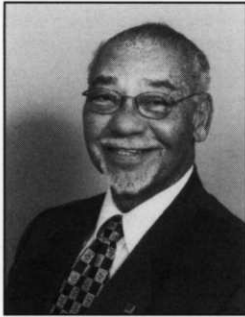


An interview with Clark Beck

By Becky Smith



Clark Beck

Becky: What drew your attention to the Engineers Club?

Clark: I joined the EC because, as an engineer, I wished to keep an Engineers Club here in Dayton and reasoned that my membership would help do that, and I should join. I have been a member now for about 26 years, and I was president of the Club for the 1990-91 term.

The Club is honored to have you! You have contributed so much to the field of engineering—if you had to choose what would you say you are most proud of?

I researched, organized and implemented a pre-college academic intervention program (Wright STEP: Science, technology and engineering precollege program) in 1988 designed to increase the number of women and minority Dayton Public School graduates who are academically prepared and sufficiently motivated to successfully complete a math- or science-based four-year curriculum.

Wright STEP provides a free summer academic enrichment experience in mathematics, communications, problem solving, computers and engineering applications along with tours of engineering facilities. The 1988 program accommodated 40 seventh-graders, and now the program accommodates about 160 students from seventh through tenth grades. Successful participants can receive up to four years free tuition at Wright State; however, a lot of the students who successfully complete the program and are recognized as some of the best and brightest do not attend Wright State. Even though they may have received free tuition, they go on to attend schools like MIT. The program has been around for 21 years now and it has finally circled around to directly affect me—my grandson, who is a great student, was nominated for the program.

Congratulations! That must make you very proud, especially since starting your education was a difficult experience for you.

After making the decision to pursue a master's degree in engineering, Purdue University was my first choice. The dean told me because of my color I couldn't be an engineer, but I could enroll in the industrial arts course. I then went to the University of Cincinnati. The dean at UC told me I could enroll in the engineering program but I was likely to catch hell from the faculty and students. I did, but I finished the program anyway. I now hold a Masters of Engineering degree in Mechanical Engineering, a Master's of Science Degree in Aerospace Engineering, and an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Science, all from the University of Cincinnati.

I certainly see why you are so passionate about education and why you volunteer so much of your time and efforts. Where did your education lead you career wise?

I was an Assistant Dean for the College of Engineering and Computer Science for Wright State University for five consecutive years and then again for the 2000-01 school year. I was the Manager of the Integrated Logistics Technology Office with the Air Force Systems Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for thirty years.

What role has the EC played in your career/life since you became a member?

I used to bring the students from the Wright STEP program to the Club for etiquette training. Bringing students to the Club was as satisfying to me as it was to them, especially the boys. I have conducted tours of the Club for Sinclair's College for Life Learning (CLLL) students. I have also been instrumental in having some organizations I've been involved in schedule their events and meetings here; for example, I scheduled some events here when the National Society for Professional Engineers held its national meeting in Dayton.

Is there one accomplishment that you are most proud of from your time as President of the Club?

Although it didn't happen while I was president, it really pleased me when the Club applied and got on the list of historical buildings. I had proposed the idea a decade earlier.

Do your wife, children, and grandchildren enjoy the Club as well?

My wife enjoys eating at the Club, my son is a member, my daughter likes to visit and dine there, and my grandchildren like to come for anything. However, none of them come as often as I do, nor do they enjoy it as much as I do.

What do you enjoy most?

I really enjoy the view from the Loggia. I like to come in and read the newspaper and relax, just like at home. The Club is my home away from home.

What is something many may not know about you?

I'm thankful. Due to my living conditions during my first year at UC, I developed a disease that caused my kidneys to fail. I received a cadaver kidney and was given a 50% chance of living for six months—that was 37 years ago. The best things I did in my life came after my kidney transplant. I've furthered my education, gotten married, had children and grandchildren. I have been able to live my life. I now give talks on the importance of organ donation. Don't take your organs to heaven. Heaven knows we need them here.

Club Ambassadors

Special thanks to those who sponsored new members of the Club since June 1, 2009.

Pat Adamson
Dave Corcoran
Bob Hocking
Phil Mowry (2)

Harry Seifert
Jerry Smith
Debi Talentino