Daniel Delbert McCracken

Born July 23, 1930, Hughsville, Minn.; pioneer prolific author of model computing and programming textbooks, including the first[1] textbook on Fortran.

Education: BA, mathematics, Central Washington University, 1950; BA, chemistry, Central Washington University, 1951; MDiv, Union Theological Seminary, 1970.

Professional Experience: General Electric Company, 1951-1958; New York University AEC Computing Center, 1958-1960; self-employed consultant and author, 1959-1981; chairman, Computer Sciences, City College, City University of New York, 1989-1991.

Honors and Awards: president, ACM, 1978-1980; fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1985; Norbert Wiener Award for Social and Professional Responsibility, 1989; ACM SIGCSE Award for Outstanding Contributions to Computer Science Education, 1992; fellow, ACM, 1994.

Daniel D. McCracken is an author, a former president of the Association for Computing Machinery, and professor of computer sciences at the City College, City University of New York.

His *Digital Computer Programming* (1957) was the first textbook on the subject. Among his 26 titles are works on Fortran (1961, 1965, 1972, 1974, 1984, and 1988), Algol (1962), Cobol (1963, 1970, 1976, 1988, and 1990), and numerical methods (1964 and 1972), all published by John Wiley & Sons. He has also published on PL/M (1978) and Nomad (1981) with Addison Wesley Publishing Co. He is the editor, with Margaret Mead, of To *Love or to Perish: The Technological Crisis and the Churches* (1972). His books have been translated into 15 languages.

McCracken graduated in 1951 from Central Washington University with degrees in mathematics and chemistry, and earned the MDiv degree from Union Theological Seminary (New York) in 1970. After seven years with the General Electric Company in a variety of assignments in computer applications and programmer training, he spent a year at the New York University AEC Computing Center, then (1959) went into full-time consulting and writing on computer subjects. He joined the City College Computer Sciences Department in 1981. He was the chairman of the department from 1989 to 1991, and has served on a wide variety of committees of the College and of the School of Engineering.

McCracken was ACM vice president from 1976 to 1978 and president from 1978 to 1980. He was chairman of the History of Computing Committee of the American Federation of Information Processing Societies (AFIPS), chairman of the ACM Committee on Computers and Public Policy, and a four-time ACM National Lecturer. He has lectured in 49 states, Europe, and Japan. He is the 1989 recipient of the Norbert Wiener Award for Social and Professional Responsibility from Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility. The ACM Special Interest Group on Computer Science Education gave him their 1992 Award for Outstanding Contributions to Computer Science Education.

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[1] ... and probably the most successful (editor).

Other volunteer activities include: president of the Board of Education, Ossining, New York, 1965-1966; member of the board of the Institute for Certification of Computer Professionals, while ACM president; team member or chair for four accreditation visits under auspices of the Computer Sciences Accreditation Board, 1985-1988; and reader for the ACM/IEEE-CS joint task force on computer science curriculum.

QUOTATION

"Don't make predictions about computing that can be checked in your lifetime."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biographical

McCracken, D.D., "The Early History of FORTRAN Publications," *Ann. Hist. Comp*., Vol. 6, No. 1 Jan. 1984, pp. 33-34.

Significant Publications

McCracken, D.D., *Digital Computer Programming,* John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1957.

McCracken, D.D., *A Guide to FORTRAN Programming,* John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1961.

UPDATES

Dan McCracken died July 30, 2011 (MRW, 2012)