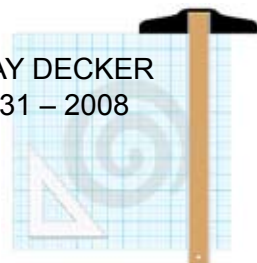


Prince of a guy

Mesa's reliable engineer and friend

RAY DECKER
1931 – 2008



Sadly, the man who was “Mesa Engineering” for nearly three decades passed away earlier this month. Ray Decker was revered by his fellow employees for not only his vast expertise in the engineering field but also for his unique personality as a very caring, honest and helpful man. His contributions and loyalty to Mesa were immense.



“He reminded us to think beyond the boundaries of an issue,” says Terry Segerberg, CEO. “He was tremendously detailed on each particular concept that he was working on and brought an idea to life by drawing input from all those around him. He was also a warrior for the employees who always made it known when another employee had an issue.”

“Ray was very fundamental in the success of Mesa,” says Kent Sexton, President of Sales. “He had his own unique approach regarding the development of many of the products we market today. He was a genuinely fine person as well as a great teacher and mentor. I truly appreciated Ray.”

Ray Sexton, Mesa's founder, reflects on the life and career of Ray Decker: “Mesa has really lost a tremendous person, not only from the business standpoint, but to me personally, he was just one of those individuals that you don't come across very often...He was a great engineer. He would get the job done. Not only as an engineer but as a person, there is no one that could take his place.”

Ray was born and raised in Marin, CA—a suburb of San Francisco. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Shirley, their three children: Ivy Decker Jones, Lori Navarro, Ralph Decker and seven grandchildren. Ray's retirement in 2005 came on rather suddenly. He was forced to leave the engineering work at Mesa in our current staff's capable hands. At that time Ray and his wife moved from Riverside to the Bay area to be closer to their son, Ralph. Ray was hired by Ray Sexton in August of 1977. Prior to that he attended Marin Junior college and later went to the University of California at Berkley, where he majored in engineering. His first step in the engineering field took him to F.M.C. Corporation where he worked for 10 years. He then went on to work for Challenge Cook Brothers, a Mesa customer. While working at Challenge Cook, Ray received significant experience working with concrete boom pumps and concrete pump hose. When Ray took the position at Mesa, he used this experience to help establish Mesa as a major player in the concrete hose market.

“His history of working with equipment and being so versatile made Ray a good fit for us,” says Jim Sexton, Mesa Vice President of Manufacturing. “Mesa purchased Airplaco Equipment Company in 1974. We needed help in Cincinnati as far as redoing some of the old 1949-1965 designs. Ray used to make regular trips here to Cincinnati. He had the knowledge, mechanical and otherwise, to really help us out with the equipment engineering. You could ask him about pretty much anything you wanted. He’d take it in and eventually he would come back with his thoughts on how to resolve a situation or what he felt would be the best design to handle a certain application. He was everything that you would want in an engineer and he was a very easy going individual. He was a prince of a guy.”



Ray Decker (in foreground) at Mesa's Monrovia office

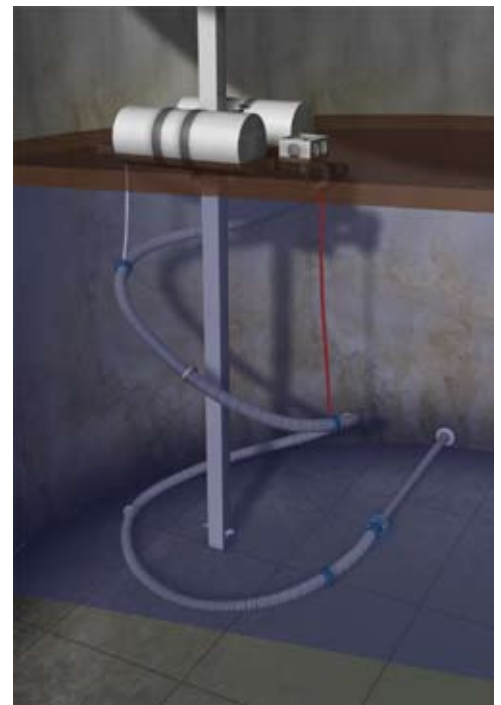
During the first 10 years that Mesa was in business, the company did not have a full-time engineer. Most of the designs were handled in-house by Ray Sexton, Maury Enbody (the founder of Gunitite Supply) Fred Swain and Jim Sexton.

“Ray was the one person who was just across-the-board. In the development of the whole company he was crucial,” says John Cary, Mesa Sales Manager, Ret. “Ray was always available for you. I was in Angola one time and with the time change I was still able to reach him. Another time I was in Korea and he was able to get back to me at a hotel in Korea because he either came into work real early (or very late). He was able to solve problems. He was just an amazing guy.”



Mesa Armor-Clad roof drain system

“Ray was heavily involved with Mesa’s Armor-Clad design and ultimately the Resist-All-Clad design,” says Jim Sexton. “Armor-clad--as far as putting it on paper and specifying materials--that was Ray’s baby, and he did an excellent job. He established formulas that we are still using today for rainfall, sizing drain systems and chemical compatibility—to name a few.” “Ray Decker was responsible for finding something that we could sheath the hose in—the stainless steel armor,” says John Cary. “Then later Resist-All-Clad (RAC) was initiated by Ray Sexton.” Ray Decker formulated the RAC design, including the tether system that keeps the drain system in position in a storage tank. He was also instrumental



Mesa Pontoon Skimmer system

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in developing our floating skimmer system. He came up with several modifications to arrive at the final skimmer design. He gave extra effort by talking with other engineers and customers to refine the skimmer to how it is successfully used today. "He was very conscientious in making sure that our system was first class," says John Cary.		
Ray stressed the importance of record keeping for drain hose, remembers John Cary. "At first we sold so many hoses that we didn't know how many hoses we sold! But then he started demanding that we have drawings and specific documentation beforehand. He was really the one who established our tracking system."		
"I probably use his name at least once a week, such as 'I remember when Ray worked on that' or 'you know, it would be nice to be able to call Ray and ask him about that...he would remember.' When you look back at the wide variety of projects that he worked on, it's pretty amazing. He was able to handle all that and very efficiently," said Jim Sexton.		
"I was on a number of challenging job sites," says John Cary. "I would be with the employees at a tank and we would have to get Ray on speaker phone. He would handle customers very well. He would stick to the facts and ask the right questions. Ray was great sales support."		



Ray Decker (left) performing a product test at Mesa

Ray was very adept at shifting gears in his job as chief engineer at Mesa. He could answer questions about a rubber product one moment and then turn around and continue working on some development for gunite equipment. Ray designed the Ridley

C-7, C-9 and C-10 gunite machines which are still very popular today. The C-10 remains the flagship product for Gunite Supply. Ray was also instrumental in the engineering work for the Airplaco pressure vessels, the Powder-Monkey product line. He also designed many of Airplaco's smaller grout pumps.



Ray was responsible for a major transformation of the Mix-Elvator, the dry-mix

batch plant sold by Gunite Supply. The Mix-Elvator was all mechanically driven when Mesa Industries acquired the

Airplaco product line. Ray transformed it to an all-hydraulic machine, which led to numerous sales all over the country. He later developed the Airplaco 914 batch plant to fill a

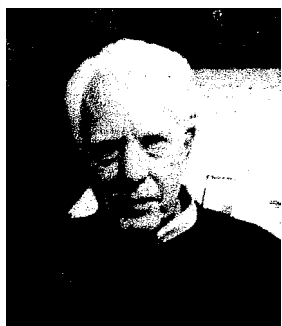


Ray (2nd from right) in the field with the Airplaco 914

need in the market for a larger portable batching truck. Nearly 75% of the current Airplaco 914 design can be traced to Ray.

“He was very open about everything and very knowledgeable about all the products,” says Carl Robinson, Mesa Chief Engineer. “He never had any issue about sharing his knowledge. He was very good about passing along information. I always got along very well with him. His contributions to Airplaco’s equipment line are major.”

“Just to be with him was a joy,” says Hamlet Hartounian, Mesa Draftsman. Hamlet and Ray worked very closely together on designs at Mesa’s Monrovia office. Ray did not use computerized engineering software so Hamlet



became a link from Ray’s ideas to the new technology. “I wouldn’t feel that he was my superior and I had to do whatever HE tells me. No, he wasn’t like that. He was more of a friend. Ray was the best supervisor I ever had. He accepted me the way I am and he gave

me a lot of freedom. He didn’t hold back. He said just do it, and I’ll look at it, and we’ll talk about it. That was it. I did the work. He gave his opinion and we went from there.”

Ray was a religious man. He was a member of the Church of Christ, Scientist. “The other thing he really loved was tennis,” says Jim Sexton. “When he came into town he played at a nearby court (Reeves near Lunken Airport). I believe he played with some of his family members at home in California as well. He enjoyed the game very much.”

When Ray was commuting from Riverside to Monrovia, he had to come in early to avoid all the traffic. Towards the end of his career, it became nearly a 2 ½ hour drive or more. Ray could be at work some days as early as 4:00 in the morning. But he was a morning person. He liked to come into the office when it was quiet. He could get

ready for the day. People at the Houston and Cincinnati offices started to realize that they could reach him on the west coast early in the morning. This sped up the wheels of business by allowing sales and production staff to get answers quickly.

One of Ray’s morning rituals was to have a coffee and doughnut. “That was definitely one of his favorite things to do,” remembers Jim Sexton.

“I would pick him up during the last few weeks that he was with us at Mesa and we would go to this bakery,” says Hamlet. “We would stay for about 10 minutes, chat with the people over there and have a doughnut and coffee. We talked on the way to work and to his home about a lot of things—about life, this and that, I’m going to miss him for sure...I wish I had more of his type in my life. Ray and I took a new design to the field to be tested. It was a wonderful time with him—to go and see the actual workings of the gunite machines. It was very educational. His shadow was behind me as I worked. He was a very unselfish person and he was not a pretentious person. He brought up his concern and we dealt with it—at least between me and him. He was a great engineer. It seems like all of the drawings around here have his name on them. He did a fantastic job. His documentation was outstanding, very to the point. I learned a lot from him.”



Ray’s legacy to Mesa is felt throughout the company. His dedication, tremendous skill and his patience have a lasting impact on the success of our products and the morale of our employees. We owe a tremendous amount of respect to Ray. His career at Mesa is the stuff of legends.

Any omissions in this article are regrettable and unintentional. Mesa means only to honor the great contributions that Ray Decker had on the company. Comments may be sent to: tferguson@mesa-ind.net

June 2008

Mesa Industries, Inc.		Mi		ITEM	PART NO.	DESCRIPTION		QTY
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