

## Great Ideas Garner Accomplishment Awards In 1987

In 1987, several people received Accomplishment Awards for their productivity-improving ideas. Among the recipients: Mike Johnson, Art Sexton, Paul Hoxit, Vance Revis, Leonard Poteet, Paul Burke, Sandra Caldwell, Susan Balcewicz, Carlos Owen, Erwin Hittel, Duane Griffin, Jackie Smith, Troy Maybin, Stan Kumor, Peter Wuelfing and Alden West.

When Dick Queen became the last winner of the year, just before Christmas, *Fotofax* was there. We wanted to find out the difference in a good job and a job good enough for an award.

Lester Chapman, Dick's supervisor, came with Dick and John New, Finishing Area Supervisor, to a meeting with Chuck Smith, in the Plant Manager's office.

After some small talk, Chuck handed Dick a sealed envelope, saying:

"Dick, you know we got together to present you with an award, for your contribution to improved performance in off-size slitting, but I'd like to hear how you arrived at your idea."

Dick described the devices that his idea replaced. "That's the same thing we used years ago in the Coating Area, when I was working over there," he recalls. "That was back in '64 and '65. They were big, awk-

ward, and hard to install; as a matter of fact, I hurt myself trying to attach one of them to the unwind.

"We revised them a couple of times, then came out with a 'new design,' but it was really the same old thing. And I said, 'There's got to be a better way.'"

"He found it when we really needed it," says Lester Chapman.

"We had taken large losses on a foreign order, back in June. We knew we'd be faced with the same thing to fill an order in August, but when the time came, we still hadn't found a solution. We knew we were going to lose our shirts again. Then Dick said, 'I'm going to show you something that will work.' And it did.

"We ran some tests to be sure we didn't have other troubles, but it worked fine. It was a lifesaver. Along with the high losses

we knew were coming, we were also working with a tight deadline.

"But that's not all," Lester continues.

"There was an expensive project in the

works to try to solve the problem. You always figure a project is going to help, but you never know for sure, you know? Dick's idea saved the project dollars, along with the lost production of down time to do the work."

"It's a beautifully simple answer to a complicated, chronic problem," John New points out. "There are still a few refinements to be made, but there's no doubt about it; this works."

Chuck Smith adds that it's good to be able

to recognize Dick's long-term initiative, and asks Dick's thoughts on the future, with all the changes in the plant's operation.

"It's been an exciting 23 years," Dick

replies. "And the changes are exciting. But I think we've got to learn to meet things head on, instead of running away. People get bogged down in trying to do things the same way all the time. That's a big part of our problem, I think."

Dick has been holding the envelope for quite a while. He looks down at it, then at the plant manager. "You mind if I take a look at this?"

"Of course not! Go ahead."

Dick breaks the seal and peeks inside. His eyes light up just before his smile.

"Oh, boy," he says. "This is going to make my girl mighty happy!"

"Christmas present for your daughter?"

"That, too," says Dick, "But the girl I'm talking about is Glenda, my wife."

We know that good ideas are an integral part of everyone's job, just part of what makes the whole system work. It actually keeps our processes and equipment on an evolutionary upgrade continuum. Now we've found out that, if the idea solves a big enough problem, it may give you the soft, warm feeling that comes only from a cool, hard award.



DICK QUEEN is presented an Accomplishment Award by Chuck Smith, Plant Manager.

## James Williams Develops "Revolutionary" Recovery Process



SOLID GOLD? Nope, but it's the next best thing — pure silver. James Williams shows the results of the silver recovery process he invented.

In mid-February, James Williams, of the Control Lab, received his third suggestion award.

James is a quiet man, but actions speak louder than words, and his silver recovery process is expected to echo like thunder through the photographic industry.

"The Williams process is nothing short of revolutionary," says Gaylord "Shep" Shepherd, who heads the silver recovery team at Brevard. "I know that 'revolutionary' is strong language, but there's no other word for it. I think this is going to set a new standard in the recovery business."

Yet, for all of being revolutionary, Shep says the process is nothing new. "It's an old process. Everyone knew it, everyone

knew it worked, everyone knew it didn't work well enough. But James looked at it and said, 'What would make it better?' — and that's what everyone else had failed to do."

"This is a unique piece of work," said Plant Manager Chuck Smith as he presented the award. "The remarkable thing is that it's so simple — yet no one else had found it."

Chuck's presentation of the award had a certain feeling of "business as usual."

"We're here to recognize James Williams for his accomplishment in silver recovery," said Smith. "James, here's an envelope with a message from Jack Shirreffs and some 'recognition' — I guess you want to have a look at it."

"Thank you," said James, opening the envelope. Then he said, "Thank you very much."

Williams's first award was in 1983. By October of that year, the plant had scrapped 9 batches of MHG (modified hydrolized gel), losing a batch a month of expensive material. James looked for a common denominator in the abnormalities, found it, and made his suggestion. We haven't scrapped a batch of MHG since. Next came an award for recovering gold which had been going "down the drain."

"Down the drain means more than lost money," Gaylord Shepherd points out: "Most people are aware that every bit of silver we save represents a cost savings, making us more competitive. But I don't think there's as much recognition that any trace of any kind of metal 'down the drain' is pollution of the environment."

"James Williams's work has given us a recovery technique that is less expensive to apply than electrolytic processes, and it extracts much more metal than any other technology, which enables us to reduce pollution as well as recover dollars. That makes it doubly valuable, since there's a possibility that it may have application in the extraction of other metals, as

## Jim Hill Recognized For Marketing Excellence

Jim Hill was notified early in January by Mark Suwyn, Group Vice President, Imaging Systems Department, that he had been recognized as a department winner by management for his outstanding marketing achievement with DuPont customers during their visits to Brevard.

When you talk to Jim, he will tell you that he's just part of a larger organization responsible for entertaining customers; that he sometimes is the focal point and that many people are responsible for the visitation program being successful. Jim also will add that many people who aren't directly responsible for the program contribute as well.

But when you've seen Jim in action — he's more than he lets on. He has the unique ability to make people feel genuinely at ease. He treats our customers with the respect he would guests in his own home.

People can sense sincerity. They know that when Jim goes home and returns, on his own time, with a jar of mountain sourwood honey or a home baked pie for our guests, he really cares about people. There are some folks who visit our plant who've never eaten cornbread and cressy greens. Jim just can't let a deplorable situation like that continue. Yes, Jim has a uniqueness, it's called the personal touch.

There is also an awareness perception associated with Jim's job. Jim has to recognize when to give attention and when to leave people alone. An example of this would be when a doctor visits with his family, sure, Jim could bait the hooks, start the fire and do all the work; but sometimes it's important to let the doctor show his son how to do it. Jim has to

sense these things and he's really good at it. Management has been told by customers, that they've rediscovered their family while visiting here. You see — just the right touch — that's Jim Hill.

Yes, Jim is correct. There are many people who help. There's the customer camping at the lake who is invited to church on Sunday by one of our employees. "Invited me to their camper," said one customer. "Offered to let me go fishing with them," said another. "I went."

It's the little things which don't get overlooked that makes the Brevard Visitation Program such a success. When you see a customer in the hallway or on the walkway, you may not get a chance to say hello — but a nod and a smile lets the customer know that he has been recognized. "Boy — a lot of friendly people here." We hear that over and over.

The Brevard people make the program work. Sure there's a group who work with customer visitation and many of us say, "Man, I'd like to do that job." However, it's not as easy as one would think. All these people work hard. There's preparation and being psyched up, treating people like personal friends and all the little extra things which must be done with a personal touch.

Yea, Jim, we hear you and we agree there's a lot of people whose efforts sum up the success of the program. But Jim, this one's for you!

Jim and his wife, Mary, have been invited to Wilmington this April for a dinner ceremony honoring those persons who are outstanding examples of marketing excellence.

well."

Shortly after James opened his envelope, the conversation became a dizzying swirl of ion-exchange and plating language, in which the *Fotofax* reporter

quickly became lost.

But Chuck Smith had one last statement that could be a message for all of us:

"With accomplishment comes greater freedom to accomplish."