SOCIETY NEWS

AWS Educator Member Profile

Charlie Scoggins

Charlie Scoggins first entered the world of welding as a high schooler when a teacher, Hezekiah Smith, invited him to join a welding class.

Enthralled with the craft, Scoggins propelled his welding education in 1966 by attending Red River Vo-Tech in Hope, Ark., where he earned a technical certificate.

“I was in the very first welding class they offered,” he said.

In 1968, Scoggins received a scholarship to attend Southern State College in Magnolia, Ark., now known as Southern Arkansas University. Here, he attained an associate’s degree.

After graduating, Scoggins secured a job working the night shift at Smith-Blair Inc., a manufacturer of piping systems for water, gas, oilfield, and industrial markets.

However, Scoggins discovered a new passion when he began teaching welding classes to high school students during the day.

“Working there motivated me to want to teach because there are so many things to learn when teaching someone else,” he said. “What I have learned keeps me going.”

He also taught welding to local companies, as well as for the federal prison in Texarkana, Tex. After 14 years with Smith-Blair, Scoggins left the company to teach full time.

In 1981, he landed his dream job teaching at the University of Arkansas Hope-Texarkana, where he still works. Scoggins teaches introduction to arc welding, pipe and structural welding, position welding, and metallurgy, as well as gas metal and gas tungsten arc welding. He further teaches dual-credit classes for high school students.

“The most rewarding thing for me is teaching students a skill or trade so they can go out and get a good job and make a living,” he said. “The benefits pay off for them because sometimes they make more money than the instructor.”

Scoggins’s teaching method involves connecting his students with the local community. His students have built barbecue pits that are auctioned off during fundraisers and local events, as well as created welding projects for parks.

Scoggins serves as a role model for his students through his volunteer work. He is a member of the Brotherhood of Fulton, a religious organization, through which he helps host programs for people who are sick or in need of support. He also assists in conducting food drives for the New Bethel Baptist Church.

When he’s not busy teaching or serving his community, Scoggins enjoys farming and taking care of cattle.

AWS Member Profile

Gilly Burron

Gilly Burron was initiated into the welding industry when his father and brother founded Florida Gas Welding Supply in West Park, Fla. After working in sales for several years, Burron managed a successful limousine transportation company, which he eventually sold to dedicate himself to the family business.

Burron worked to grow the company by bolstering his own knowledge base.

“Getting in-depth training by different manufacturers gave me the ability to look for avenues to better understand customers and be able to suggest different applications to fit their needs,” he said.

He also expanded the business to include individual and group welding training.

“This is what sets us apart from the rest,” he said.

Today, Burron is a partner in the company as well as an AWS Certified Welding Sales Representative. Calling his job an “adventure,” he enjoys teaching his customers how to improve weld quality.

“It’s a great feeling when you can be next to your customer wearing a welding hood and showing them where they lack in any welding process,” he said.

He also prides himself in providing a high level of expertise.

“I see our industry as a dying trade,” he said. “I always ask the customer looking for welding equipment, ‘Would you buy a car from a salesperson who does not know how to drive?’”

Burrion also chairs the AWS South Florida Section. His role includes finding companies to host meetings, which allows members to see the company’s everyday welding activities; identifying ways the Section can help its members be successful; and giving seminars to those looking to learn more about the latest welding technology and equipment.

“I like providing students with valuable information regarding the industry,” he said. “My motivation also comes from knowing I am part of someone’s educational success, whether it’s a beginner or advanced welder.”

He advises those considering a career in welding to hone their skill and invest in continued training.

“Build your skill better than the average welder, and make yourself worth what you expect in compensation,” he advised. “If you were a cook at a diner, would you expect the same compensation as a chef in a five-star restaurant? The same goes for the welding industry.”