

Edward M. McCormick  
1920-1996  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE  
AND ASSOCIATE DEAN, SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING  
AND COMPUTER SCIENCE, EMERITUS

B.S., M.S., Pittsburg State University; Ph.D., Technology Management, The American  
University, December 23, 1970  
California State University, Fullerton From August 25, 1980 To August 27, 1990  
Birth: June 7, 1920; Death: August 25, 1996

The first time I saw "Mack" McCormick was while walking across campus, early on a spring evening many years ago. He was on his way to class, as a part time lecturer in the Department of Computer Science. Strangely, instead the familiar clutch of lecture notes or a brief case, he was carrying a plastic shopping bag, printed with yellow flowers and budging at the seams. I later found that it contained a printed circuit board, cables, battery and small LED display. Together, these formed a rudimentary computer he had built for demonstrations in his class. This would be impressive today, but in fact it was in 1979, when building a computer was more of a challenge than it is today. His students were in fact getting a preview of the microcomputer age soon to overtake the discipline. I think this episode says a lot about Mack – the dedicated teacher, a grasp of current technology based on experience, and always looking toward the future.

Mack was a mainstay of our department throughout his 10-plus years of service. His teaching covered a wide cross-section of our courses, ranging from microcomputer architecture and assembly language to information structures and operating systems. We probably remember him best, though, as a "hands on" teacher. He was most at home near the equipment. Therefore it will be no surprise that he was no deck that Saturday morning in 1982 when we set up our first student laboratory in E-25. This was probably the first open microcomputer lab on campus, and Mack was the one who kept it running until we were able to get a technician. Over the year, there were many such labs that Mack helped set up.

Like many that entered Computer Science in those days, Mack came without formal training in the discipline. However, he possessed an exceptionally rich background in related fiends and a keen intellect, making him a valuable asset to our new and growing Department when he joined us full-time in the fall of 1980.

The richness of his past experience became fully apparent to me when he came up for tenure. This was after our campus had become more intense on the importance of research and creative activity, with recent refereed publications as the default indicator. While he had plenty of those in his pre-Fullerton career, he was now fully consumed with development of student laboratories, curriculum development, and teaching. Consequently, his file was not strong in current research. Then someone suggested that he include his entire career in the file. Those of us privileged to read that file will never forget its richness, both in quality and diversity. Highlights included:

- At the Naval Ordnance Lab, Corona (1951-1959), headed the group setting up one of the first digital computers in Federal government.

- At the National Science Foundation (1959-1968), headed the grants program for use of digital computers in research, as well as overseeing internal administrative applications.
- At the U.S. Department of Agriculture (1968-1977) as a Computer Specialist, developed national planning models, including the first application of satellite data for agriculture assessment.

Earlier in his career, he worked in electronics, radar, and radio, both as practitioner and a teacher, at various government labs and companies beginning in 1941. Attesting to the significance of these accomplishments, the file was punctuated with newspaper reports and commendations, including a congratulatory memorandum from President Nixon! His stature as a leader in early computer technology was also indicated by invited archival contributions, such as 'Digital Computers: Their History, Operation, and Use,' *Smithsonian Treasure of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Science*, (Simon and Shuster, 1966). In all, he published 17 technical articles on electronics and computers, beginning in 1945. Apparently, his modesty had prevented him from mentioning any of this earlier. Once this material was added to this file, complementing the already strong teaching performance at UCLA, The American University, and Fullerton, Mack was granted his well-deserved tenure by President Cobb in 1984.

While perhaps we in Computer Science knew him best, Mack was no stranger elsewhere on campus. Once his talents became known, we had a harder time keeping him to ourselves. This was especially true within the School of Engineering and Computer Science. As an example, he taught courses in Electrical Engineering, co-authoring lab manuals and otherwise adding a Computer Science flavor to the EE courses taken by our majors. Near the end of his service, he was appointed Acting Associate Dean of ECS. This service was during the difficult period in which we were moving into the new Computer Science building. His reputation spread across campus as well. For example, he served on the Computation Affairs Committee, and tapped by President's office to present a series of inter-session and Summer courses on the user of microcomputers for staff, on a campus-wide basis. While we were at first reluctant to share his talents, ultimately we gained much. The term "good will ambassador" is appropriate here, for Mack was a wonderful spokesperson for the Department. Wherever Mack went we found the Department had a new friend. No matter to whom I was talking, I found that if they knew anyone in our Department it was probably Mack.

Mack was dedicated to his work at CSUF, but had other rich dimensions to his life as well. He was a devoted husband to his wife Cleta, a loving father to two daughters, and a proud grandfather. The McCormicks were active members of the Crystal Cathedral congregation where, incidentally, Mack applied his electronic wizardry to the audio system. Although computing tended to be avocation as well as vocation for him, I note his C.V. that he was a member of Theta Alpha Phi, the honorary society for dramatics. The interest must have been most keen early in his career, or perhaps college days, but it did continue, as evidenced by his work on the audio-visual equipment matters for the annual *Pirates of Penzance* production at Dana Point. Nonetheless, from my perspective it appeared that computers were all consuming for him. He always had one

within reach, and was certainly among the first to have a "home brew" machine. This is evidenced by a string of popular press publication such as "How to Upgrade the Basic Elf Microcomputer," *Popular Electronics*, February 1978. His readers will miss him, as will fellow members of the North Orange Counter Computer Club, but none as much as this Department.

Submitted by  
Edward F. Sowell  
Professor of Mechanical Engineering  
and Professor of Computer Science  
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