

## **Y-12's Training and Technology instructor's story – Terry Barnes**

Here is Terry Barnes' story about TAT (Training and Technology) at Y-12. Terry was both a trainee and an instructor. He has worked at Y-12 ever since graduation from TAT.

Terry said, "For 17 years, starting in 1966, the Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) and Union Carbide Corporation, Nuclear Division jointly operated the Training and Technology (TAT) program in building 9709 here at Y-12. TAT was an industrial skills training program that prepared unemployed and economically disadvantaged individuals for industrial employment. Over that 17 year period, more than 6000 trainees graduated from the program and over 90 percent of the graduates were placed in well-paying jobs.

"The role of Union Carbide in the partnership was providing the technical instruction and industrial personnel while ORAU provided technical-related mathematics, science, and blueprint reading instruction along with program management and job placement assistance. Training was conducted 40 hours per week for 26 weeks. All classes were eight hours per day.

"The areas of training included; Welding, Machining, Physical Testing, Pipefitting, and Drafting. Originally there were other training areas including glassblowing, industrial electricity and chemical-technician training but, with the program being geared to meet the demands of industry, these areas were dropped when demand for them waned. General Equivalency Diploma (GED) tutoring and examinations were also offered.

"After being accepted into the program and choosing an area of training, the trainee would spend 2 hours a day in classroom studies and 6 hours in a hand-on shop or laboratory area. In the work areas they not only learned the manual skills needed for success but also the importance of proper industrial behavior and work attitude. They punched a time clock and were docked for tardiness. A major infraction of the rules of conduct could result in termination from the program.

"Having graduated from high school in 1968, with little job experience, I found it difficult to find a job. Being classified as '1A' in the draft also contributed to my dilemma. Luckily I was accepted into the TAT program in the fall of that year. I completed the program and was hired into the Physical Testing Organization at Y-12 in April of 1969.

"I went back to the TAT program as a Physical Testing instructor in 1977 and remained there until it was phased out in early 1984. There are lots of amusing stories about things that took place at TAT. There were people from every race, every religion and every social stratum there so you can imagine. Most of them, however, can't be printed in this media.

"I will relate one that happened to me when I was an instructor. We were always looking for new ways to present our skills and crafts to the students. For instance, showing them how to machine parts for their cars or x-raying tires to find what was making them go flat. This made the training relevant to them. Each area loved to find new and different projects.

"One afternoon at shift change, I was talking to some of the welding and Physical Testing instructors about the furniture in our offices. We weren't allowed to order anything new. Everything had to come from Y-12 excess properties so all the desks in the place were painted the old army gray and were metal

desks. I told them that I wish we had more colorful furniture to liven up the place. Then I said that if I could order a new desk I would order a red one so everyone would know whose it was. That got a big laugh from them all.

“The next day when I went into my office, my desk had been painted fire engine red. A great job too. The rust had been sanded off. The handles had been masked. It looked like a brand new desk. And I was right too, everyone knew whose desk was the red one.

That concludes Terry’s perspective on TAT. I think you will agree that this program had a significant impact on him.

Terry’s experience at TAT prepared him for a career at Y-12, one I am sure he will tell you has been a good one. Like many of the other 6,000 who went through the program, he developed skills that have served him well.

There are others at Y-12 who went through TAT and who taught there. Won’t you tell your story? I think there are a lot of stories we can include, in spite of what Terry said about many stories from TAT that “... can’t be printed in this media.”

I recall the story A. K. Johnson told me about the time a trainee came running into his office in Building 9737 screaming that the person chasing him had a butcher knife and was going to kill him. AK was afraid the butcher knife wielding trainee would do just that right there in his office.

He had the presence of mind to push the “duress button” that was under his desk and summoned security to come and take the agitated trainee off site. AK laughed when he told that story, but assured me that when it was happening, it was surely not a laughing matter.

While this particular story may not have had a happy ending for the knife-wielding trainee, many more stories told about TAT Trainees and instructors turned out very successfully. This training program held out hope and promise to desperate individuals. Many trainees and instructors benefited from the experience.

This series has already provided an enormous amount of feedback from TAT instructors (as seen above in Terry’s story) and people who went through the program. Tell me about your experience at TAT!

D. Ray Smith can be contacted at (865) 482-4224.