

QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **WINTER 2015**

INNOVATION

50/35/50

50 NOTABLE MEMBERS

35 YEARS OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE

50 MEMORABLE MOMENTS





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QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

WINTER 2015

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The quarterly publication of the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), INNOVATION provides in-depth coverage of design issues and long-term trends while communicating the value of design to business and society at large.

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Cover: For IDSA and the Ford Mustang, turning 50 is only the beginning.

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Carroll Gantz, FIDSA

IN MEMORY

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“Within my lifetime, the profession of industrial design in America was initiated. I was fortunate to be a part of this profession during my entire education and career. In a literal sense, industrial design has been my life.”

—Carroll Gantz, FIDSA

Our friend and mentor Carroll Gantz, FIDSA, lived a design life—from his early interest in transportation (at age 4) to his meticulous student projects, in his service to his country in Korea, in his wide-ranging career as a designer, manager and educator, and in his contributions to our professional society. His impact on the world of design through products and prodigious historical research are unique. In his retirement, he wrote five books on design history (in addition to writings on other topics) and had just completed the 387-page story of a friend's family history. He introduced the general public and young designers to the rich, vibrant history of design and engaged all of us to become better professionals through his writings, his work and his presence.

Words cannot express our gratitude and admiration. It is fitting that Carroll's final gift to IDSA was his contribution to this anniversary issue.

He dedicated his 2011 book *The Industrialization of Design: A History from the Steam Age to Today* to “the Industrial Designers Society of America, its predecessor organizations, and its leaders: The ‘little engine that could,’ and did, establish, organize, define, transform and sustain the profession of industrial design.”

Read the book to better understand this issue of INNOVATION and the 50 years of IDSA.

—Guest Editors: Bret H. Smith, IDSA, professor of industrial design and interim associate dean for academic affairs, Auburn University, and co-chair of the Design History Section and Vicki Matranga, H/IDSA, design programs coordinator, International Housewares Association, and co-chair of the Design History Section

Share your memories of Carroll Gantz at <http://www.idsa.org/news/remembergantz>.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE 50 YEARS MAKES!

What was it like to become a designer in 1955? As one of the dwindling survivors, I've been asked to reveal the truth about those remote and primitive years!

Inspired to enter the field by IDSA Fellow Raymond Loewy's 1951 book *Never Leave Well Enough Alone*, which glamorized the profession far beyond reality, I had graduated from the only degree-granting program in industrial design at that time, Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University). The few other programs were less than four years and/or offered a certificate rather than a bachelor's of arts or fine arts. Accreditation for design programs did not exist. My first two years of foundation courses included painting, figure drawing, color, anatomy and art history but little about industrial design. The second two years were better, except for the glaring omission of rendering techniques required by major design employers. There were no national student competitions, no student chapters and few lectures, exhibits or articles about design. I was in a graduation class of seven, all males.

There were no campus corporate interviews for designers, but Uncle Sam was waiting for us; the military draft was still in effect after the Korean War. It was tough to get any job because employers anticipated that young men would be drafted within weeks of graduation from college. After months of unsuccessful interviews as I waited to be drafted, I decided to get it over with and enlisted in the military.

When I got out of the military in 1955, the prospects for industrial designers weren't much better than when I'd tried to find a job three years earlier. *Industrial Design* magazine had just begun publication, but it had few classifieds. There was only one national design headhunter (Theodore S. Jones in Boston), and almost all the design jobs were in a handful of major cities. Still, somehow I learned of a job opening at the family-owned Hoover Company in rural Ohio. When I was offered the job at the mind-boggling salary of \$450 per month, I jumped at the opportunity.



The only other designer at Hoover was my boss, Russ Swann, who had no formal design training. We worked in an open bull pen at huge 4' x 6' drafting tables with dozens of engineers and draftsmen. There was no privacy or secrecy in what we were designing. Engineers peered curiously over my shoulder as I worked on clay models (the non-drying greenish-gray stuff). I was supposed to make their designs "prettier," but they fought any significant change I suggested. I had to learn rendering techniques on the job by imitating examples in *ID* magazine. I *lofted* complex surfaces by sawing plaster models into half inch slices and traced the sectioned templates directly onto tooling drawings.

Contact with design peers was virtually nonexistent, but there were several national design organizations. The American Society of Industrial Designers (IDSA's predecessor) had fewer than 100 members. Admission to this professional organization required evidence of product designs actually in production in three different product categories—which took me over seven years to achieve since product lead times were about four years—plus three letters of recommendation from current members. Chapter meetings were 150 miles away. The Industrial Designer's Institute, another IDSA predecessor, presented annual national design awards, but I only learned of these years later when I unintentionally won one of them.

Well-designed US household products were hard to find in the 1950s. The aggressive five-year Good Design program by the Museum of Modern Art had already been discontinued. In Germany, the New Bauhaus school had just opened in Ulm, and Braun AG was reorganized to initiate what would become the most influential corporate design program over the next generation. IBM computers existed, but they cost millions, filled a large room, had 8,000 vacuum tubes and a memory of only 5,000 words. Blissfully, I didn't know much about any of this or what was going on in the design profession until I had worked for five years or so.

Naturally, I used the typical 1955 tools of the trade, and I still save most of them in the event of global electronic failure. The tedious manual labor of exaggerated renderings and lovingly sanded models provided me with enormous tactile and artistic satisfaction, but today's tools provide designers the capability to create designs unimaginable then—and at 10 times the speed.

And there are so many more designers taking advantage of these new tools. Today, there are 53 design education programs in industrial design, 35 of which are accredited. There are dozens of competitions and awards for students and professionals alike. Annual design awards get national press and full credits to designers. IDSA's latest *Design Perspectives* lists 34 open industrial design positions. May the good old days rest in peace!


—Carroll M. Gantz, FIDSA

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