

**The 1909 Conference:  
Advancing Thought, Research, and Practice  
in Technology and Engineering Education**

**THE INDUCTION CEREMONY**

**Conference Life Chair:** Calls the session to order. When order is achieved, the chair briefly reminds the members of the process of nomination and the eligibility requirements that each of the (*insert number*) inductees have met and which have been recognized by the vote of the Conference.

**Conference Chair:**

Today we are pleased to recognize these (*insert number*) individuals by inducting them into membership in the 1909 Conference whose mission is advancing thought, research, and practice in technology and engineering education. I will call an inductee's name and announce the sponsor's name who will then escort the inductee to a seat (pointing to the first seat at the Chair's right hand). I ask the sponsor to remain standing behind the seated person. (The Chair repeats the naming and seating process until all inductees are seated with each sponsor standing behind. When all are seated, he thanks the sponsors and asks them to return to their seats.) The chair then introduces the person who will conduct the induction—The Inductor.

**The Inductor:** (speaking deliberately, ceremoniously):

Life Chair Daugherty, members, and guests. We are here to witness the installation of new members into The 1909 Conference.

Initiates: I am pleased and proud to tell you that you have been elected to active membership in the 1909 Conference and on behalf of the Life Chair and the members assembled here, I want to tell you more about the Conference and your obligations as a member. Our eighth Life Chair, Dr. Michael Daugherty, will present you with a copy of our membership regulations. It is important that you give careful attention to points that relate to membership in the Conference.

Our regulations are relatively brief and several key points will be of particular interest to you. For example: section IV. 7 of our governing statement concerns obligations to communicate. It reads, "Participation in the Conference shall be interpreted to include: Replying promptly to all Conference communications, both from Members and from the Conference Life Chair, notifying the Conference Life Chair promptly of inability to attend any annual meeting; notifying the Conference Life Chair promptly of inability to accept any program or committee assignment."

Items IV.3 and 5 relate to your active participation in the Conference. They state: "Active Members, (and) Active-at-Large Members...who fail to attend three consecutive annual meetings of the Conference (shall be automatically dropped from Active Membership) and will be moved to Former Active Membership." At her or his request, however, transfer can be made to Associate Membership.

The conference has a long, continuous, and distinguished history of 114 years. Bennett (136, p. 502-503) reports that "The Manual Arts Conference grew out of a letter written by Dr. Robert W. Selvidge to Dr. Charles A. Bennett of Bradley Polytechnic Institute in 1908, expressing the opinion that there was a great need of an opportunity for the teachers and organizers of manual training to get together in close conference where they might exchange

views on questions of vital importance and express all their heresies without being reported in educational papers.” Bennett also explained that “The invitation to the first meeting stated definitely that the conference was 'not called to form a permanent organization but merely to help in the solution of problems of great importance.’” Several ideas from the early meetings remain a foundation of our present-day conferences. Interestingly, the Conference is not included in the indices to Bennett's works on the history of the field.

The Conference's first meeting was held in 1909 from November 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> at Bradley Polytechnic Institute in Peoria, Illinois.

In a few years since 1909 it was not possible to assemble. For example, meetings were originally scheduled to be held every other year following 1909. However, this was done only once before a yearly schedule was followed. Two meetings in 1923 made up for 1922, which had no meeting. Travel limitations imposed during World War II resulted in four years in the 1940's without meetings. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented a meeting from being held in 2020.

Early conferences were scheduled for three days -- Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, but now we deliberate at two-day meetings.

Inviting visitors to the Conference follows an established pattern. This is one means by which we reach out to more professionals in our field. Our requirement for individuals to attend at least one meeting prior to the one during which they are accepted into active membership guarantees that new members are aware of our strengths and weaknesses. Interested friends of the Conference and graduate students have long been welcomed as visiting observers.

The first Conference was called by Dr. T. C. Burgess, Director of Bradley Polytechnic Institute, at the encouragement of Charles Bennett (then at Bradley), R.W. Selvidge of the University of Missouri, and William T. Bawden (then at State Normal University, Normal, Illinois). The 12 Charter Members represented:

- The Public Schools of Indianapolis, Indiana;
- State Normal College at Cedar Falls, Iowa;
- Illinois State Normal College, Normal, Illinois;
- Bradley Polytechnic Institute, Peoria, Illinois;
- State Teachers College, Macomb, Illinois;
- The Stout Institute, Menomonie, Wisconsin;
- The University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois;
- Indiana State Normal College, Terre Haute, Indiana;
- Chicago Normal College, Chicago, Illinois;
- The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois;
- The University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri; and
- The Frances Parker School, Chicago, Illinois.

Charles Bennett served as the organizing Chairman for the first and second Conferences. At the third meeting, Bennett was elected Chairman and Bawden served as the Secretary. As the “Committee of the Conference” they made the arrangements and coordinated the sessions through the fourth meeting in 1913.

While we no longer have a Conference Secretary, we do have a Membership Committee and a Membership Chair. We also create ad-hoc committees to study special issues, which may be brought before the Conference.

At the fifth Conference in 1914, the members voted to request the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Dr. P. P. Claxton, to take over the conduct of the Conference. Dr. Claxton

designated W. T. Bawden to represent him and to take charge of arrangements. Bawden continued in this capacity until he left government service in 1923. At the 14th meeting, the Conference elected Bawden Chairman and then re-elected him each year until he became known as the first Life Chairman.

The Conference's Life Chairs include:

- |                      |              |            |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|
| ▪ William T. Bawden  | 1914-1941    | (27 years) |
| ▪ Verne C. Fryklund  | 1941-1961    | (20 years) |
| ▪ H. H. London       | 1961-1970    | (9 years)  |
| ▪ Rupert Evans       | 1970-1980    | (11 years) |
| ▪ Daniel Householder | 1980-1992    | (11 years) |
| ▪ David Bjorkquist   | 1992-1995    | (4 years)  |
| ▪ Thomas Erikson     | 1995-2013    | (17 years) |
| ▪ Michael Daugherty  | 2013-Present |            |

At the 2013 Conference in Chicago, Illinois, Michael Daugherty was elected to serve as our eighth Life Chair. During his tenure, he worked with members to set the Conference on a course to be responsive to current and future opportunities—including a collaboration with the members of the Southeastern Technology Education Conference, an expanded focus on STEM Education and a yearlong effort during 2022 to study changing the name of the Conference, which resulted in renaming the former Mississippi Valley Technology Teacher Education Conference and the Southeastern Technology Education Conference as the 1909 Conference: Advancing Thought, Research, and Practice in Technology and Engineering Education. He has also initiated collaborative agreements with Epsilon Pi Tau and the Technical Foundation of America to provide awards programs and financial support for the conference as well as establishing 501C-3 not-for-profit status for the conference.

There is much significance in the tradition of the Conference. The evolving changes in the name of the Conference illustrate this point. As you may know, in 1909 the Conference was designated the Mississippi Valley Manual Arts Conference.

The change in the name from Mississippi Valley Manual Arts Conference to the “Industrial Arts Conference” came about suddenly, though the need for dropping the out-dated term of “Manual Arts” became more and more apparent over the years. It was not, however, until Kenneth Beach, who became a member in 1937 and continued to attend from his position at Cornell University, laid down an ultimatum “that he had taken his last visiting request to his dean to travel to an outmoded manual arts conference.” The membership was thus influenced to set tradition aside, and, in 1948, changed the name of the Conference to the Mississippi Valley Industrial Arts Conference.

When Rupert Evans became our Life Chairman in 1970, he appointed a special committee headed by Ralph Wenrich of the University of Michigan to study our mission and report the need, if any, to change the name and scope of our Conference. After much debate at Conference sessions in 1971 and 72, the members voted to broaden the mission and change the name to the Mississippi Valley Industrial Teacher Education Conference. Similarly, approximately twenty years later a multi-year process was begun wherein the Conference received reports, debated, and deliberated on its vision, mission and purpose and in 1996 changed the Conference's name to Mississippi Valley Technology Teacher Education Conference. Commenting on the change, Life Chair Erikson observed that the scope of the conference is as broad as is the usage of the term technology. As mentioned previously, the name was changed again in 2022 to the 1909 Conference: Advancing Thought, Research, and Practice in Technology and Engineering Education after an ad hoc committee headed by John Flanagan of Goodheart-Wilcox recommended such a change.

While the name of the Conference has changed, the Conference has been consistent in maintaining its unique approach. At the 25th anniversary meeting in 1934 Robert W. Selvidge illustrated this point when he reported that “We are frequently asked, ‘What questions have the Conferences settled?’” and then observed that such a question represented a mistaken notion of our objectives.

One of our traditions has been not to pass resolutions or attempt to settle problems. You are urged to “take what you can use and leave the rest behind.” I will venture that the discussions during the first twenty-five years of the Conference's existence did more to settle problems than all of the resolutions passed by all of our related Associations concerned with industrial and technology education. There is evidence that throughout its history this Conference has done much for its members. For example:

- The seeds for much of the professional and technical literature through the years have been planted and nurtured at our Conference.
- Many concepts for articles have been road-tested at our sessions.
- The Conference provides opportunity for us to be subjected to a highly motivating experience during the examination and exchange of ideas that have in turn given direction to our work.
- Articles for refereed journals in our fields of interest are selected from presentations and thus receive worldwide dissemination. Presenters can place papers on the worldwide web to gain even wider exposure.
- Research for Conference presentations has frequently been reported at other Conferences and the results are often quoted in the literature.
- The three major publications of 1934 (Industrial Arts in Modern Education), 1988 (Industrial Teacher Education in Transition) and 2013 (Proceedings of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meeting) are also examples of our members' efforts.

You will be happy to know that in 1972 then Life Chair, Rupert Evans arranged to have the historical records of our Conference placed in the library of the University of Illinois. These records, which date from 1909 to the present, are now available to researchers investigating the work and influence of this Conference. The current 1909 Conference website also includes recent agendas and downloadable conference papers.

Thus, you can see that the dynamics of this Conference are reflected by its membership and the major issues, which confront this profession. So as you join us, I hope that you will “be an exporter of thinking that will motivate discussion and strong positions in respect to what needs to be done to bring about desired changes in the philosophy, goals, content, standards, and learning approaches to technology teacher education in the United States.” I can assure you that, in turn, active members and our Life Chair will influence your thinking and leadership abilities through heated discussions and lively debates.

Life Chair, Dr. Michael Daugherty, and all members will now extend their congratulations on your having become an active member. We bid you welcome in the expectation that you will be a dynamic, productive, and contributing member of our Conference.

#### **Conference Life Chair**

Makes comments necessary for the good of the order, invites all forward to congratulate the new members, and declares the session over.