

2019

# FUSION HALL OF FAME





## ESTABLISHING THE FUSION HALL OF FAME

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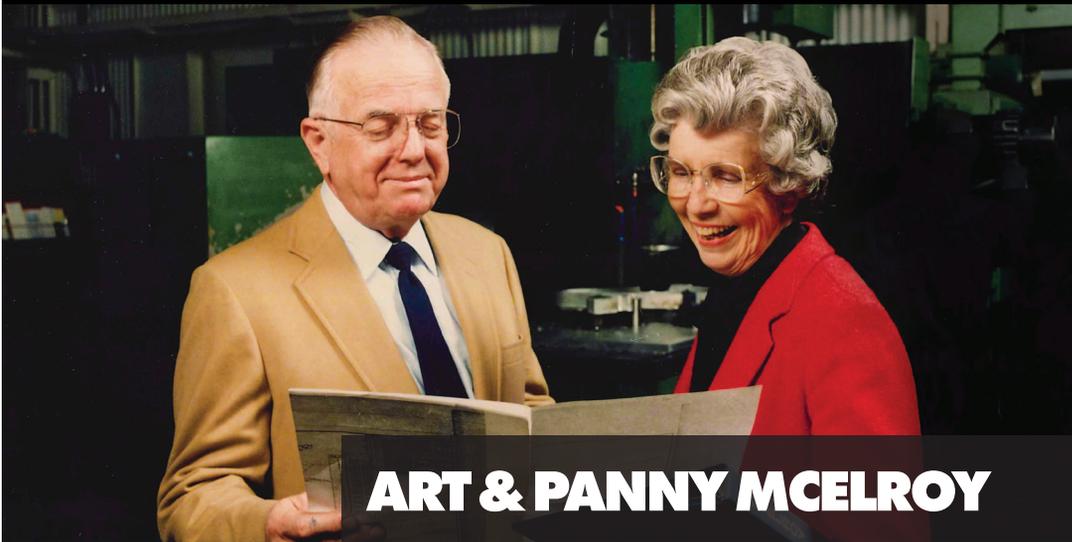
AS MCELROY CELEBRATES ITS 50TH YEAR OF MAKING FUSION EQUIPMENT, WE REALIZE THAT THE FUSIBLE PLASTIC PIPE INDUSTRY WOULD NOT HAVE ADVANCED WITHOUT THE EFFORTS OF LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE. SIR ISAAC NEWTON SAID IN 1675 AND THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THE FUSION INDUSTRY, "IF I SEE FURTHER IT IS BY STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS." THE WONDERFUL SUCCESSES WE ENJOY TODAY ARE THANKS TO THE FUSION 'GIANTS' WHO CAME BEFORE US AND PAVED THE WAY.

SO THIS YEAR, WE ARE ANNOUNCING THE INAUGURAL CLASS FOR OUR **FUSION HALL OF FAME**. THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION IS BASED ON THE LONG-TERM INFLUENCE AND IMPACT THESE NOTABLE FIGURES HAVE HAD ON OUR INDUSTRY. OUR SELECTION COMMITTEE, CONSISTING OF BOTH MCELROY AND OUR CHANNEL PARTNERS, CONSIDERED MORE THAN 30 PEOPLE WHO WERE ALL WORTHY OF SUCH AN HONOR. ULTIMATELY, THAT LIST WAS NARROWED DOWN TO FIVE AMAZING PEOPLE: MCELROY FOUNDERS **ART AND PANNY MCELROY, OLE LARSEN** AND **JEAN LOUTHAN** (PHILLIPS PRODUCTS CO./PHILLIPS DRISCOPE) AND **BILL ROBBINS** (MASKELL-ROBBINS).

WE ARE ALSO EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THAT AN HONOR WALL WILL BE ESTABLISHED AT THE MCELROY TECHNICAL CENTER, WHERE A PLAQUE MEMORIALIZING EACH INDUCTEE'S CONTRIBUTION TO OUR INDUSTRY MAY BE DISPLAYED SO THAT FUSION STUDENTS OF TODAY, AND VISITORS ALIKE, CAN LEARN ABOUT THE ICONS OF OUR INDUSTRY. WITH THIS INAUGURAL CLASS, THE MAIN HALLWAY IN THE TECHNICAL CENTER IS NOW DULY CHRISTENED THE "FUSION HALL OF FAME."

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## MEET THE FUSION HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2019.



## ART & PANNY MCELROY

### SETTING THE STAGE

**EVERYTHING THAT MCELROY IS TODAY** stems from the firm roots of its founders, Art and Panny McElroy, and their groundbreaking work in the fusion industry.

With dreams and courage fully intact, they opened their own job shop business in the garage of their home in 1954. Art was an outstanding inventor, mechanical engineer and businessman, so while he designed and built, Panny oversaw the accounting functions and payroll. She liked to remind everyone that she was the first employee.

People who knew them say they were great teachers and held themselves to a higher standard than they expected from others. As a couple, they were dynamic, considerate of others at all levels, and made visitors and guests feel genuinely welcome. Working with their clients closely, work sessions often flowed into a family dinner that fostered enduring friendships as well as trusted business partnerships.

David Dutton, one of the first salesmen, recalls Art saying that you can work all your life to establish your integrity and lose it in a matter of seconds if you compromise it. Art and Panny shared many other powerful lessons. Read and be willing to learn. Be gracious and kind. There are a million ways something doesn't work — you only need to find one that does. Love your family. These were words to live by.

### MAKE US A FUSION MACHINE

In 1969, when Phillips Driscopipe asked Art to design a better-equipped machine for their high-density polyethylene (PE) pipe product, he did what he is famous for. He pulled out his yellow pad and black felt-tip pen and started sketching.

For 15 years already, he had been designing custom parts and machines to serve his clients' specific needs. At the time, McElroy made everything from boat brackets and aerospace tooling to blow and injection molds, molded part processing machinery as well as a very successful line of fintube machines that were gaining acceptance all over the world.

A fusion machine would be Art's next challenge and being a solutions provider was his specialty. He presented his first fusion prototype, a small 2-inch machine, to Phillips and told them if they were interested, he would like to redesign it to balance the forces, which became the patented Centerline Guidance System — a cornerstone feature of all McElroy fusion equipment today.

David recalls Art saying that there's nearly always a weak point on any new project,

something that keeps you from being successful. But PE pipe was different. He didn't see any weak links. He didn't see any stumbling blocks – he saw a future. He thought it could be a real industry.

"I think he was the first to recognize this was more than a job shop deal," David said.

### **SELLING THE GAS DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY ON FUSION**

Art's tougher and more rugged machine was superior to anything available at the time. Phillips quickly was able to sell 25 of them along with their gas pipe and fittings to Kansas Gas Service. Together, they would work the natural gas industry and see if they could make something out of this PE business. They were off to the races.

The first machine that launched the business was a 4" Hand Pump and more sizes developed rapidly after that. There were stationary machines, then wheeled and self-contained models. By 1974, McElroy offered a range of machines from the smallest 2" to the prototype 48". McElroy would eventually sell machines direct while Phillips focused on their pipe and fittings. One by one, gas companies came on board and the McElroy-Phillips partnership began to dominate the industry with their innovative solution for gas delivery.

### **INVENTING & IMPROVING BUTT FUSION**

Fellow Fusion Hall of Famer Jean Louthan, a Chemical Engineer for Phillips, conducted the first fusion demonstrations during promotional tours. Everyone looked up to him, but his perfectionism intimidated a lot of people who were learning to fuse pipe. There's one person he didn't intimidate though. Art McElroy.

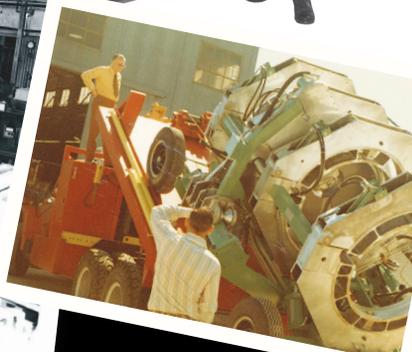
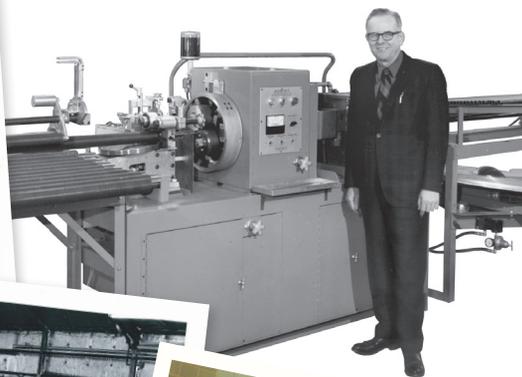
"I don't know that Art could be intimidated," said Ted Striplin, one of McElroy's first salesmen. "There's no competing with Art McElroy when it comes to mechanical engineering. He would get an idea and sketch something in two seconds and more than likely it was an answer to a problem."

Jean and Art got along famously. They respected each other and acknowledged what each brought to the industry. While Jean would hail Phillips as the inventors of butt fusion, Art would add that McElroy improved it.

Many tried to replicate McElroy's equipment over the years, but Art wouldn't make it easy. His philosophy was to stay ahead of the game by investing in engineering and product development and the business flourished as a result – McElroy became the leading innovator of pipe fusion equipment. Art eventually held 30 U.S. and foreign patents on fusion equipment and eight patents on fusion-related equipment.



(Above, clockwise) Art McElroy shakes hands with Jean Louthan (left) at Phillips facility in Perryton, Texas; Art and the No. 3 fintube machine; Art loading a MegaMc®; Panny McElroy in the shop.



## TRAINING THE WORLD'S FUSION OPERATORS

Being committed to the industry on every level, Art dreamed of having a formal training facility. McElroy University was established in 1981 to ensure that operators and inspectors develop best fusion practices. It was also around this time that Art recognized McElroy needed distributors to help sell equipment on a broader scale. It was a natural progression because the market was already established for McElroy machines and, unlike its competitors, fusion was the major part of McElroy's business.

## LEGACY

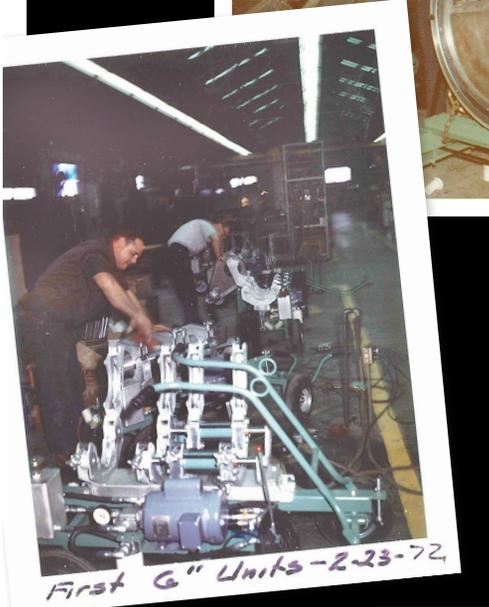
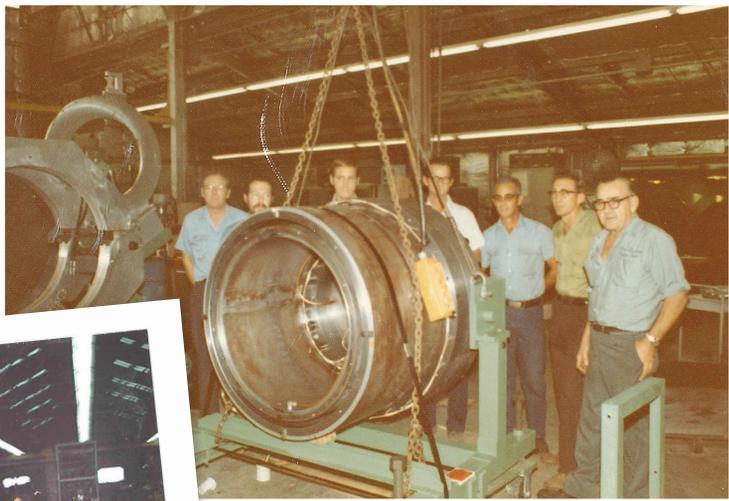
Following Art's death in 1988, Panny became CEO, and helped steer the company into its next successful phase with the second generation of the family at the helm. Upon her retirement in 1996, executive leadership of McElroy passed to her and Art's children, Chip McElroy, Donna Dutton and Peggy Tanner. Panny passed away in 2006 and though she and Art are no longer here, their legacy lives on through the values they instilled, the innovations that are still alive in our equipment today and the culture of hard work, partnership, creativity and teamwork which they nurtured and inspired.

Art truly wanted to help people solve problems and give them the tools they needed to create the best infrastructure the world has to offer. That same calling holds true today. Then and now, McElroy seeks input from users in the field in a constant effort to improve and help make their work easier and more productive. Striving for excellence and setting ambitious goals continues to be an integral part of the culture at McElroy and that is all due to the examples set by Art and Panny McElroy. They instilled everyone with one thought, that there is nothing out of reach with determination and a steadfast vision.

McElroy succeeded in gaining a stronghold in natural gas distribution after making that critical decision to make fusion equipment 50 years ago. Today, thermoplastics are gaining ground in nearly every industry as heat-fused, leak-free joints are accepted as a reliable piping solution. McElroy continues to expand its line of pipe fusion products and has the most extensive line of fusion machines in the industry with more than 400,000 square feet of facility space around the world. There's still a long way to go, but it's still early in the journey and Art's gut feelings about fusion 50 years ago are no less true today. There's a real future in fusion.



(Above, clockwise) Art McElroy and a fusion machine lineup outside the Fulton office (above); Art with the 4" Hand Pump and Art in his office.





**OLE LARSEN**

## A CHANCE TO THRIVE

**OLAF “OLE” LARSEN WAS WORKING FOR** a natural gas company in South Dakota when a former mechanical engineering classmate told him that he should be working for Phillips Petroleum Company. It was a great company with great benefits. So in 1952, Ole made the move to Bartlesville, Okla., and began working in automotive fuels research. There was one problem though — it wasn't satisfying his ambition. As he put it to his son, Gary Larsen of Tulsa, “*someone would have to die*” for him to get a promotion.

But there was another research division that was fresh with new opportunities. It stemmed from Phillips' invention of HDPE (high-density polyethylene) pipe resin in 1951 followed by the butt fusion joining method in 1955. When they started a new division to market PE pipe ran by some of the company's youngest, brightest minds, he jumped on it and thrived.

### **MARKETING POLYETHYLENE**

In order to sell PE pipe, they had to show potential customers how it worked and that it worked. One of his first marketing projects was to convince Wham-O, creator of the Hula Hoop, they could make a better product using their specially-formulated, extruded pipe because it could be butt fused together which would eliminate the toy's wooden dowels and staples.

Gary remembers an impromptu fusion experiment in the family kitchen vividly. His father brought some of the pipe home and they melted the ends using his mother's electric skillet then

pressed them together by hand. Voilà — fusion!

“I think that's probably the first butt fusion that occurred,” Gary said.

Their efforts would pay off but not necessarily in Hula Hoops. PE pipe would go on to stake a massive claim in the energy industry. Before the '50s came to a close, the first PE gas distribution system was installed in Caney, Kan., and PE pipe quickly became the choice material for gas distribution across the country.

### **DRISCOPIPE AND DIES**

Ole created a special extrusion die for thermoplastic material that was patented in 1968. He also got that promotion. He was Director of Engineering, in charge of the equipment for making and handling Phillips' high-performance gas piping product they branded as Driscopipe (known today as Performance Pipe) at the company's plant in Pryor, Okla. McElroy was contracted to make the dies for Phillips' proprietary M7000 resin used to produce Driscopipe

7000 gas pipe and 7600 industrial/water pipe. Based on Ole's design, these dies were machined from high alloy stainless steel forgings to close tolerances and polished to a mirror finish. The fine finish gave the pipe the smooth, shiny appearance both outside and inside that other pipe did not have, which enhanced its performance.

In 1969, McElroy would create its first fusion machine for Phillips which further solidified the relationship. Together with quality pipe and equipment, they would dominate the gas distribution market for years to come.

### A LIFETIME RELATIONSHIP

Ole had a special relationship with Art McElroy built on mutual respect, trust, shared values and they genuinely liked each other. The same should be noted for their wives, Joyce Larsen and Panny McElroy.

Gary said Ole and Art worked together like brothers. Both men's objective was to improve the quality of the pipe and

## THERMOPLASTICS WAS A NEW FRONTIER AND THERE WAS NO PAST TO FALL BACK ON.

the productivity of extrusion, while at the same time reducing costs. Much of their collaboration was by phone when a problem arose or one of them had an idea to discuss. Most of their discussions ended with Ole saying, "Go ahead, do it." This was when McElroy was about to build something just a little different, and most often it was successful. There was no need for a purchase order, trust traveled over the phone.

Ole played a critical role in Driscopipe's early success in producing superior PE pipe that far exceeded all ASTM and other code requirements. Today, Performance Pipe has seven ISO 9000 certified manufacturing plants in the US.

### LEGACY

Though Gary didn't follow in his father's footsteps when it came to quantum mechanics, he played a significant marketing role in the fusion business as a commercial photographer. In 1973, he opened a studio and began a business relationship with McElroy that grew significantly over the years as more and more kinds and sizes of fusion equipment hit the market.

Ole moved to Dallas in the '70s when Driscopipe relocated its administrative offices. He passed away in 2014, leaving behind his wife Joyce, of Dallas, and his only child and son, Gary.

In life, Ole was a trailblazer. He wasn't mired by old traditions and ways of doing things. Thermoplastics was a new frontier and there was no past to fall back on. He would play a leading role in determining the traditions and procedures that would lead the industry into the future. Gary said his father was the kind of person who welcomed that challenge and that he, along with Art, were perfectionists who did everything that needed to be done to make sure things were right.

"Dad never failed," he said.





## JEAN LOUTHAN

### FUSION DEMO EXTRAORDINAIRE

**JEAN LOUTHAN, A CHEMICAL ENGINEER** for Phillips Petroleum Company, was the original fusion demonstration artist. If you ask those who knew Jean in the early days of fusion, they will grin slyly and say that he was ... "intense." They'll say he was a serious perfectionist and that he didn't want to talk about anything but plastic pipe. But he had good reason why. It was his life, and everyone in fusion today is better off for it.

Before McElroy fusion machines were first developed for Phillips in 1969, Jean was developing fusion procedures. He made it clear that Phillips invented butt fusion, but Art McElroy, a gifted mechanical engineer, would add that McElroy improved it. Jean and Art respected each other deeply for the knowledge in their respective fields.

#### WINNING THEM OVER

Jean's ability to instruct and his unique understanding of the capabilities of thermo-plastics played a key role in the early days of promoting the Phillips Driscopipe 7000 product to the gas industry. But it wouldn't be easy. Steel ruled the day and it would take some convincing to change that mentality. Even when the engineers were sold on polyethylene as an ideal piping material for gas distribution, they still had to win over the construction contractors.

One of the most effective marketing tools were the Phillips educational tours. These four-day tours were spectacularly organized

and would take place three or four times a year. Some 20 to 30 engineering and operations personnel from an assortment of gas companies would be flown to Houston to visit the Sweeney refinery where PE is made and Blackwell Plastics to see where the carbon black and other antioxidants were blended. Then they would go to a pipe plant, usually in Brownwood, Texas, or Pryor, Okla., then on to the Plastics Technical Center in Bartlesville and finally to McElroy.

At McElroy, the group would tour the plant then go to a butt and saddle fusion demonstration, and this is where Jean took command. He loved to fuse pipe and for the first year or so performed all the fusion demonstrations.

"He knew what he was doing and had an aura of authority," recalled Ted Striplin, a salesman for McElroy at the time. "He didn't trust anyone else to do the demos until he saw that Dave (Dutton) and I knew what the heck we were doing. He was a mentor definitely."

## **MCELROY'S MECHANICAL ADVANTAGE**

Ted chuckles recalling Jean's first experiences fusing pipe with McElroy machines. He was used to equipment with a 2-1 mechanical advantage. "You really had to lay on that thing," Ted said. But McElroy's machines had an 11-1 mechanical advantage and were much more powerful and rugged. "But (Jean) would still lay on that thing. It was the hardest thing in the world to try to explain that he didn't have to push that hard, but we finally got him settled down."

Art designed McElroy fusion machines with equal distribution of force around the diameter of the pipe, which became the patented Centerline Guidance System. This was a winning design feature that made joining pipe so much easier and helped demonstrate the quality of polyethylene as a reliable application. Eventually, Jean felt comfortable that McElroy's salespeople understood polyethylene well enough to perform their own fusion machine demonstrations. McElroy would also start selling its machines direct while Phillips focused on making pipe and fittings.

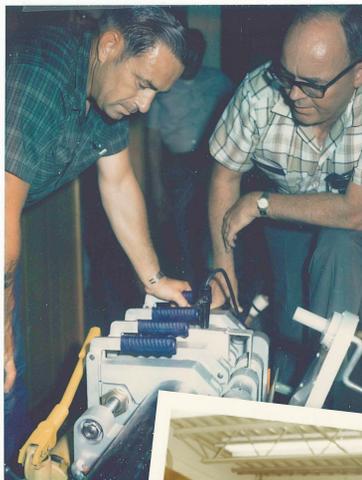
## **LEGACY**

With a combination of the tours and Jean's and his associates continued marketing efforts they were successful with several major gas companies choosing to become early adopters of Driscopipe 7000. These included Kansas Gas Service, Washington Gas Service, Con Ed, Brooklyn Union Gas, Niagara Mohawk (National Grid), New Mexico Gas Company, Washington Gas Light Company in DC, PSE&G in New Jersey, Baltimore Gas in Maryland, Columbia Gas in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky, North Shore Gas in Chicago, Michigan Consolidated Gas, Consumers Energy in Michigan and others.

Jean recognized the importance of industry organizations and code bodies and was an early and active participant in the Plastic Pipe Institute (PPI), the Plastic Materials Committee of the American Gas Association (PMC/AGA), ASTM, ASME and others. He was also largely responsible for McElroy joining these organizations.

An apparatus for sidewall fusion was patented in 1973 authored by Jean as well as Arlow Helm of Pryor; Ralph Wynne, Gale Roush and Donald Conkling, all of Bartlesville, and Art McElroy of Tulsa.

Jean was respected by his co-workers and competitors alike for his knowledge and commitment to the industry. Much of his authorship remains in many of the codes and standards today. Jean died in 2006 in Sandy, Utah.



*Jean Louthan took pride in performing the first McElroy fusion machine demonstrations and commanded the attention of everyone he trained.*

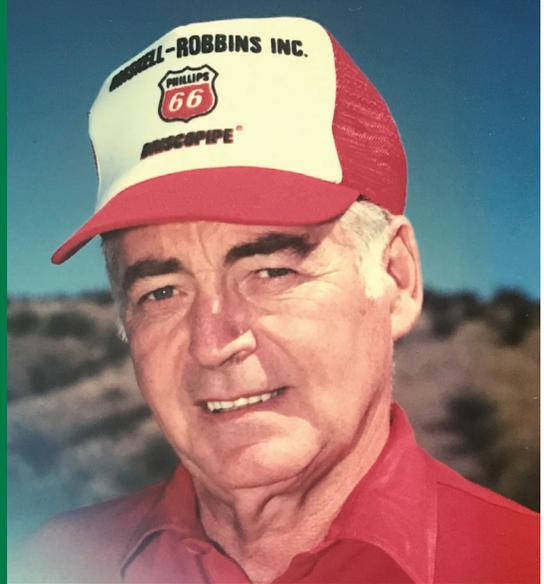


## IN THE BEGINNING

**BILL ROBBINS CAME INTO THE FUSION** industry via the steel industry. He was working at Ryerson Steel Co., in Seattle, and they had a plastics division that was importing PE pipe from Germany. His first job was relining a wood-stave pipe with 14" pipe. He had no experience fusing pipe at the time so Ralph Maskell stepped in to help. Ralph was the new director of the company's PE pipe division in Chicago and came to Seattle to show Bill how to put pipe together.

Bill drove Ralph a little crazy during that first fusion. The fusion machine was old, antiquated, with very few hydraulic parts and was made in Germany. The more Bill pumped the pipe toward the cutting head, the harder he made it for Ralph to trim the pipe for fusion. The whole procedure made trimming a hard job.

"When I was pumping, he was pulling on that facer trying to cut the shavings off the pipe. It was awful. Very hard to operate," Bill said.



**BILL ROBBINS**

### STARTING A PE BUSINESS

Fast forward a few years, and as Bill kept looking at his company's PE products, he could see they weren't doing it correctly. He had seen McElroy machines working successfully on other jobsites with Phillips Driscopipe so he got in touch with them in 1975 and essentially sealed his fate in fusion. It was that same year Bill asked Ralph if he would like to start a company selling Driscopipe and McElroy machines. And like a page out of Art McElroy's book, who had started his business in a small garage a couple decades earlier, Ralph moved into Bill's basement which served doubly as Maskell-Robbins' first office.

Bill was first introduced to McElroy machines at a Washington Natural Gas jobsite. They were fusing PE pipe with 2" and 4" McElroy machines. But Bill was struck by their 6" machine back at their shop. It was all hydraulic and Bill thought it would be a pretty good machine to put pipe together so he called McElroy and asked what size machines were available. When he found out up to 12", he immediately wanted one so he went to the bank for a loan. The first bank thought PE might be a risky investment and turned him down. But he got lucky at the

second bank and soon he was the owner of a 12" hydraulic fusion machine.

### PROFIT IN THE FIRST YEAR

After making a profit their first year, they were able to purchase a second machine in 1976 — McElroy's new 18" machine. Bill and Ralph knew they were on to something good and each brought their unique talents to the business. Bill was focused on sales, business and distribution while Ralph was the hands-on person wearing the technical hat. They would bill their company as a one-stop, full-service distributor having the highest quality materials, equipment, shop facilities and expertise.

### THE FIRST 36"

Seeing that business was going strong, Art McElroy called Bill one day and said he was building a 36" machine and wanted him to buy it. The asking price was \$150,000 and Bill thought that was a lot of money, but Art said, "*Bill just buy it.*" So Bill bought the first 36" machine and he got so busy he had to buy another, then another and another and so on.

One of those 36" jobs was in Hawaii. Bill was fusing 24" pipe on one side of the road at the same

time a competitor was fusing 14" pipe on the other side with an old, mostly manually-operated machine. Bill noticed the 14" pipe started moving the opposite direction and figured they must be finished fusing the pipe. But he soon found out why they changed direction when the competitor's operator came up to Bill and said, "Could you please not have your machine around our pipe anymore?" As it turned out, the project engineer had compared machines and how the pipe was being fused in each case and had asked the competitor's operator to cut out a number of joints.

Bill said he was proud to be using a McElroy machine and fusing Driscopipe that day. When he left the jobsite, the 14" pipe was still lying on the ground, untouched.

### **GROWING THE BUSINESS**

Throughout the rest of the '70s and into the early '80s, business was booming at Maskell-Robbins. They grew from 2 to 80 people. They moved from the Seattle basement office and eventually to a building in Mountlake Terrace, Wash. They opened offices in Salt Lake City, Reno, Anchorage, Houston, Tucson, Watsonville and Santa Ana.

Bill said they never had a problem hiring people and they never had to look. They had earned a great reputation and people came to them. Customers from the mines came to work for him as well as people in construction, engineers, bankers, accountants, the metal industry, PE pipe manufacturers and relatives.

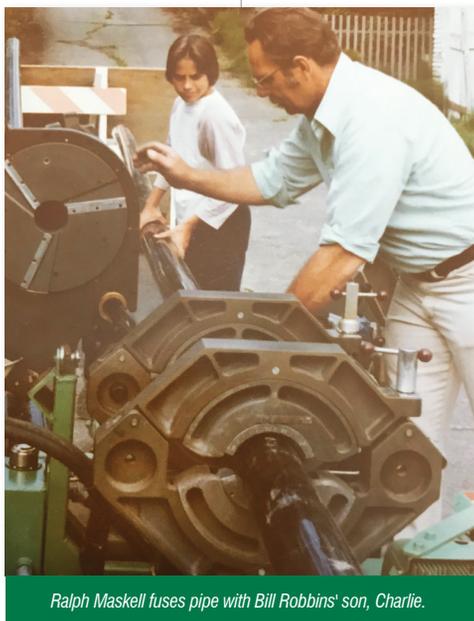
### **SELLING THE PE SOLUTION**

Maskell-Robbins was selling for industrial projects including sewers and chemical plants and

were doing a lot with the mining industry. They successfully demonstrated to the mines that they could save them a lot of money if they replaced their stainless steel with PE pipe, which came to be a godsend for the mining industry.

Bill found the best way to have more PE pipe on jobs was to work with consulting engineering firms. They would meet with the engineers during their so-called Brown Bag lunch hours. They would talk about PE pipe and usually have a small McElroy machine that they could use to fuse pipe. Brown Bag lunches were very beneficial to Maskell-Robbins because the engineers they talked to would alert them when a project they designed was going out for bid.

"Having the confidence of the engineers really helped when dealing with contractors," Bill said. "The engineers would almost always recommend Maskell-Robbins as the preferred supplier. The engineers knew we had the necessary equipment and experience to do the job. We were ready to go."



Ralph Maskell fuses pipe with Bill Robbins' son, Charlie.

### **THE 1648'S FIRST JOB IN AFRICA**

McElroy's large-diameter market wouldn't be where it is today without Maskell-Robbins' tremendous successes on big jobs in the formative years. As one of the first four owners of the 18" machine and the first owner of the 36" machine, they would also own the first production 1648.

It was around 1982 when Bill was working with a South African engineering firm that was determined to land a major water and sewer line project for a pulp and paper mill in Richards Bay that extended into the Indian Ocean. Bill

**YOU HAVE 100 PERCENT ON EVERY WELD IF YOU DO IT THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE DONE. THERE WAS NOT A MACHINE AROUND THAT COULD EVEN COMPETE WITH A MCELROY MACHINE.**

and the engineers flew in to Tulsa and told Art they needed a 48" machine. Bill said it was the most positive thing the engineers had heard on their trip when Art said, *"No problem. I'll have your machine ready before you're ready to fuse pipe."*

Ralph would spend two years in South Africa fusing pipe with that first 1648 machine. He fused 48", 42", 36", 24" and 18" pipelines — all of them about 18,000 feet long. The 1648 definitely made an impression. The engineers were ecstatic.

"It was a very large project for us," Bill said. "The machine was flawless and worked very well under some very windy conditions. The contractor had to replace the tent Ralph was working under four times during the fusion of pipe. Ralph also had to watch for alligators after seeing the posted signs."

Complementing the machine's prowess was the fusion operator who kept the machine spotless.

"Ralph was the kind of guy that wiped a machine down after every joint. He was German and meticulous. Wherever he went, he had a rag sticking out the back of his pocket to wipe the machine down," Bill said.

Maskell-Robbins would come to sell and fuse pipe around the world. They went to Alaska, Peru, Chile, Burma, Jamaica and even the former Air Force Base on Johnston Island not to mention all the jobs in the States from Houston to Dutch Harbor and Barrow, Alaska. Because they were developing such a good reputation, they would often get calls from industries when they were in a jam.

One such emergency involved a problem at a pulp mill. An immediate fix was needed or they would have to shut their mill down. It went something like this: *"You're highly recommended by a pulp mill engineer in Vancouver, B.C. Canada. They said you know as much about fusing as anyone in the country. Can you come tomorrow?"*

When they found out the caller was in Durban, South Africa, it didn't dissuade them. Ralph boarded a plane and got there as quick as he could some 33 hours later.

### HOW TO SELL A MACHINE

Bill says it was easy to sell a McElroy machine — all you had to do was let them look at it. If someone was interested, they'd invite them to a jobsite to see how it worked. It wasn't unusual for a group of 30 to 40 engineers and city officials from sewer and water departments to surround their machine and watch them fuse pipe.

"You have 100 percent on every weld if you do it the way it's supposed to be done. There was not a machine around that could even compete with a McElroy machine," Bill said.

### LEGACY

McElroy would not have grown to where it is today without Maskell-Robbins. Bill was a huge force in establishing PE in new markets. Looking back on his career, he describes it as both fun and challenging.

"It was kind of a gamble and it paid off," he said. "I was pretty confident we could do it."

And with a good dose of confidence, it never hurts to be in sync with your fusion machine manufacturer and to share the same passion for the fusion industry.

"I really enjoyed Art. He was a good guy. Smart. He knew what he was doing," Bill said. "When he developed Centerline (Guidance) fusion, it made a big difference in fusing pipe. Using hydraulically-operated machines was also a big plus as it made the process of fusing pipe much easier and faster for the fusion tech."

Bill is now 86 years young and living a great life in Bellingham, Wash., with his wife, Ann.



