

A Caring Innovator

Feeling unqualified to write about Ted's technical achievements, the family asked a colleague of Ted to write more about his professional innovations. This is the response they received:

Ted was a natural engineer in that his pattern of day-to-day thinking was always that of an engineer. I never met anyone who could take on so many, and so varied problems, to which he would inevitably apply his engineering mind and solve them, whether it was a complicated issue in production, or building an aviary, or laying out a model train track. He was always in engineer mode.

You asked me to relay some of his accomplishments at Avonite. Simply, there would never had been an Avonite without him. From his pre-Avonite days at Avondale, where they made decorative boxes.

He soon discovered that there was a very high amount of scrap boxes being made, which was prohibitively expensive because of the high cost of resin. It was Ted who came up with the idea that Avondale take the scrap boxes, grind them up, and then reintroduce the ground material back into new boxes. This idea would soon become the basis for Avonite's technological breakthroughs.

Avonite was initially a one-by-three-foot sheet that was cut into tiles and then sold to make countertops. I am not sure who came up with the idea of making three-foot by ten-foot sheets, but it fell to Ted to come up with a production method, and equipment that would do just that, which was no small feat. Ted applied his engineering knowledge to overcoming the problems that resulted from making such a large monolithic casting. This had never before been done using a thermoset resin. He developed the autoclave pressure system to reduce porosity in the castings and to allow multiple sheets to be cast at the same time. To reduce cracking—and there was a lot of cracking in the early days—Ted developed the cooling presses which allowed the sheets to cool evenly and slowly, this eliminated the cracking.

Several of our competitors toured our plant in the late eighties, when the company was up for sale, and each of them commented on, and marveled at, what had been accomplished. I think the pour-head, which allowed the Avonite mixture to be dispensed in a three-foot wide ribbon, was one of his proudest accomplishments. This piece of equipment allowed the mixture to be poured at exactly one-half inch thickness, without separating the dry filler from the liquid matrix as it passed through the slotted orifice.

Ted's other accomplishment was his personal concern for the growth and success of the company; he treated his departmental budget as if it were his personal savings he was spending.

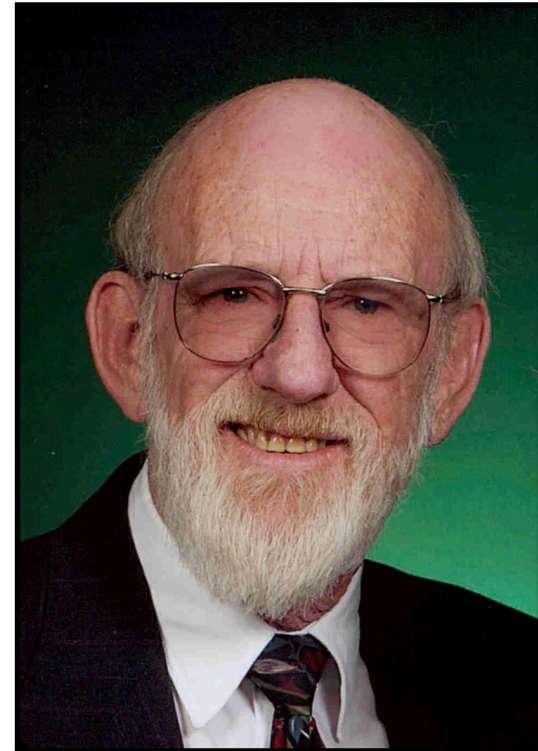
Beyond that, Ted was truly concerned about the company's personnel, their needs and desires. I witnessed, more than once, Ted bringing up an issue that was of concern to maybe only one person—and him—at company meetings.

I never had a biological brother, but Ted was the closest I will ever come to having one.

My sincerest wishes and prayers,

Lon Risley

Memorial



Theodore Elwood Stevens
(June 7, 1937 - Dec. 1, 2018)

Mountain View Church
6001 W. Oakey Blvd. ~ Las Vegas, NV
Friday, December 7, 2018 @ 2pm

Theodore Elwood Stevens

Theodore Elwood Stevens, 81, passed away on December 1, 2018, at his home in Las Vegas, following a lengthy illness. In his final days, he was surrounded by family and friends.

Ted was born in Denver, Colorado, on June 7, 1937, the middle of three children. When he was a child, his family moved to Angwin, California, where he was raised.

When he was a child, his grandfather had him disassemble and then reassemble a pocket watch, which he was able to do. From this experience, Ted realized that God had given him a gift for understanding how things worked and how to fix them.

Throughout his life, Ted used this gift to provide for his family and bring himself immense enjoyment. The professions he followed include bookbinding, piloting, flight instruction, artistic metalworking, mechanical engineering, and even game design. He is remembered among specialists as an innovator in the field of solid surfacing material.

In the mid-1950's he married Carol Parrett and had three children: Janet, Robert, and Cherie. Later, he married Sue Craig and moved to Puerto Rico with her two daughters, working there for a data company and then as a flight instructor and airline pilot.

In the mid-1970s, he moved to San Diego and got involved in metal artwork. This led to him being hired by Avonite, a company that, under its various names, he worked for until his retirement.

After retiring, he enjoyed traveling in his RV and taking cruises and trips. One of his most memorable adventures was restoring and flying a Cessna 182 up to Alaska with his son. He was, in addition, involved in many church projects and activities, having been an elder in his church in Albuquerque for many years.

Ted was a wonderful husband, devoting his last 32 years to his wife, Theresa. He will long be remembered as a loving father, grandfather, and great-grandfather whose greatest passions were fixing things and helping others.

He is preceded in death by his parents and sister, Pat; and survived by wife Theresa of Las Vegas; son Robert Stevens of Las Vegas; daughter Janet Grassman of Las Vegas; daughter Cherie Firmery of San Diego; and son Jeremy Davis of Seattle.

A remembrance will be held at the Mountain View Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 6001 W. Oakey Blvd, Las Vegas, 89146, on December 7 at 2 p.m., followed by a reception on the grounds.

The family wishes to thank Pastor Boles and the Mountain View congregation for their care and assistance. If you wish, donations may be made to a charity of your choice in the name of "Theodore Stevens".

MEMORIAL PROGRAM

Invocation / Welcome Pastor Angel Heredia

"Amazing Grace/My Chains Are Gone" Elmer Palitang

Scripture (Psalm 23) Charles Langford

"How Great Thou Art" Congregation

Eulogy Bob Stevens

"O Holy Night" Congregation

Time of Sharing Congregation

"Amazing Grace" Frank Richo

Words of Life Pastor BJ Boles

"I Can Only Imagine" Elmer Palitang

Benediction Pastor BJ Boles

The family invites the attendees to stay by afterwards for a reception in the multi-purpose room

IN RECOGNITION

OFFICIANT

Pastor BJ Boles

TECH TEAM

Arvin Videna & Jack Darrow

CHORISTER

Elmo La Porte

PIANIST

Elmer Palitang