

Brenda's Copy

# DAYTON engineer

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## Ernie Frazee – Success Story

As a young fellow, Ermal "Ernie" Frazee sold newspapers in Muncie, Indiana, along with a number of other boys. He built the largest route in town by getting permission to deliver all the papers to the largest employer in town—the Ball Brothers Company. Needless to say, Mr. Edmund Ball had a carefully placed paper on his desk each day. Being the natural enterpriser, Ernie expanded his newspaper business by getting permission to sell sandwiches to the workers in the same plant, and so he did quite well for a young fellow in the midst of the Great Depression.

After high school Ernie moved to Richmond, Indiana, and one day took the Interurban to Dayton with a friend who was looking for a job. He had no training, no experience, no formal education—nothing to offer but diligence in his work. The first job was assembling novelties for Cracker Jack boxes. He then moved on to tool and die training at the Johnson Tool Company paying intense attention to detail in every phase of that training. Later he looked elsewhere for job opportunities, but nothing seemed to satisfy his need to accomplish an inner drive.

Ernie decided that he must get a formal education. He applied to and was accepted at Ohio Northern College, but he was a young fellow with few funds to support his attending college. He made an agreement with the Dean to help assist in machine shop class inasmuch as he had some experience in this area. In addition he held down two jobs while attending classes, but even that was not enough to sustain him at school.

He withdrew and went to work for Frigidaire. There he got himself an opportunity to become a coop student. He and 300 applicants were tested. Ernie, along with five others, was admitted to the General Motors Institute Engineering Coop Program.

After graduating as a mechanical engineer from that outstanding engineering school in the late thirties, he joined the G.M. Overseas Division as a service engineer in South America—returning to the States just before we became involved in World War II.

Ernie came back to the tool game which was home to him. He also returned home to marry his gal, Martha Wolf. Together with his innate drive to achieve a yet undefined goal and a young wife who supported all his quests unselfishly, he went into business on a 50/50 basis with a former co-employee of the Lauder Corp., Claud Wilson, and later bought him out to start Dayton Reliable Tool and Mfg. Co. in late 1949.

Through these tough struggling early years he accomplished many feats and built a very successful tool business through his stick-to-itiveness, intense determination, engineering ability and personal integrity.

Then in 1959, while on a family picnic with some friends, he wanted to open a can of beer, but there was no church key. He used a car bumper to open it and said, "There must be a better way." He found it with the invention of the easy-open can end. Over the years this invention has created about 500,000 skilled jobs in the world, caused an investment of about 7 billion dollars with new aluminum rolling mills and an expansion of the can industry worldwide. Last year this manufacturing technology produced about 150 billion easy-open can ends. For all the 325 people at Dayton Reliable Tool it has provided good dependable skilled jobs with many opportunities for its people. For our country it provides exports. Last year more than 55% of all the company's work was shipped overseas. All of this is an outgrowth of Ernie's diligence, intelligence

and dedication to the company's people.

He has served on the boards of many companies including the former Third National Bank of Dayton. He is honored by serving the community as a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Dayton, and a member of the President's Board at Wright State University. He also works closely with Sinclair Community College here in Dayton. He is chairman of the Junior Achievement of Dayton and the Miami Valley. He has been honored by the Engineering Society of Dayton, the Packaging Institute, and by the Dayton Creative Fest in 1984. He received the American Enterprise Award. He has been honored by the Newcomen Society.

Just last year he was presented the Distinguished Aluminum Award by the GMI Aluminum Association. It is the highest recognition the association awards, and had been awarded only five times previously since its inception. Ernie is the only non-General Motors employee to be so awarded. previous recipients were Ed Cole, former President of G.M.; Pete Estes, also past President of G.M.; Harrold Warder, past Vice President of G.M.; Jim McDonald, immediate past President of G.M.; and Alex Cunningham, former Vice President of G.M. Ernie is in fine company with these distinguished leaders.

On February 20, 1988, Ernie will gain the distinction of Fellow of the Engineers Club of Dayton. He is only the sixth person to receive this honor. Make plans to attend his induction ceremony followed by a gourmet dinner.