

In Memory of Frank Muraca

We are sorry to announce the sad news of Frank Muraca's death on the 3rd January 2008. Frank was a popular and generous champion for all the Design and Technology community. He died after a long illness which he fought with great courage and dignity.

Frank was known throughout the D&T community as an outstandingly creative and inspirational personality and raconteur. After a highly successful career in teaching in Rhyl High School and Holywell High School, Frank joined TEP in the late 90's and turned the programme around with his technical skills across electronics, materials, systems and CAD/CAM. His seminal ideas and projects can be found now in almost every school in the UK. As a teacher trainer and student trainer his reputation was outstanding and his infectious humour and willingness to share new ideas and skills with all those who met and knew him is well known.

His appointment to TEP and all his work for TEP was always a real thrill to him as he had become disillusioned with the changes in teaching, paper work, continual assessments and targets that often stifle enthusiasm and creativity. Frank was known most popularly as TEP's National Coordinator although his work often carried over into many other areas of interest. Frank was quite literally a dynamo of talent across a number of disciplines and naturally a modern day polymath. Frank spent his waking hours dedicated to improving our subject, whether he was training, teaching, developing new products and ideas, technical writing or managing the TEP website.

The legacy of material associated with Frank is quite vast and the creativity we now see in D&T and the resources available to D&T teachers and pupils would have been rather limited without Frank's prodigious output. The creative DNA that was and is Frank can now be found in almost every school's D&T department. He was one of the greatest salesmen for our subject and was at his best when he was selling Technology.



His training as a Cabinet Maker had given him the grounding and the skills that would be of great use to him during later life. He attended teacher training at Alsager College of Education and went on to become highly respected and regarded across the North Wales coast for his knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm.

While at Holywell as a Head of Dept. and along with a successful TSI funding bid he set up a department that was revolutionary for its time. He was into CAD CAM in the 80's and was never likely to be left behind with the latest technological developments. Frank

was a renaissance thinker and from the early BBC computers in schools he was on the case. If there was any software designed for a BBC, Frank had tried it. He literally pioneered computer technology and Systems and Control and CAD CAM into schools and a number of businesses too. He quite literally dominated these disciplines and had more recently developed a passion and expertise for laser technology and rapid prototyping, his home based computer network driving the heart of much of TEPs development.



He changed the life of all those who came in contact with him by his infectious enthusiasm and by example. He inspired so many teachers of D&T to modernise the way they taught the subject. Frank and his wife Maureen would often have open house for teachers and student teachers to visit and learn more! He was relentless in his quest for new and innovative products and ideas. He would have a go at anything, no problem was too big or too small. He added to that repertoire by introducing many smart and modern materials to all of us through the 90's and lifted the D&T brand.

His passion extended to so many areas, his family home is filled with hand crafted furniture and artefacts and his workshop is a veritable 'tardis' packed with every conceivable technical tool or gadget, for Frank was a consummate 'gadgeteer'. He was an accomplished radio ham too and was well known as a speaker and innovator across that field too.

He devised new products and ideas for Teaching Resources over many years and when not creating for schools he was solving medical physics problems at the local hospital, consulting the surgeons and even sorting out their Power Points! Famously he brought back from the US the compressed air rocket technology now popular across schools in the summer months. Often at the very leading edge of materials discovery Frank would be pioneering technology for schools like QTC, Ultra Capacitors, boil in a bag metals and smart materials before even industry had a chance to develop them.

Not just an outstanding head of department picking up accolades and National awards, for many years Frank was a member of the Editorial Board of Electronics Education. Frank was of course a one off, who always left us breathless for more and with Frank there was always much more.

As a subject community we have lost probably the best ambassador that we have had in recent times and he will be greatly missed. Frank will quite deservedly be remembered for ever.

Frank leaves behind his widow, Maureen recently retired head teacher and son Jon an accomplished musician and technologist.

You can find many tributes to Frank by following the link on the TEP website homepage and we would welcome donations from friends and colleagues for; **The Bone Marrow Transplant Unit Royal Liverpool University Hospital**

Nick Baldwin - Feb 2008