



Robert L. Peaslee

January 4, 1917 - March 5, 2009

Robert L. Peaslee, passed quietly in his sleep on March 5, 2009 in Rochester. Bob had been fighting bone and prostate cancer for several years. He was born January 4, 1917 in Milwaukee, WI and had just celebrated his 92nd birthday. He loved family, helping people solve problems, music, gardening and nature. Bob started a brazing division in 1950 at Wall Colmonoy Corp. in Michigan. He became a world-renowned expert in his field and authored the book "Brazing Footprints". He continued to work at age 92 as a Brazing Consultant. Bob was also a member of industry groups including AWS American Welding Society, ASME American Society of Mechanical Engineers and ACS American Chemical Society. He received numerous industry awards including becoming an AWS Fellow. He is survived by his son, Robert Yvonne Peaslee; grandchildren, Ann James Saunders and Jeffrey Lisa Peaslee; and five great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Peaslee, in 1989. The couple married January 4, 1941 in Cincinnati, OH; and daughter, Bonnie Jean Adams. Visitation will be Thursday 6-8 p.m. and Friday 2-8 p.m. at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, 705 W Eleven Mile Road 4 blks. E of Woodward, Royal Oak. The service will be Saturday 12 noon at the funeral home. Burial will take place at Oakview Cemetery, Royal Oak. Memorials to American Cancer Society, Attn: Memorial Department, 20450 Civic Center Drive, Southfield, MI 48076. Share your memories at www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com.

Tribute Wall



“ *I am honored to have met him and to pick his brain about brazing the week I was there. Godspeed Sir.* ”

Craig Wood - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

“ *Our Eulogy for my grandfather: Poppy’s Pearls – My Grandfather’s Wisdom* My grandfather gave me these pearls, and I have cherished them every day, one by one. I am sure that each of you who knew Bob Peaslee knew about the pearls of wisdom that he modeled all of the time. In his long life, he showed me how to be a good person, one story at a time. He showed me how to be a persistent person – When he was a young man, just in High School, he watched a pretty girl walk by his house every week on her way to violin lessons. When he decided he wanted to meet her, he took up playing violin himself – so that he could walk with her. Poppy played the violin on and off for the rest of his life. The pretty girl became his wife. He showed me how to be a practical person – When he was searching for a job in college, he interviewed with the gas company. Because it was more affordable, Poppy rode an Indian brand motorcycle around Cincinnati. As an interesting footnote, my Very Proper Grandmother zipped around with him in a side car! During a particularly bad snowstorm, Poppy bundled up and rode into the interview. When he arrived, his competition was lined up – one pressed suit and polished pair of shoes after another. The interviewer came out of the office and saw Poppy, snow covered, in boots and a heavy coat and realized this was a man ready for action and hired him on the spot to do outside meter repairs. He showed me how to be a person with a sense of humor – A metallurgist by career, his original interest was purely chemistry. My dad recalled a saying that always made Poppy chuckle: Once there was a chemist, but now he is no more, for what he thought was H₂O was H₂SO₄! In case your chemistry is a little rusty, the unfortunate example drank sulfuric acid in place of water – and in rhyme! He showed me how to be a passionate person – He took up the field of brazing when it was in its infancy. He sold nickel brazing to manufacturers that, by his definition, didn’t know they wanted it. He would win them over by asking what problems they had, and then go about solving them with his new product. He developed and taught the Brazing School that was attended by international participants. He always talked about his adventures discovering the –footprints– that metals left behind.

In his own words, he said, "Just like footprints in the sand tell a story by showing the direction someone has gone, how fast they were traveling, and the length of their stride, brazing footprints also tell a story of many variables and provide clues to the reasons certain conditions occur. One must know what to look for." That quote is from the preface of his own book called "Brazing Footprints". It was even translated to Japanese. He was so very proud of that. He showed me how to be a diplomatic person "As a sort of mediator and purveyor of metallurgical goods, Poppy frequently found himself between the engineers and the metallurgists " kind of a brazing "rock and a hard place". When he wanted to do something new, these two sides would come together to tell him why it wouldn't work. The engineers would say, "that's impossible!" and the metallurgists would proclaim, "the engine will fail if you do that!" Poppy would say, "Let's let the engine decide whether it will work or not". When the two parties got stuck and could not see the other person's viewpoint, he'd bring out a ping pong ball that was painted black on one side only and hold it so that each side could only see one of the colors. When he would ask the one side, "What color is the ball?" It was, of course, always the opposite of the other team. When the whole ball was revealed, the meeting proceeded with a renewed camaraderie. He used to say, "Every problem has a solution, but the hardest are people problems!" He showed me how to be a person of understatement "During a time 15 years ago when Poppy was under the weather, I called to ask him if we could come up and help him out. "That would be fine" was his reply. Probing, I ask

Ann Peaslee Saunders - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

HZ

“ There are few legends in technical fields, but Bob was truly such a person in brazing. If you look up the word brazing anywhere, there should be picture of Bob there smiling with his trademark bow tie. I met Bob at a C3 meeting in the early 80s and was immediately impressed by his knowledge, his passion for brazing, and his helpfulness for those of us who did not fully understand the subject. We will all miss him greatly.

H. Glenn Ziegenfuss - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

NC

“ I've known Bob since the early 70s when I first joined the Brazing and Soldering Committee. Bob started and shepherded the annual Brazing and Soldering Conference at the Welding Show and "in the early days" with his instigation we also staffed a brazing booth. Bob was always helpful and full of stories about successful brazing challenges. I considered him a mentor and we will all miss our friend. I remember he always ordered milk at our Committee dinners - must be one of his secrets for a long life. Thanks, Bob, for your support for my successful run for Vice President of AWS.

Nancy Cole - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AJ

“ End of an era in the field of brazing and soldering - but the legend shall live....forever in the lives of us that benefitted immensely from this true "Gentleman". Mr. Peaslee took me under his wings during my tenure with Wall Colmonoy and taught me everything that I know about brazing today. He was a great man, a great teacher and above all a great human being. Words dont do justice to his greatness. Mr. Peaslee, We miss you. My heartfelt condolences to Mr. Peaslee's friends and family.

Amit Jain - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ I was fortunate to work for Bob during my forty years at Wall Colmonoy.He will be greatly missed by all of us.

James A. Lewis - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

HY

“ It offers heartfelt condolences to the news of Robert L. Peaslee's death respectfully ..everyone the employee of our company.. And, I wish to express my gratitude deeply for allowing me to translate a wonderful book of "Brazing Footprints" into Japanese. Please sleep restfully.

Hisao Yukimatsu - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ I had the priviledge to meet Bob Peasely some fifteen years ago and was rewarded many times since by his knowledge and genuine desire to be of service to me in the problem at hand

Jack R Horner - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JW

“ Bob's gentle persistence is what built the excellent Brazing and Soldering web presence on the American Welding Society website. Bob also always did more than his share to encourage others in his field to attend technical meetings and related events, even into his 90s. As a result, brazing and soldering professionals all over the world have formed a more cohesive and interactive engineering community. Bob was truly one-of-a-kind -- a fascinating communicator on a wide variety of subjects, and a legend in his chosen field. We will miss him greatly at AWS, yet all of us are proud to have known him. Bob was truly a friend and a mentor to all those around him.

Jeff Weber - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ I first met Bob at the International Brazing and Soldering Conference in 2003 in San Diego. It was incredible to see his passion and devotion to brazing and soldering and to the welding industry. I got to know Bob over the past 6 years in my role as executive director of the American Welding Society. He was very helpful to me in assisting the Society with its mission revision. In fact, I have a picture of Bob and me in my office and it has been a privelege to have known him. He definitely made the world and our industry a better place. We will miss him and I want to take this opportunity on behalf of AWS to extend our deepest sympathies to his family.

Ray Shook - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ We will miss Bob immensely! John McKenzie AWS - Detroit Section Secretary

John McKenzie - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

PE

“ Our deepest sympathy is with you in your time of need. We will keep Bob in our thoughts and prayers often. May God Bless. Paul and Sherry Evans

Paul R. Evans - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AS

“ Robert Peaslee was a great man, a great engineer, and a pioneer of brazing—a leader of several generations of professionals. Brazing alloys and principles of the process invented by Robert Peaslee and William Clark, Sr. had made an epoch in the US industry. They have become a key point and discovery in brazing technology that transformed processes used for a few special applications into a world-wide technology included in a number manufactures which determine the face of our civilization: Jet and Rocket engines, Nuclear reactors, Automotive, Ship buildings, X-ray instruments, Aerospace, Semiconductors, and many other applications. Most industrial countries use Microbrazing-type alloys now. Everything Bob made in metals, in books, in education will live centuries ahead as Bob’s contribution in our human civilization and as the monument of his great spirit. His bright memory, noble speech, and professional attitude were amazing and unforgettable for everybody who had contact with him. Every time I met Bob and talked to him was an event in my life; I will always remember Bob, my elder friend and colleague.

Alex Shapiro - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DK

“ Bob was a legend in the field of brazing, and with his passing, an amazing era in the world of brazing comes to an end. He was also an amazing human being. I will miss him. There's an old expression that says "the world should be a better place because a man has lived." That is certainly true about Bob. He impacted so many lives over the years, including mine, and I count it a distinct privilege to have known him, to have worked with him side-by-side, and to have been able to call him my friend. Rest in peace. Dan

Dan Kay - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

GA

“ Bob was a wonderful person, friend, teacher, mentor, master, and doctor to so many people within our industry. His willingness to help those in need without compensation will pay dividends for decades. I can only try repay him by following in his footprints.....

Grayson Alexy - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

KT

“ Always Respectful; Always Helpful; Always Insightful. It was truly a pleasure to have known him and worked with him. Sincerely, Keith Thornberry Care Medical, Inc.

Keith Thornberry - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ I served on two AWS subcommittees with Bob, the C3 and A5H, dating back to 1972. He was not only a fine committee chairman and leader, but a great gentlemen and friend to all of us. I dropped off those committees 15 years ago or so, but continued to run into Bob at AWS shows and other AWS functions. He was a credit to American industry and to the AWS. He was greatly appreciated and will be sorely missed.

Mike Merlo - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AR

“ Robert Peaslee will always be one of the best representative of really unique generation of American Engineers contributing enormously to Human Race Progress in the middle of 20th Century. One can only hope that his Legacy will be preserved and will help us all in these hard times. Thankful always to Bob, Anatol Rabinkin, one of many the Robert Peaslee Memorial Prize Recipients

Anatol Rabinkin - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ Every time I saw Bob, he always challenged me to conduct more research in the field of brazing. The usual starter line was, "I have a research topic for your students!" Always a mentor and a friend! I will miss Bob and his engaging conversations for a long, long time!

Stephen Liu - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TS

“ A smile, a flashy bowtie, and a new story about moisture in a cracked ammonia atmosphere. Those are three things I could count on every time we sat together at lunch.

Tom Siewert - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JJ

“ Thanks for all of your professional support and personal friendship over the years Bob. It was always a pleasure to spend casual time with you. I would like to share the story about Chips birthday in San Antonio but that will be for another moment. May perpetual light shine upon you.

James R. Jachna - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

WE

“ Bob was a friend and mentor for 40 years - He defined the word "Gentleman". We will miss Bob's wisdom and friendship. My condolences to his family.

Wayne Engeron - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

WE

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Wayne Engeron - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MH

“ Bob, You will be missed by so many good friends, not only for your expertise in the Brazing World, but your guidance & being just a "Good Guy". Rest in Peace

Mike Higgins - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

PG

“ So many good memories....always helping, advising, offering thoughts with a smile...will miss a good friend while the world will lose a brazing expert.

P. Kumar Gupta - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

ML

“ Bob and I go back many years and he and I have shared a lot of stories. He was a great friend and mentor. He was always willing to share what he knew and help us. He never seemed to hold something back so he or his company could benefit. As he always said, If we spread the word about brazing we ALL will benefit. His presence at our AWS C3 meetings will be greatly missed. I wish him well on his new journey and my guess is that he is already solving some joining problem in heaven. God Speed Robert Peaslee.

Matthew Lucas - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TA

“ "Can't" was not in your vocabulary. So determined and always positive ... you never let jaded cynicism get in the way of reason, accomplishment, or integrity. Thank you for being such a wonderful friend and mentor. Your passion for learning, for teaching, and simply for life, will continue to influence the way I live mine. I will miss our talks, yet you will live forever in my heart. Thank you for a rare and remarkable gift, Tanya

Tanya Anandan - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ To Bob, my beloved neighbor and friend... simple words seem inadequate. Thank you for showing what it means to be a 'rugged individualist', and a lover of people, animals, industry, adventure, discovery, and work... Thank you for sharing your never-ending wisdom and for being an optimist to the end ... reminding us when faced with every challenge, that we just have to "do what's right and keep going - chug, chug, chug!" I can see your arms going along in a train motion as you used to say that trying to make me laugh. Your garden will grow again. You will be greatly missed and never forgotten.

Susan L. Buck - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM