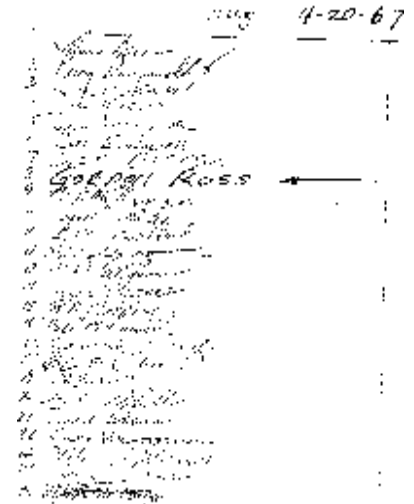


GORDON ROSS & TEXAS AIR PRODUCTS, LTD.



On December 30, 1957, Gordon Ross returned from Germany, accepted his final discharge papers and leaves the Army behind. Gordon was quoted as saying, "I am pretty darn glad to be getting out of the army after two years!" (At least that's what we can print.) A short, focus-filled four years later, on May 30, 1962, Gordon accepts his diploma from the University of Texas and a degree in Industrial Management. He originally thought he would spend his career at some manufacturing plant and work his way up to becoming a supervisor on an assembly line. Gordon initially dreamed of becoming a manager, having an office with a window that looked out over the assembly line, and sit in his chair and say I finally made it! Well, that didn't happen!

Gordon took a job with Honeywell in San Antonio and eventually learned "a bunch" about controls and HVAC systems. After several years in the San Antonio office, Gordon was transferred to Shreveport, Louisiana. Once there Gordon, and his lovely wife, Carol, learned all about Cajun food, and other interesting local facts. While in Shreveport, Gordon met William (Bill) Harrison, another salesman, who was a graduate from the University of Arkansas and who had begun working for Trane. Gordon introduced Bill around town and they became friends, attending the same church in Shreveport, and making calls throughout Northern Louisiana and the East Texas area. Bill is now the Trane representative in Little Rock, and is currently serving his second and final year as one of ASHRAE Society's Vice Presidents. Incidentally, Bill's son Drew also works for Trane and was in Austin for several years and served on the BOG for the Austin Chapter. Early on, Gordon saw the value of becoming an ASHRAE member and actively attended the meetings in Shreveport. At the right is the April 20, 1967 sign-in sheet from the Shreveport ASHRAE Chapter.



Gordon left Shreveport for Dallas in 1969 in another transfer with Honeywell, and worked a few more years before going to work for a rep firm. One of Gordon's fondest memories of the Honeywell job, and a story when started by Gordon immediately causes raised hands to go up in the air, was when on the first day on the job his boss comes in to get Gordon and they go dove hunting by noon. Here's Gordon on his first day on the job and the boss is taking him hunting for half of the day. That story still puts a big smile on Gordon's face, and he always said that job really beat going to college. (Note that, at Gordon's urging, employees immediately raise their hands in the air when Gordon starts to tell – repeat - his stories; signaling that they had heard that one before!).

Gordon really enjoyed working for Honeywell, but after a few management changes, and the fact he didn't really like his new boss (can you imagine Gordon not liking someone?), Gordon went to work for the rep firm company called Woodco Mechanical Representatives in 1971. On February 1, 1976, Gordon took a job with Welco Sales in Dallas leaving Woodco behind. With the new job Gordon was able to move to Austin, where he opened an office and became the Austin Branch Manager. Gordon remained with Welco Sales for three years during which time he was the only person on staff covering the entire area of south Texas from Austin and San Antonio to Corpus and the Rio Grande valley. At the time, Gordon's main line was Titus.

Gordon joined another local rep firm Mechanical Reps (MRI) in Austin on November 1, 1978. MRI had decided to get into the air distribution business and worked out an agreement with Welco Sales and Gordon, while Welco decided to close the Austin office. Gordon remained with MRI for about 4-1/2 years until he wanted to own his own rep firm. The Austin office of Texas Air Products – TAP – was born on June 24, 1983. Gordon continued to represent Titus and through-out the years became the representative of numerous other brands such as Ruskin and Loren Cook.



At the right is the 1987-1988 Officers and BOG for the Austin ASHRAE Chapter. From L-R are: Pres. Ron Jackson, Pres-Elect Jeff Brouillette, VP Tim Waugh, Sec. Mike Davidson, Treas. Mel Foster, and Past Presidents. Bill Brydson, Steve Jaeger, and Frank Gerling, along with [Gordon Ross](#). Manuel Del Valle not shown.

Gordon became involved in the Austin Chapter of ASHRAE as soon as he moved to Austin. Over the years Gordon participated in the Chapter, attended meetings and helped by providing occasional speakers and information for

numerous technical sessions and programs. During Society year 1987-1988, Gordon was elected to the Austin Chapter's Board of Governors (BOG). That year's Officers and BOG consisted of President Ron Jackson, P.E.; President Elect Jeff Brouillette, P.E.; Vice President Tim Waugh, P.E.; Secretary Mike Davidson (also of MRI); Treasurer Mel Foster (Fox Service); Past Presidents Steve Jaeger, P.E.; Bill Brydson, P.E., and Frank Gerling, P.E.; and Manuel Del Valle. During that year, the Austin Register consisted of Volume 30, Numbers 1 through 10 and exists as a complete set within the Austin History Center's archives. The November 19, 1987 meeting that year was designated "Research Night", and Gordon assisted in getting Mr. Tom Finn from Ruskin to speak on "Fire and Smoke Dampers" for the program, as well as Mr. Jerry Brown of Dow Corning to review "Fire Seals" for the technical session.

Gordon opened the San Antonio office of TAP with Mike Stewart, another refugee from Honeywell, on January 2, 1985. The office worked out of a converted utility room off Mike's garage, with the washer and dryer still in there for convenience, and with Mike's mother working as part-time secretary. Unfortunately, the sales were not as good as expected and the office shut down after a short, non-productive period.

About 11 months later, in November 1987, Gordon was able to re-start the office when Billy Stigent, a long-time Alamo Refrigeration employee, came to work for him. Mr. Jack Henry started with TAP in the Austin office within a month or two after Billy started in San Antonio. This was the same time Danny Grant left the Austin office to go back to Houston to work for H.D. Grant Company (his father), after working for TAP for about 3 years. Kathy Walker, currently TAP's Chief Financial Officer, was the official Den Mother with Gordon, Billy, and Jack on board as Danny was leaving. Kathy now has 20 years with TAP while Jack has 18. Throughout TAP's early years, several other employees joined TAP and remain to this day: Claudette Minor (SA – 15 years); Mike Furlong (SA -14 years); Ferdie Burket (Weslaco – 14 years); and Joe Puente (SA – 12 years), to name a few. It speaks highly of Gordon's philosophy and how he treated people that very few employees have wanted to leave over the years.

On November 14, 1989, Robert Stinson, P.E., joined TAP (15 years) after Gordon coerced him with many lunches and made him go kicking and screaming down to SA. Robert had a good friend and sweetheart named Gigi who already lived in San Antonio, so that actually made Gordon's job easier in convincing Robert to move to SA. Shortly after Robert joined the company, Billy Stigent decided to move on. Another interesting note is that Robert left a local engineering firm called Espey, Huston & Associates to go to work for Gordon and TAP. Robert's replacement at the time was this author. Life's funny when you think about it all. Over the years, this author had many conversations with Gordon regarding HVAC equipment and selections, but I did not think that I would go to work for him; and, eventually work for another engineer whom I had replaced 15 years ago in the consulting business. In the short time of working with Gordon, my fondest memory will be assisting in troubleshooting VAV boxes and supply air distribution issues; and, holding a ladder while Gordon is stuck up into the ceiling tile somewhere. Gordon eventually sold the company to Robert in 2002, and continued to run the Austin office until December 31, 2004 when he decided it was time to retire after being in the business for 42 years. Gordon has been to a few more ASHRAE meetings lately, and I sincerely hope he continues to make a few more in the years to come.

On his last day of work, Gordon was quoted: "What an emotional high I always get when I stop to think about and realize that I started something in 1983 that gave an opportunity to so many people to find a working home and a place to build a career. I'll be able to look back for the rest of my life and say, 'Yeah, I had a company with offices in Austin and San Antonio and Weslaco (Know where Weslaco is? It's down in the Valley near McAllen--that's what I always say to people). We're a manufacturers' rep firm, and we sell equipment to contractors in the construction industry--mostly heating and air-conditioning stuff--no, I don't know how to work on the condensing unit on your house, but we were in that kind of business, only on bigger kinds of projects--big ol' fans with 100 horsepower motors and things like that that you'd find up in the penthouse on the top of a big building--stuff like that.' Proud? You bet. Lucky? The absolute luckiest. Grateful to all of you? A great big YOU BET!"

Gordon has always been grateful to have had the opportunity to work with everyone in this business including ASHRAE!

Respectively submitted,
Randy Schrecengost, Historian

At right, a true Texas Gentleman, Gordon Ross accepts his Gold Watch from all the TAP employees.

