


**Distinguished Service Award**

## 2009 Distinguished Service Award

**William A. Ross**

*Presentation Speech*

Dear Members of the Engineering Design Graphics Division:

Thank you for presenting me with this year's EDGD Distinguished Service Award. I am both humbled and honored by this recognition and regret that I am not able to be there for the presentation. Although it has not been possible for me to maintain active participation at the Division's annual and midyear meetings for the last 5 years, I remain as loyal to the Division and its members as I was when I first joined in 1981. I can't believe it's been that long! Where does the time go?

My first EDGD midyear meeting was in Pittsburgh, PA back in January of 1984. Garland Hilliard, my boss and mentor at N. C. State at the time, encouraged me to write a paper and make a presentation on the new 3-D CAD instruction that we were developing at State. Boy was I nervous! As I look back, it is easy to see why I became an instant fan and now a loyal longtime advocate for the Division at that meeting. Colorful and now 'legendary' figures like Bob Larue, Mary Jasper, Larry Goss, Frank Croft, Jon Duff, Jack Brown, and many others, made me feel welcome and valued. No pretenses and no airs! As Tim Sexton said in his acceptance speech last year, "I never knew that there were so many other people that were as passionate about graphics as me." Personally, it was great to suddenly discover a professional identity and home. I have never wavered from that identity.

In the past, the Division has honored me by nominating and electing me to serve for two terms as Director of Programs, from approximately 1989 through 1994. I learned so much as Director of Programs and had the opportunity and privilege

to orchestrate and help organize technical sessions and programs for many annual and midyear meetings. It was a terrific way to get to know many of you. I was also nominated and elected to serve as Vice Chair of the Division for 1993-94 followed by a year as Chair of the Division in 1994-95. What a wonderful honor and career rewarding experience.

Before finding a niche in engineering graphics, I had numerous experiences that helped to define my career. I joined the U. S. Air Force and became involved in technical training. After finishing college, I was employed as a young high school drafting teacher, a community college mechanical drafting instructor, and later as an architectural designer and project manager at a construction firm. Since discovering my professional niche at the EDGD midyear meeting in 1984, I've had twenty five marvelous years of pursuing a passion for graphics at N. C. State and Purdue Universities. Participating in the evolution of engineering graphics starting in the industrial age and evolving into the three-dimensional interactive information age has been a career challenging quest. Engineering graphics continues to evolve through this critical shifting period of time and we want to 'get it right'.

Without doubt, the most memorable part of my time in higher education has been spent with students. I didn't always like every one of them, but I loved them all! After all, they were the reason I was there. However, without the freedom and support to develop and evolve new teaching strategies and methods through our supporting universities, colleagues, and especially professional organizations, we would have dried up and blown

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away long ago. With the support and encouragement of organizations like EDGD, I am delighted to have developed new instructional materials, written numerous grants and technical articles, presented papers at more than 50 conferences and meetings around the world, and authored or contributed to nine text books with more than 20 of my professional colleagues. What a blast! In addition to the support of two marvelous universities and many fantastic colleagues, I am particularly indebted to the Engineering Design Graphics Division for making my life's work possible. In fact, until you unanimously tell me to stop, I am so inspired by this award that I plan to continue to develop and publish solid modeling instructional materials and teach part-time well into the future!

Like many other award winners, I went back and reviewed the list of more than 50 DSA honorees. It is a long list of distinguished, creative, and more recently, eclectic professionals that support the technology and engineering fields. I am proud to say that I got to shake hands and thank many of those individuals. Unbelievably, I now find myself on a list of people that I have admired and looked to for inspiration. Deserved or not, that's a heady feeling.

My thanks to Pat Connolly, colleague and co-author, for graciously agreeing to present these comments and accept the EDGD 2009 Distinguished Service Award in my absence. Finally, thank you all...those present tonight and those unable to attend the presentation of this treasured distinguished service award.

Sincerely,

William A. (Bill) Ross

