

Bill Luce

After an active and dynamic career in civil and environmental engineering, Bill Luce retired four years ago. He was first drawn to civil engineering after seeing a pamphlet on such a career in the library at Trumansburg Central High School (upstate New York) back in January of 1965. Bill still has the pamphlet and plans on returning it (with some kind of “late fee”) sometime in the future.

Syracuse University was Bill’s first college experience, where after a less than stellar first semester, he transferred to a smaller two year college in the area. After graduation, he and a few friends then decided Utah State would be a great place to finish their Bachelors degrees (enticed by the Utah skiing!). While at Utah State Bill met a young lady (Evelyn Ashcroft) from Cache Valley, joined the LDS church and got married in 1970.

After completing his B.S. degree in 1970, Utah State Professor Norm Jones offered Bill an opportunity to study toward a Masters Degree, and a graduate traineeship in civil and environmental engineering, funded by the EPA. This was near the beginning of the sanitary/environmental engineering program at Utah State University.

The education Bill obtained at Utah State opened the door to a position at Nielsen, Maxwell & Wansgard Engineering, which later merged with James M. Montgomery. He next worked with CH2M Hill for three years. After a move to Vaughn Hansen Associates in 1984, Bill and two fellow employees had an opportunity to buy the firm. Hansen, Allen & Luce was formed in 1987.

When asked about the highlights of his career, Bill responded with the following:

Participating as part of several teams in 201 facility planning of several projects (plants) along the Wasatch Front such as Central Weber, North Davis, South Davis (both plants), Salt Lake City, South Valley, and other facilities in Utah.

Hansen, Allen & Luce developed a system of analysis for determining a maximum allowable number of septic systems (density) in a given area. The approach, which was used in several Utah counties, used a nitrate mass loading analysis to help ensure that ground water quality standards were maintained.

Over Bill’s career some of his most enjoyable memories have come from his association with the incredible members of WEAU, and others he came in contact with in his profession. Bill enjoyed relationships developed with operators, managers and regulators, most all of whom he considers as friends. Early in his career he remembers one of these, Jack Peterson, telling a group of graduate students that “One man’s [poop] is another man’s bread and butter”.

While Bill considers himself lucky never to have fallen into a sewer he also recalls not so pleasant (early) memories like spending an entire evening in a giant “big box” manhole in a large diameter sewer while participating in an inflow/infiltration study in a prominent Utah city. It was a challenging night, he even



remembers that the galvanized pipe “safety rails”, supposed to protect personnel from falling into the sewer, were so corroded and thin he could stick his finger right through them.

During a career spanning nearly four decades Bill has enjoyed observing improvements in wastewater treatment technologies, going from strictly secondary to more advanced wastewater treatment including various means of filtration, disinfection, etc. and water reuse. He also observed Federal and State Governments increasingly recognize that higher levels of treatment are essential to the preservation of public health and the environment.

Bill was honored to serve as President and Federation Director of WEAU. He also served as a Member and Chairman of the Utah Water Quality Board, Member of the Utah Drinking Water Board, Member of the Utah Community Impact Board, and Member and Chairman of the Davis County Board of Health. Bill was also honored to receive the “Engineer of the Year 2000” award from the Utah Engineer’s Council. He has paid for it ever since however as whenever he makes a mistake, his sons-in-law ask him, “. . . is that really what the Engineer of the Year would do?”

When asked for advice he would give to young professionals just getting started in the industry Bill stated, “Get all the education you can, work hard, don’t take yourself too seriously, and treat other people as you would like to be treated.”

Bill and Evelyn have six children and 15 grandchildren. They are enjoying retired life, having just completed an LDS church mission. 