

Profile of an Engineer ... Frank B. Turner

by
Janet Morris Yearwood

When most people describe another person as being "worth a million dollars" to them, they're usually exaggerating. But in the case of Frank B. Turner, to the state of North Carolina, he actually was worth millions...in dollars saved because of his diligence and hard work.

Turner, the retired State Real Property Officer and, before that, the Chief Engineer for the State's Budget Bureau, was behind the construction of many of the buildings the State owns. A former president of the Professional Engineers of North Carolina, Turner is perhaps best known for having inventoried all of the state's property.

"When I was with the budget department before there was a Department of Administration, I discovered that one of our colleges had built a gymnasium on property that didn't even belong to them," he recalls. At the time, Turner was Chief Engineer of the Budget Bureau and came at the request of former Governor Luther Hodges to head a newly created division to solve similar problems. Along the way, he became something of a legend in the state for his swift and honest handling of situations such as the inventory. In fact, one of Turner's best friends, Noah Sites, Jr., has high praise for his mentor's expertise.

"During his tenure as Property Officer of the State, Mr. Turner became an institution

in himself," states Sites. "He was the first Property Officer of the State. The office grew from when there were just two to start with and now there are about thirty or forty. He was also a founding member of PENC."

Turner is also a life member of PENC and a former president of the Raleigh Engineers Club. He was also a National Director for the National Society of Professional Engineers.

"I also joined the ASME [American Society of Mechanical Engineers] in 1927," Turner states. "I have a fifty-year pin from them. I call it my old age pin."

In a thirty-six year career of service to the people of the state of North Carolina, Frank Turner ultimately became known as the "Father of State Construction."

Frank Brown Turner was born in Oxford, attended Durham High School and graduated from North Carolina State College earning a BS in Mechanical Engineering in 1928. Upon graduation, he spent a year at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. Then he returned to NC State as Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering. While at State, he completed work toward his Master's Degree which he received in 1931. He also had his own heating contracting business in addition to teaching at the college. In 1937, he joined the Budget Bureau staff as a Junior Engineer, where he spent much of his time reviewing plans and specifications for buildings. He later became Plant Engineer at

the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, followed by a four-year stint operating the Cape Fear Generating Facility for Carolina Power & Light Company.

Upon returning to state government employment in 1946, Turner was named Chief Engineer of the Budget Bureau. In this position, he had to administer the first funding of capital improvement projects since 1943. For the 1947-48 biennium, the General Assembly appropriated \$50,932,256, an amount which was more than the total appropriations for all the years combined since 1921.

In 1957, the General Assembly established the Department of Administration, taking over much of the work formerly performed by the Assistant Director of the Budget. For the first time, a Property Control and Construction Division was created and staffed by former Budget Bureau employees. Turner was appointed Real Property Control officer at this time. For the first time, a central agency was able to acquire and dispose of real property for the State. In his office, Turner was able to have a significant impact on the lives of all North Carolinians by ensuring that all state-owned buildings were constructed in a highly efficient manner and were designed to be reasonably inexpensive to use. State-building projects which he oversaw included those within the University system, at community colleges, mental health institutions, historic sites, the State

Fairgrounds, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and State Parks.

In addition, Turner was responsible for the State's vast real estate holdings including marshes, swamplands, bays, and rivers. He was also responsible for recommending the sale and lease of mineral rights.

Turner was at the helm of the State Property Office when the government compound in downtown Raleigh was initiated.

"Under Mr. Turner's tenure, it was the expressed purpose of the state government to buy lands within certain metes and bounds [in order to form the state government complex,]" notes Sites. "I never imagined in my lifetime that all of those buildings that were envisioned back there in that initial plan would be built. Because right now, the Education Building and the Revenue Building will complete that complex."

Turner retired from active employment July 1, 1969. After retirement, he was in private practice for several years. And years later, Turner cast a big enough shadow to cause the Design Professions (AIA, ASLA, ACEC, and PENC) to name an award for him. The award is presented annually to the

state employee who has made an outstanding contribution to the built environment as exemplified by the professional life of Frank Turner. The award was given at the State Building Construction Conference in March. (See related story in this issue.)

Even in retirement, however, Turner has been a man on whom individuals in government could depend for honest, dependable workmanship.

"In the 40s, 50s, and 60s, [Turner] was able to command the attention of the legislature," Sites says.

"Soon after I came here to Springmoor [Retirement Center, where Turner now lives] the American Association of Retired Persons had a bill before the legislature that got stuck in the committee," Turner recalls. "They came to me and said 'We want you to go down there and get that bill out of that committee and get it moving.'...So they sent a man with a car and he let me out in front of the Legislative Building. He said, 'I'm going to wait for you an hour. If you haven't got it out of that committee, you can walk home.' I went in and told the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the Chairman of the Finance Committee what I wanted.

They said, 'We'll move it.' When I got ready to leave, they met me at the door and said, 'You got it.'"

Turner was a man who, at the height of his career, wielded a great deal of power in state government, not by domination or politics, but by dedication and honest good work.

"He never had an ax to grind," says Sites, the man Turner calls 'probably the best friend I ever had.' "And he was always honest and straightforward."

Turner, who turned 88 April 23rd, married the late Huldah May Brinkley in 1928. They had four children, Frank Vance Turner, a retired airlines pilot living in California; Camille Lawrence, of Lexington, owner of the First Colony Inn in Nags Head; Dr. Ruth Jackson, a dentist of Raleigh; and Jacqueline Bates, a schoolteacher living in Washington state. He has twelve grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Eighty-eight years gives a tall perspective from which to view life. In addition to the wisdom of age, it also reveals in Frank Turner a sense of values which are not for sale at any price. Asked to give advice to engineers today, he smiles a little.

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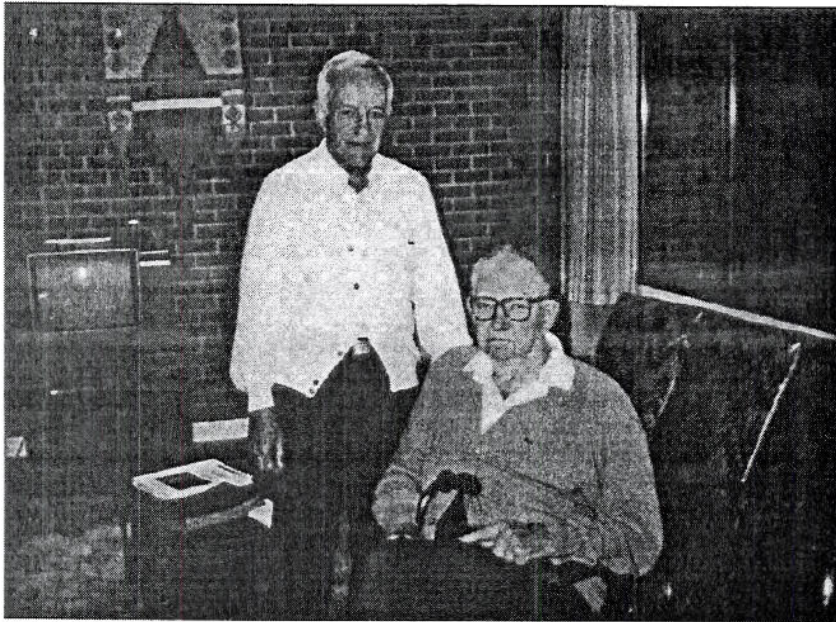
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Noah Sites, Jr., PE and Frank Turner, PE remain the best of friends in retirement.

"You must be thorough, and honest and sincere," he states. "Don't ever receive any gifts of any kind."

When Turner retired in 1969, he was widely referred to as a faithful public

servant. The span of twenty-three years since then has not changed the public's perception of him. For a lifetime of dedicated public service, *the Professional Engineer* says thank you to Frank Turner. ♦

Tenth annual Frank B. Turner Award given

The tenth annual Frank B. Turner Award was given recently to Richard B. Boyd, PE, who was employed by the North Carolina Department of Insurance from 1948-1988 as chief electrical engineer and state electrical inspector.

As an employee of the North Carolina Department of Insurance, Boyd was instrumental in providing professional assistance to the State Building Code Council, especially the electrical subcommittee.

When he started at the Department of Insurance, Boyd was the only electrical inspector at the state level. Boyd was responsible for inspecting all state owned buildings and public schools. He also provided assistance to local inspectors.

Throughout his forty-year career, Boyd received a number of honors recognizing his years of service. Boyd was given the McGraw Award from his peers as the "outstanding electrical inspector in the United States." The Carolinas Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors' Association selected him as Electrical Man of the Year in North and South Carolina.

In 1964, Boyd was elected to the Board of Directors of the International Association of Electrical Inspectors and in 1970 he was elected International President of this association.

Boyd served for several years on the Electrical Council of the Underwriters' Laboratory. He was a member of the Board of the Directors of the National Fire Protection Association and served as a member of the Standards Council of NFPA.

In 1967, the Commissioner of Insurance appointed Boyd to the North Carolina State Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors and he served continuously in that position until his retirement.

Boyd also served from 1967 until his retirement as Chairman of the North Carolina Electrical Institute. He also helped establish an all-inclusive Electrical Industry group in North Carolina.

Boyd, a native of Warrenton, is married to the former Polly Cornwell. They have three children - Blair, Frank and Betsy - and three grandchildren.

PENC New Members

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Hayden O. Moore, PE (PEI) CP&L, 919-546-4381

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Jennifer H. Smith, EIT (PEI) IBM, 919-543-2705

Eastern Carolina

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Jack K. Moore, PE (PEC) Contech Construction Products, 919-355-3200

North Piedmont

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C. D. Jewell, PE (PEPP) Ogden Environmental, 919-855-8993

Ronald F. Jeffries, PE (PEPP) Sutton Kennerly & Associates, 919-855-0993

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Manuel L. Zapata, PE (PEPP) M. L. Zapata Engineering, 704-364-3526

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Blase A. Keegel, PE (PEPP) Asheville, 704-274-8717

William R. Collett, PE (PEI) R. J. Reynolds Tobacco, 919-741-6669

S. Babu Nallamala, PE (PEPP) Nallamala Wilson, PA, 919-765-4651 ♦

Last year's recipient was Edwin F. "Abie" Harris, FAIA. Previous recipients are Kern Church, PE; Marvin Johnson, FAIA; N. K. Lee, PE; Ken Dixon; Ray DeBruhl, PE; Noah Sites, Jr., PE; John Emerson, PE; and Larry Monteith, PE.

The award is presented each year by the Design Professions (AIA, ASLA, ACEC, AND PENC as well as AGC) to the state employee who has made an outstanding professional contribution to the built (physical) environment, as exemplified by the professional life of Frank B. Turner. The award was given at the annual State Building Construction Conference.

Qualifications include a minimum of fifteen years of service in such state agencies as the Division of State Construction, Division of School Planning, the Greater University of North Carolina, Department of Insurance, and the Department of Labor; and registration as an architect, landscape architect or engineer. ♦

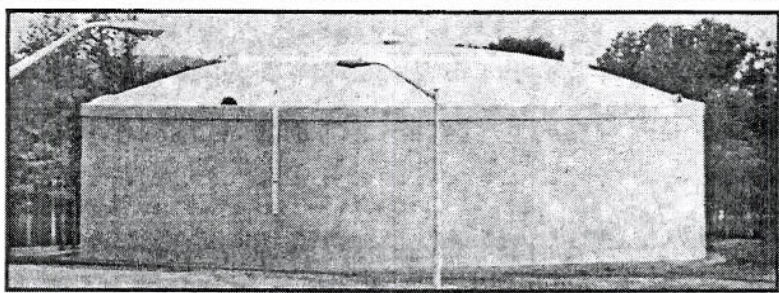
Recruit (from page 33)

way to get a prospective member interested in PENC, to show them all the things we are and all the things we do.

We have gained new members other than those sponsored by the members shown above. New members are listed in each issue of *the Professional Engineer*. To all of the new members who have joined this year, PENC welcomes you and invites you to become involved in all the activities of your local chapter as well as the state activities. Involvement makes better members and a better organization. To all the members who renewed their memberships, PENC thanks you for your continued support. ♦



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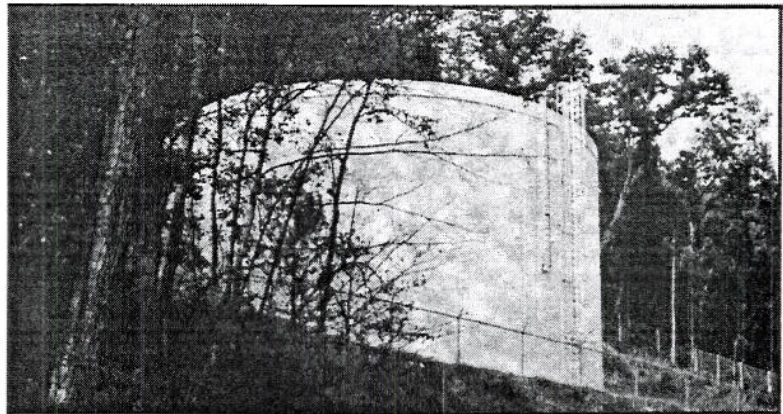


City of Kings Mountain

5.0 MG Reservoir

CONSULTING ENGINEERS: W.K. Dickson & Company, Inc.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS: Hickory Construction Co., Inc.

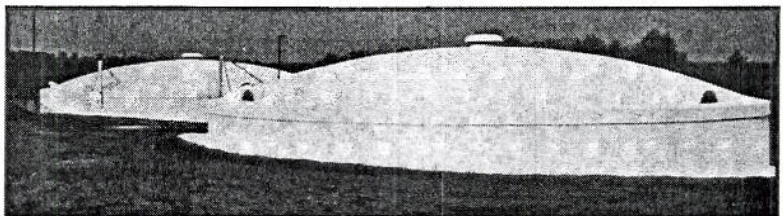


Asheville-Buncombe Water Authority

1.0 MG Reservoir

CONSULTING ENGINEERS: McGill Associates, P.A.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS: Cooper Construction Company, Inc.



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1.0 MG Clearwell and 1.0 MG Backwash Holding Tank

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