The Creation of the School of Packaging at Michigan State University

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The author Lilian Gilcrest once stated, "The greatest achievements are those that benefit others." Students, industry and consumers have all derived benefit from the achievements of Michigan State University's School of Packaging. Among the many achievements surrounding this program is the fact that it was the first to grant college degrees in packaging in the world.

Since the first Packaging degree was awarded in 1955, the School has granted approximately 5300 Bachelor of Science degrees, 700 Master of Science degrees and its first Doctorate degree in the Spring of 1998. Packaging students, past and present, have had the opportunity to participate in overseas study programs in Sweden, London and Japan. The School has one of the strongest paid internship programs on campus. The vast majority of packaging students graduate with internship experience; the idea of working with industry as a student is not new. It began with the inception of the program in 1952. Employers from around the world seek Michigan State University's Packaging graduates, and it has alumni from at least 20 countries. (Peoples July 21, 1997)

This paper attempts to incorporate articles written during the fifties and sixties with oral histories of people involved in the formation of the School in order to preserve the early history of the School of Packaging. A companion paper, written by Dr. Diana Twede, examines the relationship between packaging and marketing and explores fully changes in the curriculum with time.

It is not clear exactly how the idea for a School of Packaging at Michigan State College (MSC) was conceived. But one thing is clear; a series of people, events and ideas set the stage for a revolutionary new approach to thinking about packaging as a formal discipline.

THE CONCEPT

In 1947 at the Second Annual Industrial Packaging and Material Handling Forum, W.B. Lincoln, Jr., Technical Manager at Inland Container Corporation, presented a paper entitled "The Importance of Specialized Study of Packaging Requirements". Lincoln expressed the need for educators and industry to recognize packaging as a part of the production process. Mr. Lincoln also emphasized the need for technical training in the discipline of packaging. In his speech Lincoln stated,

Technical training that leads to a comprehensive understanding of testing equipment and techniques, the physical and chemical properties of materials and the characteristics of finished products is definitely advantageous and can be obtained from the orthodox engineering courses. The specialized knowledge in our field of activity, however, has not been adequately codified or standardized. The solutions to our problems are not generally subject to calculation by formula. They are derived by experience and test under favorable conditions, whereas under the unfavorable conditions all too prevalent it is a matter of guess work or copying competitors' packages. We see, therefore, that in general the work is much more of an Art than a Science. It is easy to understand why this field had been largely ignored by educators and the more formal branches of engineering. This failure to appreciate the value of work in the field has unquestionably cost an enormous sum through the years. Producer, transportation agency and consumer have all shared in this unnecessary expense." (Lincoln 1947)

Mr. Lincoln had announced that industry was ready for a packaging school.

The call from industry was not the only influence. Global and historical issues were also affecting decisions about the need for a packaging program at Michigan State College.

After World War II, under the direction of President John Hannah, Michigan State had invested in on-campus housing. It was a time of construction and improvement at the college. Expansion became a hallmark of the Hannah administration. During the late 1940s and early 1950s the campus newspaper, The State News, was riddled with
articles and pictures of building construction. On Monday, January 12, 1953 a photo of the construction site at the Kellogg Center appeared with the caption,

Symbolic of the large scale building program at MSC under the guidance of Dr. John Hannah is this picture of the recently constructed Kellogg Center for continuing education.

Construction was so prevalent during this time that it was even reflected in the political cartoons. (See Appendix 1, Photo 1)

Hannah, concerned that the military build up in Korea would decrease the number of men staying in campus housing (both new and old), asked for recommendations on how to keep the buildings filled. Hannah harbored this concern because during WWII residency in campus housing dropped substantially when the men left for war.

One answer to Hannah’s quandary was suggested during a meeting of the Forest Products Research Society in May of 1950. During the course of the meeting the idea for a packaging program was expressed to Dr. Alexis J. Panshin, Head of the Forest Products Department at MSC (Anderson).

Dr. Paul Herbert was Dr. Panshin’s Director. Herbert was the Director of the Division of Conservation in the College of Agriculture. (See Appendix 1, photo 2) Herbert had been a Captain in the Ordnance Department of the Army with responsibilities related to packaging during the Second World War. As a result, he was positioned to recognize the contribution that a school providing formal training in packaging could make should the Korean conflict escalate.

Dr. Herbert presented the idea of a Packaging Program to President Hannah as a way to aid the conflict, while keeping students in the dormitories. Herbert and Panshin were known to have gone to considerable work to get the program authorized as a curriculum within the Department of Forest Products.

Throughout the years Dr. Herbert was recognized as the principal administrative supporter of the School of Packaging. His support of the program continued even after he left Michigan State. In his later position as Director of Economic Development at the Michigan Department of Economic Development he was known to frequently fund research projects at the school. (Goff July 1, 1997)

The new packaging program was assigned to Dr. Panshin (and the Forest Products Department) because he was involved in the initial suggestion and because wooden crates were used in shipping. Paper and paperboard packaging, also made from the wood of trees, were not a consideration in the decision to place Packaging in the Forest Products Division.

The initial curriculum reflected this emphasis on wooden and wirebound shipping containers. The first three courses were “Wood and Fiber Containers”, “Container Packaging” and “Container Handling and Loading”.

One of the programs’ tremendous strengths was (and is) the guidance and feedback that industry provided(s) with regard to curriculum. This was particularly true in the infancy of the school; even before the program had any students the curriculum was changing to reflect feedback and suggestions from industry.

THE BEGINNING

Early in 1952 Dr. Panshin approached a graduate student, James W. Goff. Panshin asked Goff if he would lead founding the packaging program and begin as the first instructor in the Fall. Goff was to handle the overall development of the program, which included public relations, laboratory and class development, student recruiting and placement, and the development of research programs. This meeting was not the first time that Goff had heard of the idea for a new major called Packaging Technology.

The first time that he heard the idea was in 1951. At the time Goff was dually enrolled as an undergraduate student in Building Construction and as a graduate student in Wood Technology. Dr. Goff recalls that he was in wood shop in a dry kiln class. On the floor of the classroom there lay a free fall drop tester, donated by Acme Steel Company. He remembers that a fellow student and Professor Deckert, the teacher of the class, joked about the equipment. Deckert had apparently heard about the idea for the packaging program in a staff meeting and joked, “Now we gotta make boxes!”

Goff accepted the position, becoming the program’s first instructor, and box making did indeed become a part of his career with the School of Packaging. Together Panshin and Goff decided that it would be a good idea for Goff to get some experience in a packaging environment. John Ladd, the man believed to have originally suggested the idea for a packaging curriculum to Panshin, provided this experience.

Ladd, who had graduated from MSC with a master’s degree in wood technology, and was the Vice President of General Box Company, offered Goff an internship that ran from mid-June to mid September of 1952 in Chicago. Ladd proved to be a strong supporter of the program, serving as a member of the first advisory committee, and providing guidance, training and advice to the young instructor. Ladd recognized how difficult the task of forming the program would be, and Goff recalls his employer frequently commenting, “I don’t know how you’re going to do this. It’s a lot of stuff to do.” (Goff July 1, 1997)

While Goff was working at General Box Company, progress of MSC’s packaging program was two-fold, taking place in East Lansing and Chicago. In East Lansing, Panshin appealed to Dean E.L. Anthony to create an office for the program’s only instructor in room 1 of the Forest
Product's building (B-4). This request was granted and B-4 remained the home of packaging education until 1954.

THE EARLY NETWORK

In Chicago Goff was not only learning about an industry that was relatively new to him, he was also cultivating what would be the foundation of the School of Packaging, a strong working relationship with industry. This philosophy is still active at the School today. The bond between industry and the packaging program at Michigan State was built with communication between three major groups: the trade journals, the faculty and students, and a unique group called the "Industrial Advisory Committee".

The Trade Journals

Goff recognized the power of the trade journals and recommended to Dr. Panshin that it "would be wise ... for us to make formal announcements of the establishment of the curriculum in the several trade publications." (Goff July 21, 1952) Goff established a network with a number of editors of these publications. This network provided strong support, and the newly formed program received positive publicity.

One such supporter was Lloyd Stouffer, the editor of Modern Packaging Magazine. Early in 1953 Modern Packaging praised Michigan State College saying:

It is a tremendous step forward in a direction that many thoughtful people in packaging have been urging for years... There are in this country at present fewer than 2,000 persons who might be called packaging specialists. The opportunity is enormous. (Lansing State Journal May 1, 1953)

Lloyd Stouffer was more than a friend in the media; he was a powerful connection to the administration at MSC. In the early part of Stouffer's career at The Detroit Free Press he had developed a strong friendship with Jim Dennison, who, in 1952 was known on campus to be Hannah's right-hand man. This relationship provided an important connection to campus administration in a way that was not public.

Bruce Holmgren, the editor of Packaging Parade and Larry Burton, the Executive Director of the Packaging Institute were also friends of the program, and all three men were charter members of the Industrial Advisory Committee.

Industry was not only taking notice of the newly formed program at MSC; it was beginning to take notice of the newest (and only) instructor as well.

In the fall of 1952 Goff was asked to join the Packaging Institute's Committee for Packaging Education. Goff's invitation came from J.W. LaRocque who was acting as temporary chairman for the Committee for Education. (Goff would succeed LaRocque as the Chairman of the Committee for Education in May of 1953).

LaRocque was especially interested in conducting a survey of members regarding the need for formal education in packaging and suggestions for packaging curriculum requirements. In a letter dated February 4, 1953 he asked for Goff’s help stating:

Could I impose upon you for a simple, brief questionnaire which you feel could be directed to the members of the Institute, which would help us in determining those objectives which would be most beneficial to the undergraduate or to the educational institution considering packaging within its curriculum.

Goff responded favorably to LaRocque's request, and the outcome was the Packaging Institute’s “Advisory Service Report #323- What 193 Persons Think About Packaging Education and Its Employment Potential”. Report #323 detailed the opinions and thinking of 193 respondents, all packaging personnel, with regard to packaging education. In the survey's preambles Larry Burton noted.

Though the following comment is a trifling matter, it is interesting to note that the responses to A.S.R. 323 are nearly double the number of responses to any other request presented to the membership of the Packaging Institute. It indicates a tremendous interest in the subject of Education in Packaging. (Burton 1953)

The goal of the survey was to (1) determine the demand for a person formally trained in packaging and (2) help shape the curriculum of schools with such programs. The vast majority of respondents indicated that formal packaging education would be of value to industry and that there was a demand for educated packaging professionals. Most A.S.R. 323 respondents preferred a program general in scope. The survey was an essential tool in the development of the program at Michigan State, and is another example of the close contact held between the institution and industry.

The First Students

For the first year of its history, 1952-1953, the primary thing the program lacked was a student. One A.S.R. respondent anticipated the program's next obstacle when he responded,

The only reason I say 'no' (to the question 'Do you believe that a college program for the education of packaging technologists will be of value to the industry?') is that I don't think you will find college students interested in taking a
specialized course in this field, and particularly I don’t think they would be inclined to select packaging as a profession. If you could get the students, I would feel there is a definite value to the industry.

The Packaging Technology major at Michigan State College was receiving national media attention by way of various trade journals. It was the only program of its kind, and employers were beginning to become interested, despite the fact that there were no packaging students to recruit. Goff recalls that Jack Breslin would call from the placement office each time a company contacted him for a packaging intern. Repeatedly Goff explained to Breslin that there were not any students yet.

In the Spring of 1953 Reynolds Metals, Owens-Illinois and Packaging Corporation of America contacted the placement office to recruit packaging students. Breslin called Goff, only to find that there were still no students. Ready for a solution, Breslin suggested a meeting to discuss recruitment of students into the program. Goff, Breslin, the prospective employer from Reynolds’s Metals and Jack Kinney, Breslin’s Assistant, were present at the meeting.

National media attention had attracted employers, and so the four men decided that local media attention would be a good way to attract potential students. Two items, in two separate newspapers, appeared a few days after the meeting.

On May 1, 1953 an article entitled “New Four-Year Packaging Course is Open at MSC: Industry Encourage College in First Such Program in the Country” appeared in The Lansing State Journal. The article detailed the opportunities available, named many of the companies that were known supporters of the program, and suggested that starting salaries in the field would range from $4,000-$15,000 per year.

The second bit of publicity was a classified advertisement, roughly two inches tall and four inches wide, which appeared in the school newspaper, The State News.

One undergraduate, David Seagrave, responded to the article and, as a result, became the first student in the program. (See Appendix 1, Photo 3) Seagrave was a Mechanical Engineering major in his junior year at the time he answered the ad. According to a Lansing State Journal article that appeared on May 31, 1954, Seagrave was ready to drop out when he saw the article on May 1, 1953. The packaging program gave him a renewed interest in college, and he switched his major, becoming the first student in packaging. When asked why he was interested in packaging Seagrave responded,

I like the combination- engineering, business training and salesmanship electives... and there is a wide-open field for men who know how to make a container that will help market goods.” (Southern Lumber October 1, 1953)

MILESTONES IN MARKETING HISTORY

Dr. Goff credits the publicity from the articles and Dave Seagrave for recruiting the first class of packaging students. Goff recalls that during their initial meeting, Seagrave inquired about other students. Goff responded that there were no others, Seagrave was the first one. Seagrave’s response was that he knew others that would be interested, and he would bring them in the fall. Seagrave kept his promise. By the Fall of 1953 there were 5 Packaging Technology students in the Department of Forest Products.

The Industrial Advisory Committee

Before the first class of students began courses in the Fall of 1953, changes in the curriculum had already been submitted to reflect industry recommendations. Lloyd Stouffer, Larry Burton and the respondents of A.S.R. 323 suggested a new curriculum that would broaden the scope of the program. Proposed changes were presented at the first meeting of the “Industrial Advisory Committee” in the spring of 1953. (See Appendix 1, Photo #4 This photograph was taken during the first meeting of the committee.)

The recommended suggestions altered the curriculum from a total of three required packaging courses to seven. The proposal received the endorsement of the Industrial Advisory Committee, was approved by Michigan State College and first appeared in the 1954-1955 catalog. (MSC 1952-1953) (MSC 1954-1955)

The curriculum was broadened, shifting away from the previous emphasis on wood and wirebound containers, to a more general education. The seven-course sequence began with an introductory course taken during the Winter of a student’s sophomore year, and ended with Senior Seminar during the Spring of a student’s Senior year. The classes were:

*Forest Products (FP) 201, Principles of Packaging
*FP 320, Wood Technology
*FP 324, Industrial Packaging I
*FP 325, Packaging Materials
*FP 425, Packaging Cost Analysis
*FP 424, Industrial Packaging II
*FP 462, Senior Seminar

In addition, students were required to accumulate “at least 16 weeks of practical experience in some phase of packaging technology prior to graduation”. (MSC 1954-1955)

The “Industrial Advisory Committee” was Goff’s most innovative suggestion. The committee consisted of people from industry representing all phases of packaging. Its primary purpose was (and is) to collaborate with the School in development of curriculum, in order to keep the program attentive to what kind of skills industry required(s) of graduates.
Student Organizations/Involvement

Activism in the packaging program was not exclusive to industry groups like the Industrial Advisory Committee and the Packaging Institute; it was a vital part of the student culture. Marve Cherrin was a transfer student from the University of Michigan who came to Michigan State in the Summer of 1954. Cherrin and Seagrave spearheaded the creation of a student organization called “The Packaging Society”. The Society maintained close contact with industry by writing articles for trade journals and inviting speakers to address packaging related issues once a month.

The way that the Packaging Society was formed is a testament to the activism that was characteristic of the early students in the program. The students had a strong desire to be seen as their own entity, separate from the Department of Forest Products, and the current student organization, “The Forest Product’s Society” didn’t really fit their needs. They believed that the time was right for their own organization, a “Packaging Society”.

In 1955 Cherrin and Seagrave approached Panshin to get permission to begin the Society. Panshin believed that there were enough student organizations on campus, and told them it was not a good idea. Disappointed, the students told Goff what had happened to the idea; he suggested that the students not give up, but instead visit the Dean of Students. At the Dean’s office the students were told that they did not need Panshin’s approval to found a student organization. Cherrin and Seagrave proceeded with the idea, and the “Packaging Society” was born.

The Packaging Society received its charter in January 1956. (PKG News April 8, 1966) Harry Bull of Dow Chemical spoke at the presentation, and Cherrin invited Dr. Hannah to attend. Hannah responded that he would attend the presentation, but insisted that he would not be able to speak. Harry Bull, an inspiring speaker, spoke on the importance of packaging. Goff states that Hannah was so energized by Bull’s speech that he got up and spoke about the importance of packaging longer than Bull had. (See Appendix I, Photo 5)

As word of the program spread, the number of Packaging Technology students rapidly increased. In 1954 the class grew from 5 students to 19. In 1955 there were 61 students which rose to a total of 139 by 1957. The increase in the number of students dictated that changes be made.

The most pressing need was more space. During 1952 and 1953 the packaging program remained in the Forest Products’ Building (B-4) near the Red Cedar River. In 1954 the program was able to acquire a 1200 square foot building fondly referred to as the “Bee House”. (See Appendix I, Photo 6) The “Bee House” was previously used by the Entomology Department to raise bees. Goff recalls that even after the packaging program took possession of the building, there was still bee paraphernalia in the attic. (Goff July 1, 1997) Classes were conducted in a classroom that was on the building’s second floor and the first floor, which had previously been a nursery, served as the program’s laboratory. The “Bee House” remained the program’s home until 1959.

The Packaging Society continued to be active through the years. On March 9, 1959 The Lansing State Journal contained an article entitled, “State Is Broke, So... MSU Students Put Up New Packaging School.” The school had once again outgrown its location (the “Bee House”). A temporary frame construction (an army building that was erected on campus), vacated by the Art Department, was available. The temporary frame construction had 4500 square feet of laboratory and office space. (See Appendix I, Photo 7) However, the University’s maintenance budget was too thin for the $12,000 cost of remodeling and moving. (Lansing State Journal March 9, 1959) Under the direction of Hugh Lockhart, President of Pi Kappa Gamma the packaging honorary fraternity, and Richard Arnold, the President of the Packaging Society, the school was moved and remodeled entirely by students. (See Appendix I, Photo 8) The article described the move as a “triumph of education over economy, and will save thousands of tax dollars for a state threatened with bankruptcy.”

THE “SCHOOL OF PACKAGING”

In 1954 the program achieved another first with the addition of a Graduate student, Alfred Barker. Barker, a graduate of Cambridge University, contacted the Office of the Registrar asking to be admitted as a graduate student in Packaging Technology. The registrar, not sure whether or not to admit a graduate student, contacted Goff, because Panshin was on sabbatical at the time.

Goff remembers his response to the Registrar as, “Why not (admit Barker)?” (Goff July 1, 1997) As a result, Barker became the first graduate student in Packaging Technology.

Undergraduate enrollment (as well as graduate enrollment) was rising during the mid-fifties, and one of the consequences of increased enrollment was the need for another instructor. A second position was authorized in 1955. Dr. Harold J. “Pete” Raphael was transferred from his teaching responsibilities in the Wood Technology curriculum, also under Dr. Panshin, to the Packaging Technology curriculum. Despite these developments, the program still remained a division of the Forest Products Department.

Packaging almost appeared as a separate entity in the 1954-1955 catalog, but Goff is quick to explain that it was not truly a separate entity at this time. He remembers that the Office of the Registrar contacted him early in 1954 to ask how to list the packaging curriculum in the upcoming 54-55 catalog. Panshin was absent due to his sabbatical, so Goff decided that it made sense to list the program as a separate entity. The program should have been listed as a division of the Forest Products Department. Goff states, “I only remember it (that it should have been listed within Forest Products) because I caught hell for it when he (Panshin) returned.” (Goff July 21, 1997)
MILESTONES IN MARKETING HISTORY

There were certain disadvantages to being a small piece of a larger department. Mail was received at the Department of Forest Product’s and did not come directly to the “Bee House”. The Department of Forest Products provided services, secretarial for example, with little to no input from the packaging program. Perhaps the largest driving force behind the desire to become a separate entity was that, “Packaging Technology was always viewed as a separate group of people (from the rest of the Department). (Goff July 21, 1997) Goff, along with the faculty and students aspired to be recognized as “The School of Packaging”, and appealed to the college’s administration.

The people involved in the program were not the only ones who aspired to see packaging liberated from the Department of Forest Products. Many influential industry personnel that heavily supported the program wanted to see this too. Goff recalls that Orin Johnson, Lloyd Stouffer and Bruce Holmgren were interested in separating packaging from the Department of Forest Products. These men were active on the Industrial Advisory Committee, had contacts within the administration and were all involved in the incorporation of the Packaging Education Foundation, an organization created in early 1957 to raise funds for the program.

The origins of the Packaging Education Foundation were so serious about the packaging program becoming its own entity that they included it in their agreement to incorporate. One of the conditions listed by the originators of the Foundation was that the packaging program be identified as “The School of Packaging”.

The actions and urgings of the faculty, students and, no doubt, the Packaging Education Foundation asserted their influence. In July 1957 Karl H. McDone, Secretary of the Board of Trustees, informed Dean Cowden that the State Board of Agriculture had approved the request that the program be referred to as the “School of Packaging” within the Department of Forest Products. (McDone July 19, 1957)

This separated the school in name and in the college catalog; the School appeared separately in the 1958-1959 catalog for the first time. However, the budget remained in the Department of Forest Products until 1966. In retrospect, Goff states that being your own entity, but having your budget controlled by someone else was not so bad. He states, “You could complain, but you didn’t have to worry about the budget.” (Goff July 21, 1997)

The Packaging Education Foundation

A natural byproduct of the desire for independence was planning for and dreaming of the future. The creation of the “Packaging Education Foundation” moved the program from dreaming about the future to acting to impact it. The immediate goal of the Foundation was to raise two million dollars in order to build a state of the art packaging facility for education and research. The long-range purpose of the Foundation was to “provide scholarships and fellowships, support research and instructional programs, to accurne a library and to assist and develop the School of Packaging into an international center of packaging knowledge”. (Packaging Education Foundation)

The Foundation was created with great support, both financial and otherwise, from the University. Dr. Hannah himself placed Maurice Day on the Foundation’s Board of Directors. Mr. Day was a trustee at the University and the Vice President of Crucible Steel. He had been involved with fund raising at the University of Chicago, where they had raised funds by doing contracted research. Day felt that the need for packaging research was present, and that fund raising through research would be successful at Michigan State.

Day’s research suggestion was implemented, and six possible areas of fundable research were identified: (1) Control of damage during distribution (the most popular) (2) Permeability of materials (3) Gas vapor permeability (4) Packaging Machinery (5) Heat Sealing and (6) Packaging Economics.

Many organizations funded research through the Packaging Education Foundation. The first and biggest industrial supporter was the Glass Container Manufacturer’s Institute (GCFM), which funded research in damage control. Other companies such as Proctor and Gamble and General Motors followed, requesting research in various areas, and greatly adding to the Foundation’s Building fund.

Another important member of the Foundation was Phillip May. Mr. May was the Treasurer of the University, and Goff had gotten to know May well, due to the many financial donations received by the School over the years from industry. May was instrumental in getting funding for the Foundation’s director’s position.

By 1963 the Foundation had raised approximately $400,000, although this was not as much as the group had desired, it was enough to begin. Goff recalls the meeting where he and other members of the Foundation learned of the approval to break ground. It was November 22, 1963; a date he will never forget. The jubilation at the approval to break ground was dampened by the news that President John F. Kennedy had been shot.

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on April 13, 1964 in a sheep pasture just south of the Engineering Building on Wilson Road. This is still the home of the School, although a major addition was added in 1986. Trustee member Ron Stevens was the first to break ground with President John Hannah looking on. (See Appendix I, photo 9)

The new building opened in April of 1965, and provided eight teaching and research laboratories and had an area of 18,000 square feet. (Lansing State Journal March 14, 1965) (See Appendix I, photo 10)
OUTREACH

It is obvious that the growth of the School of Packaging at Michigan State University did not occur in isolation; the industry network developed in the early years helped the School tremendously. However, there were other organizations outside of industry that should be given credit, notably the Air Force and the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The Air Force

The military was a big supporter of the packaging program. As early as 1953 the Kellogg Center hosted conferences on military packaging, bringing large numbers of professionals to Michigan State to be educated.

The alliance between the military and Michigan State’s Packaging program became even stronger in 1955. An Air Force officer named Landon Robinson convinced his superiors that the packaging program should be added to the list of schools that participated in an education program with the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT). The Air Force created AFIT to send officers to various colleges for training in everything from Packaging to Criminal Justice.

Many officers without college degrees had received training during WWII and the conflict in Korea, yet completion of a college degree was desirable to meet Air Force technical needs. AFIT was created for this reason. Air Force personnel that successfully completed the AFIT program were assigned duties in their field of study.

Colonel Paul Peoples, currently the Director of the Packaging Alumni Association, remembers that he was in Japan in 1957 when he first heard about, and applied to, the AFIT program. He recalls the choices of schools on the list were limited, but that he was required to list two. Packaging was one of the choices for which he had the prerequisites, so he listed it as his second choice behind Carnegie Tech, where he had already completed two years of school of Management Engineering.

When the orders came to report to Michigan State, he tried to imagine how the packaging program would apply to the military. He states, “The best that I could come up with was the design and packaging of missile guidance components and packaging for electronics.” (Peoples July 22, 1997) This was a far cry from his first impression of the school. When he first walked into the “Bee House” he recounts with laughter that “everybody was breaking Gerber baby bottles”. (Peoples July 22, 1997)

Despite the first impression in the “Bee House” a technical experience that could be applied to military packaging is what Colonel Peoples received. After graduating in 1959, he became the chief of the Air Force packaging research facility at Brookley Air Force Base, Alabama in 1959 and eventually went on to be the Senior Air Force Packaging Officer at the Pentagon. When Peoples left Brookley in 1966 another AFIT Packaging graduate, Neal Crosson, replaced him. According to Peoples, 10 to 12 cadets completed the AFIT program through Michigan State University’s School of Packaging.

Wisconsin-Stout

Other sources of support independent of industry and of Michigan State were people in the packaging program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout (W-S). Goff recalls that in 1960 two gentlemen interested in beginning a packaging program at W-S approached him. After considerable correspondence, it was determined that W-S students would come to East Lansing during the Summer to take concentrated versions of the four laboratory courses until space and equipment could be provided at Menominee. (Goff) These courses lasted at least two Summers. Goff explains how this exposure helped Michigan State’s School of Packaging,

This was the first official inquiry by another university into the nature of the packaging program at MSU. It meant the possible end to our singular exposure to the academic critics. ... The summer course approach devised to accommodate Stout students attracted other visiting students as well. Many came to take the courses as a continuation of their education in the field in which they were working. Some used the courses as a part of advanced degree programs in other institutions. Still others came in company sponsored groups to take specific courses. In retrospect, the course offerings begun to assist the establishment of a packaging program at Stout were of tremendous benefit in extending the influence of the MSU program.

The involvement and recognition of another academic program was not merely support. Wisconsin-Stout’s interest and participation at Michigan State University’s School of Packaging legitimized the program.

DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE- THE 60s AND 70s

By 1960 two hundred Bachelor of Science Degrees had been awarded during the seven years existence of the program. (Packaging Society June, 1960) The program was becoming established; during the sixties the focus was not so much on surviving, but changing and growing.

Student Changes

In 1963 The Michigan State News announced one major change at the School of Packaging with its article, “Lone Girl Enrolled In Packaging”. (Michigan State News February 20, 1963) Her name was Eileen Emeric. The article appeared before she had even been accepted by the
University as an incoming freshman. When asked why she was interested in the School of Packaging, she replied, 

I have grown up more or less in the business (her father owned a packaging company)... This is the only one in the United States that has a four-year program with a degree.” (Michigan State News February 20, 1963)

Goff was interested in recruiting more women into the Packaging Program. Several “teas” were hosted in which women could come and ask questions about the School. The teas were successful in recruiting other women; Eileen may have been the first, but she was not the last. Sharlyn Welker joined the School during Spring term of 1965. Sally Stevenson also joined the program during Spring term 1965 when she changed her major from Mechanical Engineering to Packaging. (News Release August 29, 1966)

The first African-American student at the School of Packaging, Jerry West, graduated in the Spring of 1965. West had been encouraged by his employer to attend the School of Packaging, and Goff recalls that he was “mechanically brilliant”. (Goff, Twede June 3, 1998) In an attempt to recruit more minority students, Goff and West devised a plan to go and speak with Boy Scout groups in inner city Detroit. In their speeches they discussed the benefits of college and, in particular, the School of Packaging. Unfortunately, these talks were not as successful as the “women’s teas”, and enrollment of minority students remained low.

Despite the fact that the talks were not extremely successful, they were recognized by the University Administration. Jack Shingleton had received a grant from Ford Motor Company to encourage minority enrollment. Because of the talks that West and Goff presented in Detroit, Goff was asked to speak at a symposium put on by Breslin. It was at this symposium that Goff befriended recruiters from Atlanta State and Moorehouse College, which led to the employment of the School’s first minority faculty member.

Staff Changes

In 1959 Hugh Lockhart received his Bachelor’s Degree and was made an Assistant Instructor. He went on to earn a Master’s Degree in 1960, as well as a PhD in 1965. In 1961 several more people were added to the staff. Howard Blake III, David Olsson and David Brouse were employed as Research Associates, and Elizabeth Anderson (“Mrs. A.”) was hired for secretarial support. Mrs. A. was known for her tremendous organizational skills and take-charge attitude.

In 1966 when the Department of Forest Products was abolished, Dr. Goff was appointed the Director of the School of Packaging. The School was finally an independent entity. The Packaging offices were moved from the new building into the ones vacated by the Forest Products Department in the Natural Resources Building, next door. During the time the offices were in Natural Resources, the new building served as a laboratory. This change didn’t last long. The same problems that the program had when they were part of Forest Products began to occur. Mail, handled through the main office was not accessible until it was sorted. Personality conflicts developed between Mrs. Anderson and the support staff in Natural Resources. It was time to move back. Within a year the department office was back in the Packaging Building in what is currently known as the “reading room”.

In 1967 Goff made a trip to Atlanta for an ASTM-D-10 meeting. Prior to the trip, he contacted the Directors of Placement from Moorehead College and Atlanta State to inform them of his interest in hiring the School’s first African-American faculty member. While he was in Atlanta he talked to the Placement Director from Moorehouse College. The Director was unable to recommend any Moorehouse students for the position. However, he did state that he knew of a graduate from Fisk College in need of a job. She was Regina Sherrard, and she became the first minority faculty member at the School of Packaging. She was hired to work on a special project dealing with apples in distribution funded by the Michigan Apple Commission.

Research Developments

The Michigan Apple Commission’s study of apples in the distribution cycle was one of many research projects sponsored by outside sources during the sixties. Another large project sponsored by the National Bureau of Standards concerned damage to parcel post during shipment. In a Lansing State Journal article Postmaster General, John A Gronouski, stated, “we have had more problems with parcel post than any other part of the postal system.” (Lansing State Journal August 2, 1964) The Michigan State School of Packaging was called upon to research this problem, and make recommendations on how to decrease damage levels.

Dr. Diana Twede, current School of Packaging faculty member, recalls the “big blue box” that researchers used to investigate for the post office. The box was 1/2 of a truck trailer; it was clear, so researchers could watch packages as they were being tested on the vibration table.

After the mail project had ended, a very important development occurred. The USDA approached the School about forming a partnership. MSU would serve as an “on-call” research facility for the Department of Agriculture with regard to their overseas packaging. Reports containing test results and the recommendations of MSU packaging personnel were (are) sent to Washington on a regular basis. This contract continues today; it has been the primary source of funding for a tremendous amount of researchers, and in exchange the Department of Agriculture has obtained access to a fully equipped packaging laboratory and the advice of many academic experts.
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These projects, and many others, did much more than merely provide the School with money. They were (and are) examples of the vitality of the program, they educated and financed many graduate students who have gone on to be successful in the industry of packaging and they helped to develop the concept of dynamics and its application to packaging.

CONCLUSION

This paper only covers the beginning history of Michigan State University's School of Packaging. In the first decade the program began as a radical new way of thinking about packaging and slowly grew into an accepted institution. The second decade was a time of change and further development. None of it could have been actualized without the participation and input of the many groups discussed in this paper. This participation, a hallmark of the School of Packaging, is perhaps its greatest achievement of all.

We are not makers of history. We are made by it.

Martin Luther King Jr.

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APPENDIX

Photo #1
Above: A political cartoon showing "The March of Progress" pokes fun at the construction occurring on campus. The cartoon appeared in The State News on November 16, 1952.

Photo #2
Above: Dr. A.J. Panahin, Head of Forest Products Department at MSC (left) and Dr. P.A. Herbert, Director, Division of Conservation at MSC.
Photo #3
Above- Goff (right) helps Seagrave with a project in the "Bee House" laboratory.

Photo #4
Taken at the inaugural meeting of the Industry Advisor Committee in the Spring of 1953.
Seated (left to right): Dr. Charles O. Harris, Head of Department of Applied Mechanics, MSC; Prof. James Apple, Department of Mechanical Engineering, MSC; Mr. Henry Sommer, Supervisor of Packaging Methods, Oldsmobile Division, General Motors Corp.; Mr. Don Black, Manager, Customer Service Department, Acme Steel Products Division, Acme Steel Company, representing SPMHE; Mr. John Ladd, General Box Company; Mr. R.B. Holmgren, Executive Editor, Packaging Parade Magazine; Mr. T.W. O'Neill, Manager of Claims, George F. Ager Company; Mr. Clarence F. Manning, Vice President, Reynolds Metals Company.
Standing (left to right): Prof. William Robertson, Department of Food Technology, MSC; Mr. James W. Goff, Department of Forest Products, MSC; Dr. A.J. Pantelis, Head of Department of Forest Products, MSC; Dr. F.A. Herbert, Director, Division of Conservation, MSC; Mr. G.B. Bonfield, Vice President, American Box Board Company.

Not present: Mr. Clinton K. Royce, Packaging Consultant; Mr. Robert DeS. Couch, General Foods; Mr. John A. Warren, American Home Products Company; Mr. Lloyd Stouffer, Editor of Modern Packaging Magazine.
MILESTONES IN MARKETING HISTORY

Photo #5
Above: Dr. John Hannah presents Max Cherrin with the Charter for the "Packaging Society" at their first meeting.

Photo #6
Above: The "Bee House", a building which still housed bee paraphernalia when the Packaging Program moved in, was located near the Red Cedar River. The second floor provided space for classes; the first floor, an old nursery, served the need for laboratory space.
Photo #7
Above- Temporary frame constructions were common on campus in the fifties. They had previously been used as army buildings. They were usually erected on campus in 1959, under the direction of Hugh Lockhart (currently a professor at the School) and Rich Arnold, students handled the move to and remodeling of a temporary frame construction vacated by the Art Department.

Photo #8
Photo #9
Above: Trustee member Ron Stevens breaks ground next to President John A. Hannah in a sheep pasture just south of the Engineering Building on Wilson Road. Ground breaking for the School of Packaging occurred on April 14, 1964.

Photo #10
Above: The new building was opened in April of 1964. It contained 18,000 square feet, which included eight teaching and research laboratories. An addition was built in 1966.