

Ron Roberson

I was born in Middletown, Ohio, grew up in nearby Trenton, and earned a BS in Chemistry from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. My dad ran an auto radiator repair shop in Hamilton, and he was active in a local hot rod club called the Middletown Pacemakers, where he served as the crew chief on the club's dragster. I started working summers in the radiator shop at age 13 and became the "gofer" in the dragster pit crew around the same time. In the shop I learned mechanical skills and customer appreciation. In the dragster crew I learned the value of teamwork, and I had the privilege to experience the club winning three national class championships in the mid-1960s. My love of classic cars has its roots in those times, and in 2002 I published a book on the history of the Middletown Pacemakers hot rod club.



Freedom Road Rally in North Carolina, with Sherri, 2012

After college (1972) I got my first job at the Stauffer Chemical Company elemental phosphorus plant in Tarpon Springs, Florida as an environmental chemist. Responsibilities included air and water quality, industrial hygiene and assistant manager in the lab. Later the air and water quality testing was split off, and I did industrial hygiene almost full time. (It was during this period that I worked on a project with Steve Levine, former AIHA president, who worked in Stauffer's research center in New York). The Stauffer plant closed in 1983, and I was hired by Bendix Corporation in Largo, Florida as an industrial hygienist, supporting sales of personal monitoring pumps and detector tubes. Bendix had been purchased by Allied Chemical, who began selling off certain Bendix operations. In 1984, the plant sold and became Sensidyne. Since that time I have served as the corporate industrial hygienist for Sensidyne, managing the air sampling product lines (air sampling pumps and detector tubes) and working on new product development. When Sensidyne purchased Gilian in 1995, the Bendix line of personal monitoring pumps was discontinued, and the Gilian products were added to my product management responsibilities.

Working in the chemical plant I had the privilege of developing an industrial hygiene program from scratch, and over the ten year period we conducted a lot of air sampling. When I made the switch to an industrial hygiene equipment supplier, the chemical plant experience was helpful in doing applications assistance with customers. Being on the supplier side also gave me the opportunity to serve on committees, including the AIHA Gas & Vapor Committee (now called the Real Time Detection Systems Committee), ASTM, ISO and an ANSI/ISEA committee that established the detector tube certification program that is run by SEI. With the AIHA committee I was a contributing author to the AIHA detector tube manual, and with ASTM, I authored four standards for using detector tubes in natural gas pipelines.

I joined the Florida section of the AIHA in 1978, and Al Buck was president at the time. I joined the national AIHA the following year. In the Florida section I served as director for three years in the 1980s, and I served on the program committee for several years, including time as the vendor coordinator. In recent years I worked on the scholarship committee with Bart Geyer in setting up the section's first scholarship program. In 2014 I had the great privilege of being inducted as a fellow in the AIHA. I have also had the experience of presenting papers at the national AIHA conference on five occasions including a poster presentation in 2016 that won 2nd place for Best of Conference.



AIHA Fellow Award with Barbara Dawson, 2014

Looking back on 40 plus years in the field, I think the most satisfying aspect was helping customers to start an IH program where none existed before. Sensidyne supplies detector tubes and personal monitoring pumps, so I would help a beginner set up a detector tube program, and a year or two later he or she would be asking how to sample for dust. Long before I realized it, I had served as a mentor to many young health and safety professionals. That is a benefit of the Sensidyne job that cannot be quantified.

As Sherri and I head toward retirement, we are looking forward to that new chapter in our lives. We have three grown children and four grandchildren in Texas, Virginia and Florida, so there will be some travel in the future. I still enjoy the classic car hobby as co-president of Pin-MAR, the largest antique car club in the Tampa Bay area. Sherri is the editor of the club's monthly newsletter, and we go on tours and rallies with our 1967 Camaro. We are also active in a church, where I have taught Bible study for 23 years. There should be no lack of things to do in the coming years.