

## **Fredrick Leroy Cooper, Jr.**

Fredrick Leroy Cooper, Jr., or Leroy as family and friends know him, has been an icon in the Jackson, MS HVAC community since before he was born. How is that you ask? Well this is because Leroy's father, Fredrick Leroy Cooper, Sr., has been in the HVAC community for a long time, and we cannot tell Leroy's story or history without telling that of his father's first.

Fredrick Leroy Cooper, Sr. was an orphan growing up in the city of Jackson where he lived in foster homes most of his life. Mr. Cooper dropped out of school in the seventh grade and began working in the construction industry. There were no child labor laws back then. As most people do, he progressed in the construction industry through experience and eventually gravitated to the Heating and Plumbing (there wasn't much air-conditioning back then) side of Construction. He eventually acquired enough experience and financial backing to go into business for himself and formed F.L. Cooper Plumbing & Heating Company in 1945, a Plumbing and Heating Construction Company. Mr. Cooper was very active in the construction community and was actually a charter member of the Mississippi Chapter ASHRAE (copy of photograph attached; that's Mr. Cooper on the far right). Mr. Cooper operated his construction company in the Jackson, MS and surrounding areas for many years while his son Leroy was growing up and going through college. Of course his business grew into a full HVAC company once air-conditioning caught on. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Cooper passed away due to a stroke, in 1963, while Leroy was in college (majoring in Mechanical Engineering) and it was left up to Leroy to take over the company following his father's untimely death. After F.L. Cooper, Sr.'s death Leroy and his mother incorporated the business with Leroy as President and the company was renamed F.L. Cooper Company.

Leroy was attending Mississippi State College (soon to be Mississippi State University) and was a senior with only a week left till graduation (final exams week), when he received the news of his father's passing. Of course Leroy had to leave school immediately to attend to his mother and their affairs (Leroy is an only child). Leroy was unable to take his finals and was given incompletes in all his courses. However, due to the situation, the college of engineering allowed Leroy to take his final exams a few

weeks after everyone else had gone home for the summer. Leroy graduated, obviously, and went home to run the business his father had left him.

Leroy continued in his father's tradition of sound business practice and F.L. Cooper Company flourished for seven years after his father's death. At which time Leroy's mother, the legal owner of the company, had an opportunity to sell the company and did. After the sale of the company, Leroy sought employment in the only field he had ever known, the HVAC industry. It was at this time that Leroy began a very prosperous and noted career in the consulting engineering field, applying his Mechanical Engineering degree obtained at MSU. Leroy worked for highly recognizable firms such as Luke & Bowron, Walters & Busby, Bowron & Butler and Engineering Resource Group, Inc. where he ended his career upon retirement. Leroy was a highly respected consulting engineer in the Jackson community where he was responsible for many large commercial air-conditioning, plumbing and fire protection designs.

During Leroy's career as a Mechanical Contractor and Mechanical Engineer, he continued his father's commitment to ASHRAE where he progressed through the chapter offices eventually becoming chapter president. Leroy remained active with his support of the Mississippi Chapter throughout his career. Leroy has been a longtime friend and partner to our chapter's most recognized members, David Butler.

Leroy and his wife Linda have two children, Buddy and Holly, and two grandchildren. Leroy and Linda have been enjoying their retirement going on two years now and are active riding motorcycles across the country.