



1984 PAC Winner

Robert E. Utsler

Robert E. Utsler began his career in 1933 in Zanesville, Ohio at the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. as a laborer in the shipping department. Fascinated by both the construction and operation of glass furnaces, he determined to learn as much about them as he could, and as he has noted, "almost 48 years later, I am still learning".

According to Mr. Utsler, his "Big Break" came in late 1945, when he was transferred to Hazel-Atlas No.2 plant in Washington, Pa., as head of the mixing, melting, and annealing department.

This department included four large furnaces, 27 forehearth and lehrs, and a very large batch plant. In 1957 he was chosen to organize and manage a new quality control department where he gained a wealth of information on furnace design and rebuilds.

In 1964 Mr. Utsler accepted a position with Kerr Glass Manufacturing Corp. and was appointed director of furnace engineering and operations. In 1970 he was named manager of furnace engineering, furnace operations, and glass formulation technology.

His innovations on refractory applications, insulating practices, and furnace design have been a valuable contribution to the glass industry. He was an early advocate of batch wetting, deeper furnaces, highly insulated furnaces and greater pull rates.

In 1977 his department was responsible for the design and construction of two large furnaces and the batch mixing and delivery system at Kerr's new plant in Wilson, N.C. This, in his opinion, was the highlight of his career.

He retired from Kerr Glass in 1981. Mr. Utsler has been active in the American Ceramic Society and the Glass Problems Conference; he has chaired sessions and presented many papers.