

Soaring Skyward with Heavy Lifts

David Frazier

My first job was "Hi-lift Operator" at Inland Steel in East Chicago, Indiana. I loaded stock and moved material too heavy for a worker to lift by hand. My occupation kept me on ground level, but my aspirations were high above where mill pigeons flew, next to the men who worked the giant cranes.

I often stood mesmerized watching those monstrosities inch along steel rails. The hot rail shoes created fiery sparks that floated softly downward like dancing fireflies. This was the job I wanted. This job was where I heard the mechanical music of cables straining and steel wheels squeaking as the giant crane easily lifted 200-ton iron ladles filled with molten metal skyward. It brought back memories of when I was a kid watching airplanes flying high in the clouds as the sun glistened off their silvery wings. I wanted to fly, and that crane would become my aircraft. I imagined myself sitting in the crane cab moving objects bigger than life. This was my ambition. This was my dream.

And then one day, it came to pass. I bid on that job, and I won. My dreams of man over machine — of controlling, moving, and manipulating heavy equipment — came true. I was a crane operator. My dream of flying high in the skies of Inland Steel became a reality. My dream of lifting ladles and moving them from place to place like toys in a sandbox came true. Simply moving a lever in the cockpit of the gargantuan crane lifted tons of molten iron and made me feel like a kid again. This was the best job I ever had. It's almost as good as the one I now have: retired. I still dream of flying everyday.

David Frazier is a student at Joblink in East Chicago, IN. He has been married for 40 years to his wife Kathie, and he has been taking writing classes ever since he retired in 2003.



Hell in a Steel Mill

Maury Kleinman

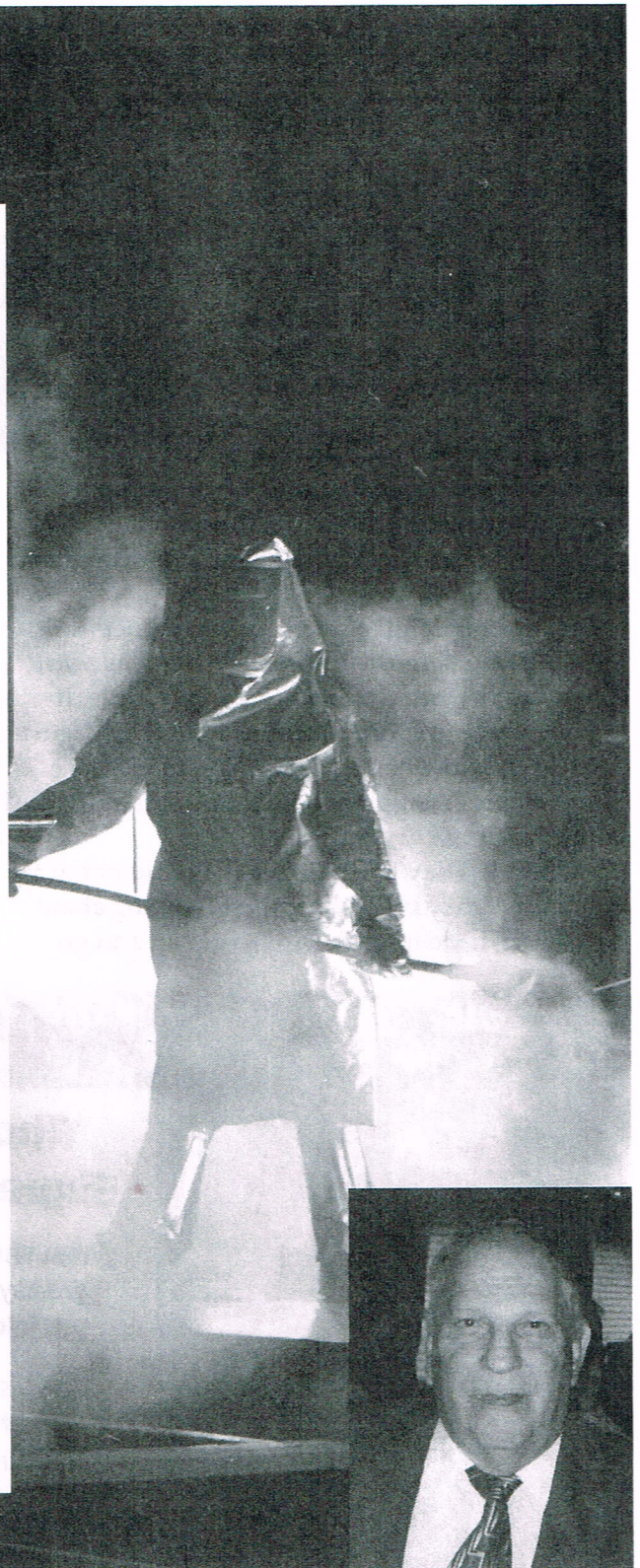
I worked at Inland Steel for 31 years as an electrician. We did everything from changing light bulbs to major rewiring. I loved being an electrician, but there was one job I hated: changing the hot rail shoes on the cranes.

The conditions on the hot rails were not pleasant. We worked in a repair basket, which was cramped and dirty and everything was covered with grease. Since the basket was open, you felt the heat and smelled the fumes from the mill. Sometimes it was over 150 degrees in the summer.

If it wasn't the heat making life miserable then it was gas fumes from the furnaces which accumulated under the ceiling of the mill. Everything was always covered in iron dust and you were wading in grease which would get all over you and ruin your clothes. Many times after repairing crane shoes, we'd throw out our clothes rather than try to clean them. It was almost impossible to get the grease out.

The worst crane to work on was 42 Crane in the main mill. Its repair area was almost directly over the furnaces so it was always hotter there than the other cranes. Sometimes the flames from the furnaces would shoot up to the crane rails, and it looked like a set of hands was trying to grab you and pull you down to hell. The hot metal burned you with no remorse. Changing the hot rail shoes on the cranes is definitely the worst job I ever had to do.

Maury Kleinman is a student at Joblink 2000 at Acer Mittal Steel in East Chicago, IN. He retired after 31 years at Inland Steel (now part of Acer Mittal Steel). The course he recently finished was "Everyone Has A Story."



What Inspires Me to Become an Architect

David Colon

When I was 19 years old, I went to work in construction with my older brother. At first it seemed hard and exhausting, but when I got used to it and learned the basics, it became easy and exciting. When you are building something, it's hard to imagine what the finished product will look like. But once I started to see how beautiful the buildings turned out, I knew I wanted to become an architect.

At the beginning I was a laborer. I had to clean up behind more skilled workers, such as carpenters, welders, and painters. I carried steel doors and equipment up flights of stairs. Once they saw that I was a good laborer, they started to teach me other things, such as how to build cabinets, put

up sheet rock, paint professionally, and weld. As I learned more skills, I saw how beautifully my work came out. I said to myself, "I want to be an architect." Today I am working hard to reach that goal.



David Colon is a student at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center #5 in New York City. He is from the Upper West Side of Manhattan and is the proud father of a 16 year old daughter. He is a supervisor for a major clothing chain in New York City.

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1. _____

Career Ladder

What are the steps David Colon has taken, is taking, and probably will need to take if he wants to become an architect? Use information from the article, his biography, and what you know. Describe the steps on your own career ladder. See Resources on p. 33 for more direction.