

Autobiographical Notes

Machinist of the Year Award

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During my senior year in high school I had taken machining courses, and in the awards assembly at the end of the term I was presented the *Machinist of the Year* award. Because of my interests in working with my hands and the success in machining I had in high school, it seemed logical to get a job as a machinist.

My high school machine shop teacher, Donald “Doc” Jensen, helped me get a job at Portec, a small specialty conveyor manufacturer in Cañon City starting in June, 1974. He was also instrumental in getting me started going to college in the fall. He had heard me say on a number of occasions that I had no plans nor a desire to go on to college. Doc believed I should and could do more with my life than I envisioned for myself and encouraged me to continue my training by taking advanced manufacturing courses at USC. I found out years later that he actually did more than to encourage me pursuing this path. Unknown to me, he had made arrangements with the plant manager of Portec to require that I go to college part-time as a condition of employment.

During high school, my goal for my life had involved eventually working as a self-employed blacksmith and having a ranch of mostly of hay fields. But after having been at youth camp, sharing during the witnessing weekend worship, and then reading the Book of Mormon that summer, it was apparent that Doc was right. I needed to be open to doing more with my life than I had settled on. So I agreed to begin taking college courses in the fall of that year while continuing to work at Portec.