty member. The three-year Fellowship entails a financial award, full coverage of tuition and fees, as well as opportunities for growth as an educator.

Noble is a standout in his field of study. He earned his B.S. in Mining Engineering from Virginia Tech in 2009 with a 4.0 GPA, earning him the College of Engineering's "First in Class" distinction, and he also has maintained a 4.0 GPA in graduate school while pursuing his doctoral degree in mining engineering.

Working closely with Mining and Minerals Engineering professors Dr. Jerry Luttrell and Dr. Roe-Hoan Yoon, Noble's doctoral research focuses on ways to optimize froth flotation equipment design, laboratory testing, and scale-up, while developing and utilizing tools such as first-principles modeling, dynamic simulation, and circuit analysis. His highly multidisciplinary research project integrates principles of metallurgy, economics, surface chemistry, particulate processing, fluid dynamics, control systems, chemical reactor theory, numerical analysis, and software development.



Aaron Noble

From Mining Engineer to “Father of the B-52” Remembering William E. Eubank Jr.

The department’s oldest alumnus (Class of ‘34) who became a key figure in the history of the B-52 bomber, Major General William E. Eubank Jr., passed away on September 3, 2010 at the age of 98.

William E. Eubank Jr. was born in Welch, West Virginia, and spent his early years growing up in Bluefield. He received a degree in Mining Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1934, and two years later entered the Army Air Corps’ advanced flying school in San Antonio, Texas.

In 1941 he took command of the 91st Bomb Squadron and was deployed to Fort MacKinley in the Philippines. Once war was declared, Eubanks and the 91st were moved to the Bataan Peninsula, and later to Corregidor, to serve as a provisional infantry company. He and his squadron were eventually evacuated by U.S. Navy submarine to Java in February 1942, narrowly escaping the infamous Bataan Death March.

Eubank went on to assist with the creation of the Tenth Air Force, serving as its assistant operations officer until November 1943, and then returned to the United States as an operations staff officer for the Headquarters of the U.S. Air Force. In March 1945 he was assigned to the Air Force School of Applied Tactics in Orlando, Florida, where he was a flight instructor and school secretary.

Major General Eubank is most remembered for inducting the first operational B-52 Stratofortress Bomber into the U.S. Air Force while serving as commander of the 93rd Bomb Wing. In 1957, under Eubank's command, the 93rd participated in "Operation Jet Stream"—the first around-the-world jet flight. This flight earned the 93rd the MacKay Trophy, a coveted Air Force award presented annually to the individual organization that makes the "most meritorious" flight of the year. A year later, Eubank commanded a 93rd Bomb Wing KC-135 (air tanker) flight that resulted in two new world records: a non-stop speed record from Tokyo to Washington, in 13 hours and 47 minutes, and an unrefueled jet distance record of 10,288 miles from Tokyo to the Azores. For his many successes with the 93rd Bomb Wing, Eubank became affectionately known as “Father of the B-52.”



Major General William E. Eubank Jr. (far left) with the crew of the 93rd Bomb Wing in 1957.

A rated command pilot, Major General Eubank logged more than 4,500 flying hours, including 60 in combat. Eubank’s awards and decorations included the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, Philippine Defense Ribbon, American Defense Service Medal, American Theater Ribbon, World War II Victory Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award with four oak leaf clusters, Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, Philippine Campaign Medal with battle star, East Indies Campaign Medal with battle star, and Legion of Merit.



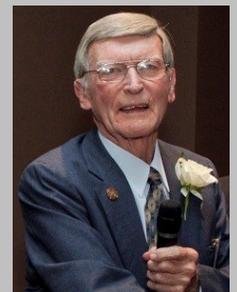
William E. Eubank Jr.
1912-2010

In Memoriam: E. Minor Pace

E. Minor Pace, a 1943 graduate of Virginia Tech’s Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering and a 2010 Inductee into Virginia Tech’s College of Engineering Academy of Engineering Excellence, passed away on Thursday 13 January 2011. He was 89 years old.

Pace grew up south of Charlottesville in the 1920s and attended Virginia Tech to pursue a B.S. in Mining Engineering. A member of the corps of cadets, Pace immediately was called to service upon graduation in 1943, joining the 1896th Engineering Aviation Battalion in the Pacific Theater.

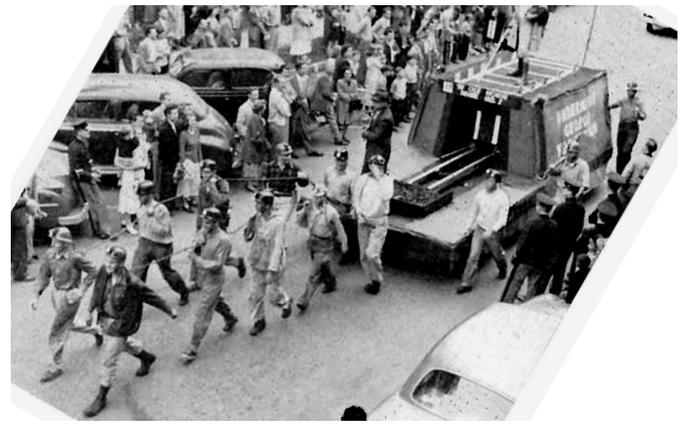
After the war, he began working for Inland Steel Company, a career which would last 34 years until his retirement in 1980. He earned a master’s degree in mining engineering from the University of West Virginia (1948) and also attended Harvard Business School’s Advanced Management Program. While with Inland, Pace served as vice chairman of the Kentucky Coal Institute, chair of the Illinois Coal institute, chair of the Coal Division of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration (SME), and as a member of the SME Board of Directors. He is the recipient of the SME’s Percy Nicholls Award and the American Institute of Mining Engineers’ Erskine Ramsay Award for his contributions to the industry. In 2010 he was inducted into Virginia Tech’s College of Engineering Academy of Engineering Excellence (see *News from Holden Hall*, Vol. 2, Issue 2). Mr. Pace is survived by his wife of 67 years, Helen Pace, his children and their families.



E. Minor Pace

“Blast from the Past”

The Fall 2010 “Blast from the Past” image (right) went back to Homecoming 1949. We discovered the picture in the January 1950 issue of *Mining Engineering*. It was not possible to identify anyone in the picture, but according to the article in *Mining Engineering*:



“A float symbolizing the current situation in coal mining won first place and \$60 for the Burkhart Student Chapter at VPI in the homecoming day parade. Complete with John L. Lewis (shaggy eyebrows and all), miners who repeatedly ‘struck’ during the line of march, a coal car with coal, and a Colonial character to represent George Washington U., home of the opposing football team whom Virginia Tech played at the homecoming game, the float was an exhibit of ingenuity and aptness of thought which pervaded the whole display.”

Only Pete Akers (Class of 1950) wrote to suggest that this was probably a homecoming float. According to Pete:

“Back in my time and before, and for a time afterward, the parade took place on the street along the Drill Field in front of the lower Quadrangle and War Memorial Gym down to Hillcrest and the Skirt Barn (the dormitory for female students) which was located in the area of Agricultural and Horticultural activities.”

Our next “Blast from the Past” was sent in by an alumnus. This picture is a bit more recent and features a motley crew of students on the front steps of Holden Hall, including one of our current faculty members.



I expect to receive a lot more feedback on this one, so if any of you can help identify the people in this picture, please send your responses to:

Dr. Greg Adel
Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

or e-mail: adel@vt.edu

As always, if any of you have photos from your days in the Department (particularly group shots) that you would be willing to share for use in this article, we would be happy to scan them and return them to you. Any photos that are more than twenty years old would be greatly appreciated.