



Mississippi ASHRAE Chapter “Stories”

(as told/as remembered by members)

Fredrick Leroy (FL) Cooper, Sr.

FL Cooper owned and operated FL Cooper & Sons Mechanical Contractors in Jackson, MS during the 40s, 50s & 60s. His son, Leroy Cooper, told me this story. A job had recently bid and FL Cooper & Sons was the apparent low mechanical bidder. A young, local equipment salesman visited FL Cooper one day to discuss the job. Mr. Cooper welcomed the young man into his office but didn't say much, which was a typical characteristic of most men of that generation. Therefore, the young salesman began to ask Mr. Cooper if his bid was good and, while doing so he dropped his price. Mr. Cooper, still not saying much, just looked down at some papers he was holding in his hands as if he were evaluating the bids. The young salesman continued to “run on” and talk about his bid, their product, etc. and dropped his price again. At this point Mr. Cooper stood up and offered his hand as if to say they would/could do business together and the young salesman left his office. After the meeting and after the young man had left, Mr. Cooper said, “hell, he was low when he walked in here”.

Charles Catledge and David Butler

David Butler, of Engineering Resource Group, Inc. (ERG), a Jackson, MS consulting engineer and former ASHRAE President, was working on a project that required a make-up air unit. David called a local equipment vendor, Charles Catledge (Charley) of Charles N. Catledge, Co. for help in selecting this unit. Charley advised David of a particular size and furnished performance data, dimensional data and specifications for the unit recommended. David proceeded to schedule the unit verbatim with the information provided by Charley. Sometime later, the job bid and Charley was the low bidder for the equipment in question so he prepared submittal to the low contractor and this submittal eventually made its way to David who reviewed it and stamped it REJECTED. After Charley received the returned, rejected submittal, he called David more than a little confused. Charley talked with David about the fact that the unit was the same one that he had recommended to David and it was the same unit that David had scheduled and specified with the information provided by Charley. Charley asked David why he had rejected a unit that was obviously, what David had specified and David's response was “you know what I meant dammit”.



Denny Terry

Denny Terry, former Trane franchise owner from 1990 to 2014, used to tell a story about a visiting Trane executive, probably from LaCrosse, WI, who came to town, back in the day, for whatever reason and it was Denny's responsibility to drive him around and introduce him to some of his customers. After the visits, Denny said that the Trane executive told him "Terry, all you've got are pine trees, peasants and piss ants".

Denny Terry

Denny Terry, former Trane franchise owner from 1990 to 2014, used many analogies describing various aspects of our industry. One particular favorite of his peers was "Little piggies get fed, fat hogs get butchered"

Gene Arledge

As told by Leroy Cooper: Gene Arledge was a famous manufacturer's representative and is rumored to have helped found Greenheck fans. Gene Arledge represented some well-known brands such as Greenheck and Cleaver Brooks. A famous quote of Mr. Arledge, according to Leroy Cooper, was "You can buy an engineer's soul with a steak dinner".

Charles Catledge

Nelson Douglass of Cooke, Douglass, Farr, Ltd. was a famous engineer in our market who would famously throw his weight around when communicating to manufacturer's representatives. A story has been told that Nelson requested something of Charlie Catledge about some piece of equipment that Charlie represented and when Charlie failed to respond, Nelson called Charlie and told him that he could come by and pick up his catalogs that would be in the hallway of the office. It was a "not so subtle" message that Charlie obviously received loud and clear.

Jimmy Eldridge

Jimmy Eldridge of Eldridge and Associates is a true "character" in our area. One of Jimmy's former partners, Stan Read, tells a story about how Jimmy temporarily earned the name "Top Floor" from the Bureau of Buildings. Eldridge and Associates had a Prime Mechanical project to retrofit an old constant volume reheat system to VAV at one of the State Universities. Jimmy



was involved during the design & bidding process, but first visited the construction site for the Final Inspection walk-thru with the University and the Bureau of Buildings. As the team walked through each floor, Jimmy went to take the stairs up to the final floor and was questioned where he was going? . . . he responded “the Top Floor”. The old plans used to produce the VAV retrofit did not include the 4th floor and no one ever questioned why only 3 of the 4 floors were included in the design. Jimmy answered to “Top Floor Eldridge” for a while after that project.

4 Stages of Heat

Jimmy Eldridge and Stan Read had specified 4 stages of heat on a boiler for a particular project some years ago. Charlie Catledge was the apparent low bidder and submitted a boiler with 2 stages of heat. The submittal was noted as Rejected / Revise & Resubmit. But Charlie cleared everything up on his revised submittal: “4-stage heating – Off, 0%, 50% and 100%”

Modulating Control Valve

Sam Carruth was part of the Controls Team at Terry Services for many years. Once on a job that had “modulating” control valves specified, Sam submitted on 2-position control valves. The design engineer rejected the submitted controls valves with a note to provide “modulating” controls valves. The same control valves were resubmitted and included clarification that they “modulating open & modulated closed” “Approved”

“Big Daddy is here”

Back in the Middle 1970 when (Bill Waller was Governor) State Bid Projects were opened at The State Building Commission. At that time the State would have separate bids for General Contractor, Mechanical Contractor, and Electric Contractor. The general could not pick and choose but was stuck with the low bidder. As a result, all the Architect, Engineers, Contractors, and vendors would be at the bid opening. The first one I went to having just moved to Jackson was for a very large project and everyone was waiting in the lobby. I remember Bill Pope with Davis Trane and Henry Hardy being there when a Cadillac Eldorado Convertible pulled up, double parks, and out bounced Gene Arledge. Bill Pope said let’s go open the bids cause “Big Daddy is here” After the bids were opened the low bidders in each trade would buy coffee downstairs and would tell you (the vender) if you were low or not and if they knew the Job was in the money and tell you to get submittals. It was a better time..

The “Bid Depository”



A Mr. Kistenmocker was running a company called Speed Mechanical in the late 60's. Mechanical Contractors were not getting a fair shot at jobs because GC's were not being fair in the bidding process. Mr. Kistenmocker came up with a "Bid Depository" where all mechanical bids would be turned into the "Depository" and then opened by the MC's together. The first time this happened, there were three (3) large projects bidding and Mr. Kistenmocker opened the bids prior to everyone else getting there, changed his bids on all 3 to ensure he was low. That was the first and last time the "Bid Depository" was used.

Cooke Douglass Farr (as told by Will Irby)

Nelson Douglas was waiting on some information to specify some equipment that Charlie Catledge represented, and was running out of patience at Charlie's (as perceived by Nelson) lack of response. He had already threatened to throw Charlie's catalogs out. After about 4 days went by following his latest request for information from Charlie, Nelson walked across the alley behind CDF to Farrah Green's office. She was CDF's accountant at the time; Nelson just wanted someone whose voice Charlie (or anyone at his office) wouldn't recognize. He got Farrah to call Charlie's office and say that she was with the City of Jackson Sanitation Department, and that one of their trash trucks had found a large quantity of catalogs in the alley behind some offices on Medical Plaza (the street where CDF was located at that time). She further stated that all of the catalogs had a sticker on the binder edge with The Catledge Company logo and contact information, and she was just calling to be sure someone had not stolen the catalogs and thrown them away. Charlie showed up at Nelson's office within 20 minutes.

Another one from my CDF days: Nelson Douglass, Jim Simonson, Gregg Cox, and Ken Greenwald often played racquetball at the Fortification Street YMAC before going to the office in the mornings. They did so on Nelson's 50th birthday, and while Nelson was in the shower, Gregg stole Nelson's underwear and put it in a big Manila envelope, which he left at the front desk for him to pick up. When Nelson arrived at the office, we had added a handicap parking sign in front of his parking place, along with a walker placed next to it. The office was decorated with the usual black balloons, signs about aging, etc. Everyone in the office was in on the underwear theft, so we all knew he was "going commando" for the day. We had a mid-morning birthday party for him with the entire office in attendance, along with Nelson's wife Rosemary, who was also in on the underwear gag. Nelson was bestowed with numerous gifts, most of which were humorous rather than serious. The last gift, of course, was the Manila envelope containing his underwear, which was presented to him by our secretary Shirley Smith. We all called him "cool breeze" for the next few days.

Another CDF incident: Birds often flew into the reflective glass windows on our office building; some flew away immediately, while others were stunned or more seriously injured. One tiny little bird broke its neck when it hit the glass, killing it instantly, and Gregg Cox happened to witness the tragic event. He walked outside, picked up the deceased bird, and brought it in to the office. Buddy Williams, who had



artistic abilities, made a tiny set of clothes for the bird, who was christened “Bubba” and displayed prominently in the office with a tiny cigarette and beer can, along with a sign asking for peace and quiet because he needed rest after a long weekend in New Orleans. Bob Farr, senior architect and partner at CDF, was not amused, and demanded that whoever was responsible immediately remove Bubba from the building. Bob was even less amused when Bubba was discovered a couple of days later, convalescing in a large potted plant next to Bob’s office.

We often worked late at night at CDF, and I sometimes drove a few blocks to pick up some Popeye’s chicken and bring it back to the office to hold me until I got home. Gary Randall was an architect at CDF, and he apparently didn’t like the smell of the chicken in the office. One night after I left, he got my Popeye’s bag out of the trash, and used some of the chicken bones and a coat hanger to make a hanging “mobile”, which was hanging over my drawing board when I came in the next morning. I thought it was hilarious, but of course I couldn’t let Gary have the last word. He complained about the smell for the next couple of days, until he found my Popeye’s bag taped to the bottom of his drawing board.

When Bill Pope was nearing retirement as the owner of the Jackson Trane office, a couple of Trane guys came down from LaCrosse to discuss future plans for the Jackson office. Sam Carruth and Denny Terry were the presumed favorites to take over as owner/manager of the office. The Trane guys wanted Bill to name his successor, but he was not going to choose between Sam and Denny because he had tremendous respect for both of them. After several attempts to get him to pick someone, one of the guys asked him if there was anyone in his office without whom he could not do his job, he said “Oh, that’s easy. That would be Nancy.” Nancy Jolly was the Office Manager and Accountant for the franchise.