



## Bill Bradley: The End of an Era

By AGMA Chairman Stan Blenke and  
President Joe Franklin

**P**hysical presence is the first thing you notice about Bill Bradley. His size 14 feet support his 6'6" frame. Working with Bill, you can't miss his drive to excel and his never-ending love and commitment to this industry. Both AGMA and the global gear manufacturing industry are better today because of direct actions of Bill Bradley.

When they learned of Bill's decision to retire, the quick response of the AGMA Board of Directors was to unanimously designate him to receive AGMA's highest award, the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Over the last few months many of Bill's friends and colleagues have shared stories and recol-

lections of working with Bill. One of his closer friends, Don McVittie—the first recipient of AGMA's Lifetime Achievement Award—detailed the true value of Bill's time with AGMA. "When Bill came to AGMA about 1985 we had no computers, just a brand new stand alone word processing system which would only accept ANSI text files on large floppy disks, unformatted. We were still printing our standards by photo offset, with hand-set art for the equations and drawings. By 1988 we were word processing on PCs. Our typical standard was more than 20 years old, since its last revision. Now, under his direction, we have a very efficient system and most standards are less than five years old since revision or reaffirmation. Our committees get first class support editorially and in meeting arrangements."

Don't be fooled by the 13" Dietzgen Micromatic slide rule in his office. Whether it's computers or snow skis or photographic equipment, Bill is very much a technophile and always up-to-date. Under Bill's guidance, the Technical Division is today almost exclusively paperless. The significant volume of communication and document sharing by our 23 Technical Committees, including ballots to the industry and the ultimate distribution of new standards to AGMA members and the industry is electronic.

Bill took on two roles when AGMA's Board of Directors approved a much stronger program on work within the ISO community. Bill was the point of contact on the staff and with many of the committees but, more important, he with Don McVittie and several others took on the job of educating the industry as to why this move was necessary.

Knowing the industry as he does, Bill carried the message that global standards were "a common language for trade" and that the US manufacturers would be the losers if we failed to develop the ability to sell to international standards



and, equally important, begin to move away from national or regional standards and to one set of global standards under ISO.

Following five years of development, AGMA's Board of Directors recently approved the last of a suite of five documents that, together, replace AGMA 2000-A88 and form the basis for measurement in the industry for years to come. The new approach is more in line with the ISO and DIN approaches.

An action of this magnitude and significant is a testament to Bill's vision and strength of purpose. This is one of the most significant changes in the way gears will be specified and evaluated in years. While there are still differences, the US industry is well on its way to being in full compliance with the ISO standards.

On a personal note, Bill and his wife, Jean, have three daughters and four grandchildren. But separating their life into neat compartments has never worked well.

Don McVittie noted Jean's contributions to successful international relations, "It's really

important, especially in the ISO arena, to socialize after hours with the other delegates. Bill and Jean genuinely enjoy the company of our colleagues and have developed close friendships with a host of them. This has lead to some adventures:



- Jean teaching the "duck dance" to a polyglot group in a cow pasture in Slovenia and the subsequent 'cow pasture polka.'
- All of the competitive manufacturers of gear grinding machines joining arms in the atrium lobby of a large hotel in Cincinnati to sing German college drinking songs at midnight.
- Bill and Jean appearing on Chinese television before and after the 1988 ISO meeting in Zhengzhou, head and shoulders taller than the surrounding crowd of locals."

His knees are a bit wobbly now and then from years of aggressive play as a defensive lineman for the University of Pennsylvania. But there is no weakness in his commitment to or love of this industry. Bill and Jean plan to relocate to the Denver-area later in 2007.

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