

# REMEMBERING RAY FAHIEN

*A pivotal force in CEE's survival and success, Ray Fahien was editor from 1967 to 1995*

LYNN HEASLEY AND PHIL WANKAT

A “quiet and determined pursuit of excellence,” was the trait colleagues most recalled of Professor Ray Fahien in the memoriam *CEE* published in November 1995 [*CEE*, 29(4), inside front cover]. It's a trait still felt in our recollections of him.

Ray earned his B.S. degree from Washington University (St. Louis) in 1947, and his M.S. from the Missouri School of Mines at Rolla (currently the Missouri University of Science and Technology) in 1950, and then went to Purdue University for his Ph.D. At Purdue Ray worked with Joe Mauk Smith, a very prolific researcher and textbook writer. Ray learned from Smith that one could motivate people by imparting a sense of purpose or mission to activities and projects. He applied this lesson himself in his dedication to *CEE*. After graduating from Purdue in 1954, Ray started his career in industry—working one year as a process design engineer at Ethyl Corp in Baton Rouge, then a decade as an engineer at the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission's Ames Laboratory.

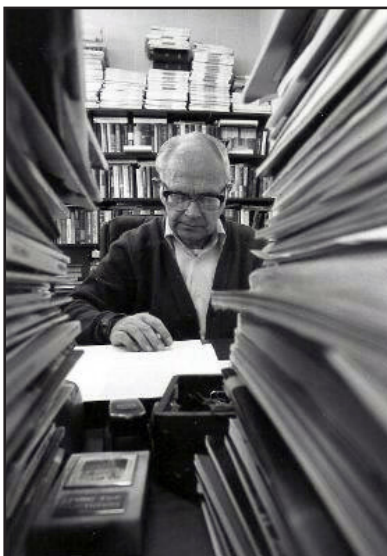
Despite 11 years in industry, his true calling was education. In 1954 he joined Iowa State University where he went from assistant professor to associate professor and acting department head. Fahien joined the University of Florida (UF) Department of Chemical Engineering as its chair in 1964. According to those who knew him, he considered educating at the college level one of the—if not *The*—highest calling(s). While department chair, he became the editor of the Chemical Engineering Division of ASEE's struggling new journal, *Chemical Engineering Education*. Fahien moved the journal to Florida, restarted it, and served as the journal's editor from his appointment in 1967 until his death from complications of Parkinson's disease on Aug. 26, 1995.

## DEDICATION

Ray Fahien was a lifelong bachelor who dedicated his life to higher education, the University of Florida, and *CEE*. His sense

of calling survived him, as Managing Editor Lynn Heasley recalls from a conversation in her training days with her predecessor, Carole Yocum, a full 10 years after Fahien's passing.

*“Carole told me that soon after being hired she asked Ray whether she should use ‘Dr.’ or ‘Professor’ when addressing formal letters. He was emphatic, Carole said—‘Use Professor, as that is the greater achievement.’ Our formal verdict letters to authors still uphold that tradition today, even though now they arrive as email attachments.”*



Evidence of Fahien's devotion to higher education abounds. He received many awards including Teacher of the Year for UF's College of Engineering in 1974, a distinguished service citation from ASEE in 1990, and the Warren K. Lewis award from AIChE in 1992. His research interests were in turbulent transport phenomena but as a result of his affiliation with *CEE*, our published memoriam notice says, “he began turning his energies and enthusiasm more to pedagogical issues in chemical engineering education,” and the combination led to one of his greatest achievements: “The culmination of the two overriding professional interests, transport phenomena and teaching, was the eventual publication of his ... widely accepted textbook, *Fundamentals of Transport Phenomena*, in 1983.” By some editing quirk, *Perry's Chemical Engineers'*

*Handbook* had never had a separate section on mass transfer. When the editor of the 7th edition, Don Green, decided to fix this omission, he naturally turned to Ray to write the new section. Unfortunately, Ray's health had deteriorated and while declining he suggested Phil Wankat, now the editor of *CEE*.

As with teaching, Ray took his role at *CEE* as a calling. In the 1987 annual report, he writes,

*“As I have frequently stated at meetings and in my reports, I edit CEE because I enjoy it and not because I receive income from it. I remain willing to continue to serve, as I did for many years, without a stipend. I am honored, in fact, to be its editor.”*

Throughout the early years of rebuilding the journal Ray was an especially hands-on editor. A typical example of

his determination despite obstacles comes from the days before faxes or email: While teaching in Venezuela from July–November 1975, he continued to oversee layout and issue construction, not just copy editing, via mail exchanged with Managing Editor Bonnie Neelands—a time-intensive practice not deterred even after noting “it takes a minimum of three weeks round trip for air mail correspondence to and from Caracas.” Not surprisingly, in those days *CEE* didn’t always print on time.

RF to BN and the other editors Aug. 5: “*The content of the Fall issue is largely decided except for the Astarita paper.... Bonnie will send me the layouts (Xeroxed copy) for the Fall editorial material as soon as it is ready and at least 4 weeks before the ad deadline ....*”

BN to RF Oct. 13 (several weeks past our current press deadline): “*There has been a slight delay in getting the Fall issue out.*”

## TEAMWORK

As times changed, roles evolved. First, Fahien together with the managing editor and a part-time student assistant took over duties of the still-unfilled business manager position formerly held by Professor Robert Bennett. As Fahien noted in the 1975 annual report at the end of his Venezuela trip, “It is unlikely that any other member of the Florida faculty would have the time to devote to this activity.” Later, the business manager role was fully encompassed within the managing editor position.

In the 1980 report Ray Fahien credits Associate Editor Mack Tyner as “doing more of the editorial work (such as advising the editor about papers, layout, etc., corresponding with authors as to suggested changes and revisions, and soliciting book reviews).” Regarding Tyner’s role at that time, Fahien said, “He deserves much recognition and appreciation for the many hours he devotes selflessly to *CEE*.” Of course, the same description applied to Ray.

Eventually desktop publishing arrived and Fahien allowed direct oversight of page layout and issue creation to rest on the competent shoulders of Managing Editor Carole Yocum.

Throughout, he was generous with appreciation. From 1981,

*“It is appropriate to mention again the support CEE has received and continues to receive from the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Florida, and particularly from its late chair, John Biery, and its present acting chair, John P. O’Connell. The department permits a goodly portion of the time of the editor and associate editor to be devoted to their work on CEE.”*

Fahien’s determination showed in support for those on his team. In one of the very few Publication Board meetings to be recorded and transcribed, Ray’s voice cuts through the group’s mostly left-brain evaluation of whether *CEE* could/should start health and retirement coverage for Yocum,

its sole employee:

(Ray F.): “*I think nothing is too good for Carole. I’m just biased. I could be objective about it, but nothing is too good for her and it’s just a matter of how much we should go. She’s doing a tremendous job. It would be a real loss if we would lose her. She likes her job and she’s not threatening to leave or anything like that.*”

The board passed the resolution with all “ayes,” none opposed.

It seems the loyalty was mutual. A personal note he sent prompted this response from departing Business Manager Bob Bennett in May 1979: “Ray, your letter of appreciation will always be treasured. I could not have worked for a better ‘boss.’” At the time of his death Fahien’s closest relative was a sister in Missouri, so Managing Editor Yocum even coordinated placing his newspaper memorial notice in *The Gainesville Sun*, while privately sharing this heartfelt sentiment in a memo: “His struggle is over and he is at rest, finally. For that I am thankful.” For his memorial service, his friend and colleague Professor Dick Seagrave offered these remarks on behalf of Fahien’s Ph.D. students and others Ray encouraged to enter the teaching profession:

*“...He produced and influenced by his efforts a significant number of faculty members who value his ideals, and many others in the profession whose approach to solving problems is more humane and caring as a result of his example.”*

Despite his devotion to *CEE*, Ray Fahien did not assume his editorship would remain unquestioned as his illness progressed. His many communications to colleagues and *CEE*’s Publication Board regarding the journal’s financial health, staffing needs, and inventory/age of papers typically included updates on his illness and how it did not deter his interest or ability to continue to serve. A personal note to the Publication Board in 1993 offers his characteristic full disclosure and sharing of credit:

*“I have the same symptoms I mentioned in my last memo. My physician said to me, ‘The only problem with you, Ray, is your Parkinson’s condition. Your heart, lungs, and other organs function normally.’ With the help of Carole Yocum, Tim Anderson, Mack Tyner, and my personal assistant Florence F. Vendeland and three part-time home health aides, I have continued to work as professor emeritus and the editor of CEE. I feel that this relationship can continue for the foreseeable future.”*

Professor and Editor Ray Fahien took over *CEE* at a time when the journal was near closing for lack of full attention to the effort required. Under his stewardship an excellent team was assembled and *CEE* thrived. In recognition of his great contribution to the journal, those he worked beside honored Ray Fahien as editor through to the end of his life. In celebrating our 50th volume we pay tribute to his “quiet and determined pursuit of excellence” on behalf of *CEE*. □