



## ROY'S STORY (PART 2 OF 2)

*By Roy Bardowell, CDDC*

Roy started High School in 1968 and Automatic Doorman had grown bigger. Roy graduated High School in 1972. Leon told Roy you can work at ADM anytime through the summer breaks. Roy had ambitions to be a Nuclear Engineer and study at MIT and Roy needed much more money for the tuition and to live away from home so the answer from Roy was a big YES. However, Roy enrolled in a local university to finish some required courses before he could attend MIT.



ADM paid Roy \$1.00 per hour which netted \$33.00 per week. At that time \$1/hr. was minimum wage. To start, Roy was placed in the wiring department where he excelled by his third day. Then one day when one of the senior press operators called in sick and product had to be stamped for an important order, Roy was asked if he wanted to try it. Of course, he agreed. Roy was bored with wiring

and he could sit at the punch-press position, so Roy thought of it as a promotion and started right away. Roy did better and punched out more pieces per hour than the regular guy and a few days later was asked to try something else out.

The managers immediately noticed Roy's skills and desire to excel and began using Roy to fill in when someone called in sick or was late to work. They also used Roy to gauge and determine the best production rate. Anytime a new employee was hired, they had a 15-day probational period to do as well or better than Roy. Even the senior employees were scrutinized. By the time the summer ended, Roy had worked almost every position and had shamed all of the regulars. Roy was asked many times by other employees not to work so fast because it made the others look like slackers. Roy said I take everything I do as a challenge and can't help but do my very best. If Roy punched out 50 pieces in an hour, he would set a goal of 55 pieces the next hour. Increasing your rate 10% becomes harder and sometimes impossible to do, but if Roy did more the next hour than the previous hour, he took it as a victory.

In only a little time Roy had tons of respect from the managers and team leaders. Roy never paid attention to the others complaints and pushed forward every day. Actually, every day Roy would try and beat the previous days rate and that helped the time to pass

more quickly. One time when Roy was cutting steel washers on a pneumatic shear, he was asked to slow down by the metal shop manager because the air compressor couldn't keep up, and there wasn't enough air pressure for other air powered machines. Roy felt like a King! Beating the machines was very satisfying to Roy.

Through June and July Roy became even faster at all the jobs. Roy enjoyed making a game of it, improving the rate every day. This caused friction between Roy and the other employees. Leon told Roy you are like having two employees, which suited Roy just fine. Roy's hourly rate was raised to \$1.50/hr. All the other employees who were being paid less than \$1.50 per hour and were there longer than Roy were pissed off. Roy would tell them "Work Faster." They would respond with. Pay me more and I will do more. We all know it doesn't work that way. Roy would also say its simple—you have to prove yourself worthy of higher pay first, and it is important to get the attention of your supervisor or the owners.

Whenever the owners had visitors, they would like to seek out Roy, to showcase they're most productive people. Roy liked the attention and would never disappoint. Roy would note this to the others and say; you need the owners to acknowledge you are an asset. No one saw things Roy's way and preferred to see the owners and their job as a pain. Roy would lose friends by saying, "if you don't like your job, go elsewhere and let a real employee take the job." Roy always did his best at every job he ever had and promoted excellence at every turn.

When the Canadian dollar dropped against the US dollar it became more expensive for Canadian companies to purchase American goods, and Canadian orders began to slow down.

In 1978 the Vice President of ADM was Robert Schram. Bob Schram had a solution.

He suggested ADM open up a distribution center in Montreal. The operator pricing wouldn't change much, but there would be savings without shipping from NJ. The Mockler family were not impressed with the idea, so when a friend of Robert Schram, Ed, told Bob he had a business for sale in Montreal, Bob jumped at the opportunity right away. In 1977 Bob Schram purchased Jarry Precision from Ed Oberhaus and renamed the company Lynx Industries. Plans were made to ship materials and product to Lynx. The only problem was finding someone who knew the ADM product line and could run the door operator division. Bob turned to Leon for help and Leon said, I can't think of anyone more suited than Roy. Bob agreed and the three met.



It was decided that Leon and Roy would both go to Montreal. Roy knew this move would curtail his desire to be a Nuclear Engineer, but thought he was young and could pull it off later. After the Canadian immigration approved Roy for a 1-year work Visa, on May 1, 1978 Leon and Roy drove from NJ to Montreal, Quebec. After a 30-minute wait at the LaColle border, they were allowed to proceed. Leon and Roy arrived at Lynx Industries at noon and met with the GM, Pierre LeBer. Pierre took Roy and Leon to lunch at a local topless diner. When Roy saw the topless waitresses, he was stunned. There was nothing like this in NJ. Leon & Pierre had a good laugh though. They both set it up just to see Roy's reaction. Leon said "the look on your face when you saw the waitress was priceless."

While waiting for components and tooling to arrive; Roy started a relationship with the

company receptionist, Lina Greco. Lina spoke 3 languages and made sure Roy saw all of the Montreal sights. Bob Schram had rented a 3-bedroom apartment and Leon and Roy each had their own room. After a month, Roy rented his own place close to Lina's home so he could walk there in 20 minutes.

Every two weeks, Leon would need to return to NJ, to pick up items for the Lynx project. During one trip, Leon died suddenly. Leon's death shocked everyone, and there was much uncertainty on how to proceed. So, the entire project fell in Roy's hands. Roy wasn't sure he had the skills to complete the setup, but he was aware he knew more than most there, so put his best foot forward and took over the setup. Machinery for door operator production slowly trickled in to Lynx. Roy thought, the way things were set up in New Jersey were quite functional and decided to copy the tried & true manufacturing line exactly as the method back home. That made things easier in regards to setup, but one person was not enough to produce the complex units.

An ad was applied to the local want ads. The first guy Roy interviewed was perfect. His name is Andre Couture and he was perfectly bilingual, which is what Roy needed to teach others yet to be hired. Roy spent lots of time showing Andre the ropes and Andre was well respected in a short time. When the residential and commercial door operator lines were separated, Andre took over the manufacturing process for residential operators. It was a perfect fit and Andre liked the position. Andre is still active in Lynx today.

When an opportunity arose for Lynx to make an acquisition and expand into garage door manufacturing, Bob Schram jumped at the offer and purchased Ambassador Industries. Ambassador was once the biggest producer of garage doors in Canada, but poor decisions forced it into liquidation. When Lynx bought Ambassador, they acquired a 100,000 square

foot property which was full of machinery and tooling to produce many kinds of specialized doors. Now there was plenty of room for expansion, so Bob made plans to reintroduce garage door production. Lynx made a deal with Taylor Building Products in Michigan and began replicating the Taylor Encore garage door line in Montreal. Garage Door tracks, hardware, and springs were already being produced at Lynx, but the biggest growth spurt happened when Lynx and Ambassador merged into one large manufacturing plant in the 100,000 sq. ft. building.

This is when Roy got his greatest lessons in garage door production and installation. Lynx/Ambassador produced all the components needed to install a great garage door system and Roy had access to it all. Roy studied every facet of the manufacturing process and soon learned more than he ever anticipated. When Roy lived in NJ, he dabbled a little in operator installation, so it seemed normal to start installations in Montreal also.

After a few years, Roy and Lina were married in Montreal, and had two boys, Roy III, and Jesse. Both boys hold dual citizenship—US and Canadian. Roy started doing more installations to create the funds to purchase a home. First Roy began refurbishing garage doors for Lina's family. Lina's Italian family were 250 persons strong, so this gave Roy a good starting base of customers. Everyone liked Roy and were happy with his work. Simple word of mouth referrals blossomed into more work for Roy and he was at times too busy.

Roy was the first person to take his commercial door operator knowledge and bottle it. Meaning he built a systematic approach to installation and service and made it available to anyone who wanted to learn more. Soon Roy's skill was noticed and Roy was asked to present his knowledge at

seminars where garage door technicians would be at.

Roy's first engagement was at a CDI function in Niagra Falls, Ontario. Roy was amazed at how little others knew of commercial operators and how much more he knew. The Q&A portion at the end of the presentation went on for an hour past the scheduled end. Roy agreed to do other presentations for the CDI, which he did through the 80's. In Canada the CDI is Canada's garage door industry association. In the USA the association is the IDA.

In 1996 Roy and family moved to Phoenix, Arizona, to run a new warehouse for Manaras Auto Doors. Both trade associations recognized Roy's unique knowledge and asked him to do presentations at almost every event. Roy liked public speaking and continued doing presentations for anyone who wanted it. Commercial door operators are one of those discreet topics which is mostly a mystery to most commercial door service people.

With Roy being an expert in commercial door operators and with the topic being a mystery to most, Roy felt the responsibility of training anyone who wanted it. To date Roy has trained 2500 technicians, but each one has achieved a different level of knowledge. Even Roy will admit, it takes much time to reach a competent level, but I will continue until I see meaningful results. Between 1985 and 2010, Roy presented commercial operator training at 25 of the garage door annual Expo's. His presentations were always well received and got rave reviews. Roy was asked to do a training presentation in 2020 in Salt Lake City, but he declined, because he thought it would be best if he took a year off. In 2021 the Expo will be held in New Orleans and Roy wanted to save himself for that greater destination. Roy's unique work did not go unnoticed. In 2008, Roy was honored with the IDEA Commitment to professionalism award, then in

2017 he received the IDA Jerry R. Reynolds Volunteer Leadership Award.



Roy and Steve Geyton—2008 President of the IDEA.

In March, 2014 Roy turned 60 years old and celebrated by throwing a Frisbee around with his two boys in Arizona. Roy felt fortunate to be able to horse around at age 60. The joy was shattered in April of that year, when Roy suffered a harrowing Hemorrhagic Stroke which left him paralyzed on his left side. It was an iffy time where Roy could have died any time. Falling asleep every night with no idea if you will wake the next morning will really mess with you, Roy said. Losing motor skills in his left leg, arm, and hand has left Roy deeply worried and depressed. Basically, all the fun things Roy loved doing are now beyond his ability. Not knowing if he will improve and get better is a living nightmare. Roy wasn't ready to end his journey and thought he had many more years ahead, but now no one knows for sure. All you can do is follow your doctor's orders and fight like hell to return to normal. Roy fought hard to get his left leg back and now he can walk short distances with the help of a cane. Even-so when Roy expects longer distances, he must use a wheelchair and be pushed by one of his boys. Getting motor skills back in his left arm and hand will take much longer, but Roy does expect a full recovery. IN THIS ENDEAVOR, PATIENCE IS EVERYTHING! Roy remembers stalking the deer in his earlier years.



Roy was happy doing training presentations, but missed being in manufacturing, sales, and distribution. In 2010 Roy was presented an opportunity to join a new startup company distributing a new line of residential door operators and garage door hardware setting up in Southern California. Roy met with Andrew and Herbert Liu and was hired to assist Andrew in his new startup. Roy was very comfortable joining the Guardian team and merged very quickly into the plan. Roy took on as many responsibilities as permitted and had fun helping out with the new startup. Roy knew a new startup requires much attention and was happy wearing all the hats. He liked his new younger boss and did his very best to help the company succeed. Guardian is on a roll now and there is no telling how successful the company will become moving forward.

Roy is currently (as of 2020) on Medical leave and temporarily involved with Guardian as a technical writer (see Roy's Blog articles). When Roy is fully recovered, he hopes to return to Guardian in a new role because it was an enjoyable place to learn and grow and he knows he can still help out with future projects.

Roy's latest quest is to help his son, Roy III with his garage door service company; Luxor Door operating out of Orange County, California



**You MUST PUT In the needed TIME TO REACH YOUR GOAL.**

*Roy Bardowell, CDDC, served as Operations Manager at Guardian Access & Door Hardware until 2014. He has been in the door and operator industry since 1973 and is known as one of the industry's most experienced operator technicians and trainers. Roy received the IDEA Commitment to Excellence award in 2008 and IDA's Jerry R. Reynolds Volunteer Service Award in 2017. Contact him at roythedoorman@gmail.com*