

Y-12's Training and Technology – TAT and John Ray

Stories from TAT graduates continue to arrive. Here is one that shows how the Oak Ridge High School worked with TAT. It especially focuses on Gene Moody and how he influenced a young student to attend TAT.

Here is John Ray's story:

"I was a graduate of the Union Carbide Y-12 based Training and Technology Program in 1978. My family moved to Oak Ridge in the fall of 1976 when my father retired from 22 years service in the Air Force. He served as an Aerovac medic and administrator of the base hospital at Pope AFB in North Carolina.

He completed a tour of Vietnam during the war and a tour of Turkey, earning a bronze medal and the distinguished flying cross. During both tours we lived in Oak Ridge to be close to my mother's relatives, and I have always felt Oak Ridge was home.

"I was 16 when we moved here and attended Oak Ridge High School as a junior. My favorite class at the high school was drafting under the watchful eye of (I'll give you a 95 on that drawing 'cause there is no perfect drawing) Gene Moody.

"I signed up for the advanced drafting my senior year and was approached by Mr. Moody in March of 1978 to offer me and another student (Greg Jones) an opportunity to attend TAT at Y-12. The drafting program at TAT had dismissed two students for unexcused absences and needed to fill the empty spots with students that already had the basics of drafting down since they were already two months along.

"The program normally ran for 10 months and had started in February 1978. The offer was to leave high school three months before graduation, finish the requirements in the evenings to complete our high school education and attend TAT.

"I thought about it for a short time and turned Mr. Moody down. I had applied and planned to attend the University of Tennessee in the fall, pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering. TAT ran until November, requiring me to bump beginning at UT until the winter quarter.

"I told Mr. Moody, 'thanks, but no thanks, offer it to the next in line.' That night after dinner with my family, we had a knock at the door. Mr. Moody came by to talk about the opportunity with my parents and me before he officially offered the program to another student. He explained the TAT program more fully and with the help of my parents, changed my mind. A decision I have never regretted." – John Ray

Well, I liked that story a lot. I am sure John went on to pursue a successful life and attributes much of his success to his TAT experience as do most others who graduated from TAT. I am continually amazed at the number of individuals who got their start at TAT and who are still living in the area.

Do you have a story from TAT? We are collecting the stories from people who send them in and are compiling them into a document that will be retained at the Y-12 History Center and will be available in the Y-12 History Library being developed there. The *History of TAT* will be available to the public much as the Jack Case story and the Dr. John Googin stories are now.

Send your TAT related story to draysmith@comcast.net or drop it off at the Y-12 New Hope Center receptionist with a note for Ray Smith. I can also be reached at 865-482-4224.