

THE WILLIAM H. CORCORAN AWARD

Past, Present, and Future

JOHN C. FRIEDLY,¹ C. GORDON McCARTY²
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627

The Chemical Engineering Division of the American Society for Engineering Education has joined with Miles Inc. to offer the William H. Corcoran Award for the best contributed paper to *Chemical Engineering Education* each year. The Division Executive Committee, chaired by L. Davis Clements, accepted a Miles offer of continuing sponsorship of the award at its meeting in St. Louis on November 9, 1993. Miles sponsorship ensures the continuation of this award which has been presented annually since 1986 and enables the Division to provide a small honorarium and nominal travel expenses for the recipient.

Miles Inc. is a Fortune 100 research-based company headquartered in Pittsburgh. It has businesses in chemicals, health care, and imaging technologies. Its operations throughout North America are organized into Agriculture, Industrial Chemicals, Organic Products, Polymers, Polysar Rubber, Diagnostics, Pharmaceutical, and Agfa divisions. In 1992 the company employed about 26,000 people and had sales of \$6.5 billion.

The Corcoran Award was established in 1984 by action of the Executive Committee of the Division and was approved by ASEE early the following year. Deran Hanesian presided at the Division Executive Committee Meeting of November 1984 in San Francisco at which the Award was established. Dendy Sloan was vice-chair and Bill Beckwith was secretary-treasurer. The committee acted on a written suggestion from Phil Wankat that the Division establish a best-paper award. The intent was to encourage faculty to disseminate their educational contributions as well as their research. Angie Perna proposed two such awards: one for the best paper presented at the Annual Meeting and the other for the best paper published in *Chemical Engineering Education*

during the calendar year. Beckwith moved that one of the awards be named in honor of William H. Corcoran, who had died two years earlier, and Sloan moved that the Corcoran Award be for the best paper in *CEE*.

It is fitting that a Division award be named for Bill Corcoran. He was a tireless ASEE worker, having received the ASEE Distinguished Service Award for "a creative, professional life devoted to excellence in engineering teaching, research, and administration" just two months before his untimely death on August 21, 1982.* He had previously received ASEE's highest award, the Benjamin Garver Lamme Award, in 1979. He had also served as chair of the Chemical Engineering Division, and in 1978 he was president of the AIChE.

Corcoran received his BS and MS at CalTech and worked briefly at Cutter Labs before spending four years during the war working on rocket ordnance and the Manhattan Project. He returned to CalTech to earn his PhD in 1948. After spending a few years at Cutter Labs as director of technical development, Corcoran joined the chemical engineering faculty at CalTech in 1952. There he served as executive officer for chemical engineering and as vice president for institute relations. Respected both for his research and teaching, as well as for his professional service, Corcoran received a number of awards. In the year 1969-70 he won the Western Electric Fund Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the Associated Students of CalTech gave him their Teaching Excellence Award in 1977.

Rich Felder was the first recipient of the Corcoran Award. The venue was the Division Banquet at Lake Tahoe during

¹ Past-Chair, ASEE Chemical Engineering Division

² Manager, University Relations, Miles Inc., Mobay Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205-9741

*See "Distinguished Service Citation," Eng. Ed., 31, October (1982); "ASEE Awards to Burnet and Corcoran," Chem. Eng. Progr., 92, Sept (1982); "Obituary for William H. Corcoran," Chem. Eng. Progr., 95, Sept. (1982); "Resolution for William H. Corcoran," Chem. Eng. Progr., 95, Oct. (1982)

the Reno ASEE Annual Meeting in June 1986. Division Chair Dendy Sloan had arranged for Corcoran's widow to be there for the first presentation of a recognition plaque.

Previous winners of the Corcoran Award (see Table 1) include some outstanding educators and supporters of chemical engineering education. Seven academics and one industrialist have won the award since its inception. Noel de Nevers was the most recent recipient, receiving the award at the ASEE Centennial Meeting at the University of Illinois in June of 1993. The paper titles show the wide diversity of subjects considered worthy of the award. All have a direct bearing on education and educators. This has been a consistent criterion used by selection committees.

A three-person selection committee for the award has served at the pleasure of the Division Executive Committee. In recent years the Division Vice-Chair has chaired the committee, which also included Ray Fahien, editor of *CEE*, and the previous year's winner.

No nominations for the award are accepted, and all contributed papers to *CEE* are eligible for selection. The purpose of the award is to recognize and encourage outstanding contributions to chemical engineering education as evidenced

by a published paper in *CEE* during the previous calendar year. The contribution may be in any area of chemical engineering teaching, practice, or theory as long as it is judged to have the potential for a significant and lasting contribution to education. The selection committee may establish its own criteria interpreting how papers fulfill the purpose of the award. The award is given to the senior author of jointly written papers, with duplicate plaques provided for coauthors.

Table 1 shows that *Chemical Engineering Education* has attracted some outstanding papers from some of the most prominent educators in the profession. Under the editorship of Ray Fahien for the last quarter of a century, *CEE* has grown into a thriving archival journal serving the entire chemical engineering community. It is the epitome of an ASEE division journal.

A long and fruitful collaboration between the Division and Miles Inc. is anticipated. Industrial sponsorship of the William H. Corcoran Award will further the goals of the award: to encourage and recognize outstanding contributions to the archival literature devoted to the improvement of chemical engineering education. □

TABLE 1
Corcoran Award Winners

<u>Year</u>	<u>Winner/Affiliation</u>	<u>Paper Title (and coauthors)</u>	<u>Reference</u>
1986	Richard M. Felder <i>North Carolina State University</i>	"Cheating—An Ounce of Prevention... or The Tragic Tale of the Dying Grandmother"	<i>CEE</i> , 19 (1), 12 (1985)
1987	R. Byron Bird <i>University of Wisconsin</i>	"Hougen's Principles"	<i>CEE</i> , 20 (4), 161(1986)
1988	C. Thomas Sciance <i>DuPont</i>	"Chemical Engineering in the Future"	<i>CEE</i> , 21 (1), 12 (1987)
1989	Robert L. Kabel <i>Pennsylvania State University</i>	"Instruction in Scaleup"	<i>CEE</i> , 22 (3), 128 (1988)
1990	E. Dendy Sloan <i>Colorado State University</i>	"Extrinsic versus Intrinsic Motivation in Faculty Development"	<i>CEE</i> , 23 (3), 134 (1989)
1991	John M. Prausnitz <i>University of California, Berkeley</i>	"Chemical Engineering in the Spectrum of Knowledge" (Coauthor: Davor P. Sutija)	<i>CEE</i> , 24 (1), 20 (1990)
1992	Robert G. Squires <i>Purdue University</i>	"Purdue-Industry Computer Simulation Modules: The Amoco Resid Hydrotreater Process" (Coauthors: G.V. Reklaitis, N.C. Yeh, J.F. Mosey, I.A. Karimi, P.K. Andersen)	<i>CEE</i> , 25 (2), 98 (1991)
1993	Noel de Nevers <i>University of Utah</i>	"'Product in the Way' Processes"	<i>CEE</i> , 26 (3), 146 (1992)