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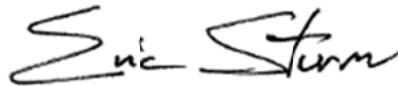
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April 30, 2013  
Paul Melton  
ASHRAE Region VI Historian

Dear Mr. Melton,

I am enclosing the La Crosse Area Chapter's 31st entry for the Gold Ribbon and Lou Flagg award. The La Crosse Area Chapter, 115, is pleased to present the biography of Jim Ritter.



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Eric A. Sturm  
YEA Chair  
La Crosse Area Chapter

## History of a Person

James M. Ritter, P.E.

The La Crosse Chapter of ASHRAE lost one of its first and most dedicated members on February 16, 2013. James Michael Ritter was born on January 21, 1931 to Joseph and Thecla (Besl) Ritter. He attended Aquinas High School in La Crosse, Wisconsin and graduated in 1949. In 1951, Ritter was inducted into the U.S. Army Signal Corps and attended basic training at Camp Gordon, Georgia. Upon completion of basic training, he was assigned to radio repair school at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Following radio repair school, Ritter was assigned to a special counter-mortar radar set and sent to Korea in February 1953. Ritter returned to the United States in September 1953 and was honorably discharged shortly thereafter.

In 1954, Ritter enrolled in the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse’s pre-engineering course and later transferred to the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 1955. In 1958, he graduated with a Bachelors of Science degree in Electrical Engineering.

Ritter started his career as a junior distribution engineer with Northern States Power Company in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. In January 1964, he was promoted to the position of sales engineer and transferred to La Crosse, Wisconsin. As a sales engineer, he was involved in the design, installation, and study of energy applications for customers throughout the La Crosse Division. During this time, he became a registered professional engineer (May 1961). In 1988, Ritter retired from Northern States Power Company after 30 years of service. He continued to remain active in engineering societies and clubs until his passing.

Ritter’s involvement in the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) began in the early 1970’s when he was an instrumental member of the group who planned and organized the La Crosse Chapter of ASHRAE. As part of that planning, a list of proposed members was established – his name was right at the top. On May 31, 1971, Ritter became an official member of the La Crosse Area ASHRAE Chapter. He was elected the La Crosse Chapter’s President-elect for 1972-73, and subsequently President for 1973-74. In 2000, Ritter was made a Life Member of ASHRAE.

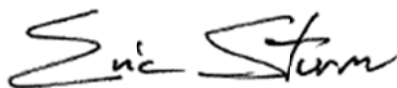
Ritter continued his involvement in the chapter following his Presidency. He was elected ASHRAE Chapter Historian for 1983-84, and would go on to serve in this position for 30 years. He also served as Region VI Historian for 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92. During his time as the La Crosse Chapter Historian, he earned numerous Gold Ribbons. Ritter was also awarded the Lou Flagg Historical Gold Ribbon Award in 2003 and 2005 for outstanding historical articles entitled “Reuben N. Trane, History of a Person” and the “History of the

Trane Company” respectively. The Lou Flagg Historical Gold Ribbon Award was approved by the ASHRAE Board of Directors in June 2002 “to recognize a Chapter Gold Ribbon Award winner for compiling information on outstanding historical projects or persons related to HVAC&R.”

In addition to being active with ASHRAE, Ritter was a member of many other organizations: National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE), Wisconsin Society of Professional Engineers (WSPE), Tri-State Energy Committee, Northern States Power Engineers-Minneapolis, Past President of Eau Claire Technical Society, Board of Directors for WSPE (three times), Past President of Western Chapter of WSPE, Board of Governors for ASHRAE (two times), Past President of La Crosse Area Chapter of ASHRAE, Member of IES, Secretary of the Board of Gas Examiners, Great Lakes Power Association, Former member of IEEE, and member of the Northern States Power Engineers Association. In 1981, Ritter was awarded the Wisconsin Society of Professional Engineers – Professional Engineer in Industry award.

On a personal note, Ritter’s son, Kyle Ritter, said his father was a practical person who was always conscious of energy waste. As children, when they would leave the lights on, their father would tell them, “it’s a waste of energy and you can never get it back.” Ritter also employed a unique filing system to store documents and records that the children were not allowed to view. Upon his passing, the children discovered a folder in section “A” that contained numerous awards and accolades which Ritter had received throughout his professional career. This is a testament to a man who wrote of others’ achievements – but kept his own quiet.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Sturm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eric Sturm

YEA Chair

La Crosse Area Chapter



Figure 1 - Jim Ritter receives Lou Flagg Historical Gold Ribbon Award from ASHRAE President Don Colliver in 2003.



Figure 2 - Jim Ritter receives the Lou Flagg Historical Gold Ribbon Award from ASHRAE President Ron Vallort in 2005.