

Y-12's Training and Technology: Bob Gouldy's dad and TAT
Or: Bob Gouldy's father and TAT (title as it appeared in *The Oak Ridger*)

As I have said often before, the history of the TAT program at Y-12 has brought so many comments and personal experiences that I am finding it hard to keep track of them all. That's good! I am proud to help shed light on this truly unique and singularly successful program that existed at Y-12 from the 1960's through the early 1980's.

Here is a comment received from Bob Gouldy:

"...My Dad, Robert L. (Bob) Gouldy, was a machining instructor there [at TAT] until he retired in 1980. If he were still alive, he could tell you many stories about his experiences there. Some would be success stories of the numerous people who went through the program and went on to have good careers in the machining trade, some of which are still here.

"I can remember him telling funny stories as well as those not so funny about having to break up fights between students that were 'shipped in' from other areas that weren't the least bit interested in learning a trade. You know what I'm talking about.

"Dad thoroughly enjoyed his tenure with TAT and I believe he made a lasting impression on many young men. For many of the more than 34 years that I've worked between here and K-25, I've had many people come up and ask if I am related to the Bob that taught machining at TAT.

"Keep those stories coming about the 'good ole days' out here." – Bob Gouldy

Now that is but a brief commentary from a proud son, but it has far more meaning. I have been contacted by many former instructors at TAT, and without exception, all have had similar stories. They can recall individual trainees and cite the sense of accomplishment they, as instructors, felt when they saw those "shipped in" from inner cities to rural East Tennessee take a turn in their attitude.

Without fail the stories always include the first faltering steps taken by these individuals, many of whom had never been given a chance to succeed at something like TAT, something that they personally could do and see a tangible product at the end of the day. The instructors and trainees who talk to me all stress the high standard of expectations to which the program participants were held.

They cite the universal truth that people live up to expectations when in an encouraging yet demanding atmosphere. TAT was just that.

Evelyn Watson, who contributed to an earlier article on TAT, continues to talk to me about her experience there. As she has thought about it more she describes some of the relationships she recalls and notes that the instructors did much more than teach a class. She describes examples where a close bond was created and assistance with simple things like how to open a bank account or how to balance checkbooks and even such things as finding a place to stay.

All of these were necessary elements of the transition from a past environment of cold hard realities of life and death on the streets in inner cities to the learning and supportive atmosphere of TAT. The transition was not always as smooth as the instructors hoped, I am sure. These trainees brought with them the behaviors learned on the street and those behaviors may not have always fit in the new environment of East Tennessee and Y-12.

But I am sure the instructors and the trainees soon learned how to work together to make a much better learning environment. Evelyn Watson's example of helping with the check book could easily have been found with many other instructor and trainee situations and the same kindness was obviously a part of what made TAT so special.

If you have stories about TAT, I would like you to share them with me. Some of the stories seem humorous in retrospect, but were very serious situations at the time. All of the stories give insight into a time and place that was unique and that laid the groundwork for other such training programs.

TAT was a huge success story and one that generated pride in individuals who worked there and who were trained there. Tell us your story.

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