OBITUARY

Donald A. Sayenga

4th June 1934 – 26th February 2019

Donald A. Sayenga, 84, passed away peacefully at home, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on 26th February 2019. He was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on 4th June 1934.

Donald graduated from Lafayette College in 1956, with a Bachelor’s Degree in Metallurgic Engineering. He then pursued his graduate studies at Lehigh University. During his years at Lafayette College, he participated in football, track and field, choir, and wrestling. Donald took military leave in 1957 to attend the U.S. Army Ordnance School and served in the Army Reserve as an ordnance officer for eight years. In 1976, he was inducted into the Lafayette Hall of Fame, as a two-time heavy weight champion. In 1993 he received the Order of Merit from the National Wrestling Hall of Fame for his writing and research on amateur wrestling.

Don was an executive for Bethlehem Steel’s wire rope division in Williamsport before retiring after 30 years’ service. Following this, Donald (and his wife Carlene) were active and integral members of the Associated Wire Rope Fabricators (AWRF), where he served as the Chief Executive for 16 years. In 2004, he was named as the first Life Member of the Associated Wire Rope Fabricators. Donald also served as Chairman of the Domestic Wire Rope & Specialty Cable Manufacturers.

Donald had an enquiring mind and natural love for research that, coupled with his passion for the history of wire ropes, led to many articles, papers and books. His publications include Ellet and Roebling and Washington Roebling’s Father. As an
authority on John Roebling he took part in the 200th Anniversary celebrations of the birth of John A. Roebling in Mühlhausen, Germany, and he presented at the John A. Roebling Symposium, 2006, at Polytechnic University in New York City.

He served for many years as Historian of the Wire Association International (WAI), Connecticut. In 2000, he received the Mordica Medal, the highest award of the WAI, for his efforts to document the history of the wire industry.

Donald was also an active member of OIPEEC, and many people will remember him at conferences presenting papers and as an eloquent story teller with a wonderful sense of humour. He nurtured the co-operation between OIPEEC and AWRF, and in 1999 was elected as President of OIPEEC.

Don was President of OIPEEC from 1999 to 2001, during which time he organised the OIPEEC conference at Lehigh University, Bethlehem in 2001, and was for many years chair of the (most active) working group: History of rope. Don was made an Honorary Member of OIPEEC in 2006.

Don and Carlene had two children, Bryn and Mattheu. In 2013 Donald and Carlene had to suffer the most unbearable thing imaginable for any parent: their daughter Bryn died from a cancer at the age of 42. They showed great fortitude to cope with the situation focusing on supporting their grand-son Aaron.

In recent years failing health meant that it was not so easy for Don to travel to Europe from America, or to participate in conferences, but he still kept an active interest in OIPEEC and in the History of Rope. Donald was working on *The History of the Wire Rope’s Invention* at the time of his death.

OIPEEC is also saddened to report that Don’s wife Carlene passed away on 22nd October 2020.

(Compiled from contributions from OIPEEC members)
OBITUARY

John Wainwright 1928 – 2020

By Richard Chaplin

John Wainwright became one of the gurus of wire rope technology, and in the field of rope hoisting systems for mines he stood at the forefront. He graduated from Witwatersrand University (Witz) in 1951 before employment as an underground section engineer in one of the Union Corporation of South Africa deep gold mines. In 1959 he was taken on by Haggie Rand Limited (then a subsidiary of British Ropes – Bridon) in their technical department providing support to Haggie customers, especially in the mining industry. He subsequently became Haggie's Consulting Engineer – a post almost unique to South African industry providing a high level of expertise available to all customers, anywhere in the world. As a result and through gaining knowledge through solving customers' problems, through to his retirement in 1992 John became highly regarded throughout the world, travelling to Europe, N. America, South America, Asia, Australia and Africa. His straightforward open manner and total honesty earned him the trust and friendship of those who often came to rely on his support. He was also highly regarded in his own organisation subsequently being appointed to the Board of Directors. In the mine-hoisting field his knowledge and experience was unrivalled, and so extensive and detailed that he usually knew more about the installations that the local engineer. And when at its peak there were over 1000 deep-shaft winders operating in South African mines. You would hear him tell an astonished engineer at some gold mine: “Well on that rock winder on your No.2 shaft the south rope has a rather high fleet angle on the right side which tends to result in uneven groove wear, and if you have not been attending to the groove, rope life will be shortened”. He also developed methods to measure groove wear profiles and dress grooves in situ, and for many years wrote most of the Haggie technical guidance in their catalogues and brochures.

John had not been well for a number of years. He was comfortable but his health restricted his ability to engage his lifelong passion for African wildlife, especially at the private reserve Jejane adjoining the Kruger Park, in which John and his wife, Glenda, had acquired a share. At the end of September John’s health rapidly deteriorated, and he passed away peacefully on 1st October. John is survived by his wife Glenda to whom he had been happily married for 65 years, their four daughters, nine grand children and two great grand children.

By those who knew him John will long be remembered with respect and loving-kindness for his technical ability, an Immense depth of knowledge willingly shared, his dry sense of humour, and total honesty.