GENE A. IANNAZZO

38-YEAR LIFE MEMBER

GENE A. IANNAZZO is a seasoned executive with 40 years of general management, sales, marketing and business development experience in the metals and minerals industries. His company, MAXIMET Co., provides consulting, agency, trading, and brokerage services to industrial clients for resource recovery, operational excellence, raw material/energy optimization and growth. Prior to MAXIMET, he served in leadership positions at Harsco Corp., where he was president of MultiServ North America, president of Harsco Minerals International and finally chief commercial officer of Harsco Metals and Minerals. He was at one time president of the Metals Services Group of Philip Services Corp. (PSC), where he ran a billion-dollar network of scrap procurement, processing and trading businesses. Before PSC, he spent 22+ years with International Mill Service (IMS) in engineering, marketing, business development, operations and executive positions. He served as an AIST Foundation trustee for six years, and for 1 years was a director of the American Iron and Steel Institute. He is co-author of the patent "Regenerated Calcium Aluminate Product and Process of Manufacture." Iannazzo served as an U.S. Army officer and graduated with a B.S. degree in business administration and industrial management from West Virginia University.

When did you first join AISE/ISS?

When I was assigned to Brazil for IMS, I was heading up our business development in a rapidly growing steel region. Prior to 1975, I had had some exposure as an associate member of the Steel Manufacturers Association (SMA) and the American Iron and Steel Institute. Working in Latin America, I gained a fuller appreciation of the importance of steel technology. At that point, I had not been exposed to AIST's predecessors.

At the time, Gerdau, one of the pioneers in EAF steelmaking, had an early form of DRI, and I wanted to learn more about that technology and EAFs in general. Upon returning to the U.S. in the late 1970s, I pushed for my company to secure more market share in the mini-mill sector.

Two executives at steel mill customers introduced me to the Association. Gordon Ford and Lou Hutchison, Costeel (now Gerdau), encouraged me to join AIME. The limited involvement I had with AIME was also largely driven by the EAF evolution. I attended the Iron & Steel Society's Electric Furnace Conference in Detroit in 1979, and in April 1980 I joined as a member.

What was your first level of involvement in the organization? How did your involvement progress over the years?

I participated in the Electric Furnace conference, and I religiously read the publications, which gave updates on major deals, personnel changes and technology adoptions. That, to me, was the food that gave us the latest information on the metals industry.

Later in my career, in 2007–2012, I served on the AIST Foundation Board of Trustees, which I found energizing and rewarding. Bill Breedlove, a co-worker who had also served on the Foundation Board of Trustees, thought it would be a good fit for me.

How has membership benefited you in your career? How do you see AIST benefiting people in the steel industry today?

AIST membership has always helped me expand my companies' strategic perspectives of the broader industry and, more importantly, our customers' perspectives. AIST has facilitated building strong industry relationships, and I want to emphasize that our commercial goals were not pushed at events. Those were secondary/tertiary to the goals of advancing the industry overall. You didn't participate to glad-hand customers.

I always picked out key presentations/papers that I wanted to see, to gain access to the technological developments that drive the future of the

▶ National Slag Association board of directors.

▶ Iannazzo was presented with a plaque of appreciation for his six years of service as an AIST Foundation trustee at AISTech 2012 in Atlanta, Ga., USA.

▶ Slag in Speedways (Las Vegas, Nev., USA).

▶ Volta Redonda Brazil, circa 1977. Iannazzo is pictured at far left.

global steel industry. AIST has had an important role in that, particularly in the Americas.

I have long believed that technology is the key factor for the success of a business. I don't think you have a business without technology.

How have you seen the industry change over the years? What do you foresee in the (near or far) future for the steel industry?

I began my career in the steel industry in the late 1960s/early 1970s. The U.S. at that time was the flagship of steel. We made more than China back then. We had an annual installed capacity of 150 million tons and a production output of more than 120 million tons. U. S. Steel was the first billion-dollar corporation. I remember when about 25% of our steel was still made in open-hearth furnaces. Overcapacity, however, breeds poor financial performance. We, as an industry, could see the freight train coming, but we were too stubborn to throw the switch.

I could see the advent and vast adoption of EAF steel production coming, especially in North America. While early on, only specialty steelmakers relied heavily on EAFs, there were also several integrated producers that had an electric steel shop within their plants. The real growth spurt of the EAF came with the mini-mill evolution, first with rebar and simple structural steels.

Mini-mills have outgrown their name, and some of them make 10 times their original targets of years ago. The true milestone that kicked the market segment into high gear was the Compact Strip Production technology in 1989. That development meant the mini-mills would come up the food chain both in quality and volume. Now it's more than 70% of U.S. steel production.

What did that all mean to a guy like me in the slag handling and mill service business? We had to re-focus our target customers and, more importantly, we had to develop and implement many more market uses for electric arc furnace slags. In the integrated mills, a lot of the slag was internally recycled. Steel slag has MgO, CaO and FeO, which are raw materials for blast furnaces and sinter plants. As a service provider, I had an advantage because I didn't work in just one plant, so I saw the best and the worst of practices.

Today there's a lot of emphasis on iron substitutes. To me, the use of iron substitutes is a bit of a crutch. It's a crutch for what you could otherwise achieve by purifying scraps — and knowing what's in the scraps is key. I think we're going to continue to try to

better separate. This will mitigate the need for iron substitutes.

I went through three evolutions in steel that led to bankruptcies and purgings of the steel industry in North America. You know you're getting older if the names of these steel companies sound familiar: Bethlehem, Republic, Birmingham, Jones & Laughlin, Youngstown Sheet & Tube, Weirton, Wheeling Pitt, Dofasco, Stelco, Inland, Phoenix, Lukens, Armco, IPSCO, Sharon, Keystone, Northstar, Oregon Steel, Cyclops, Kaiser, McLouth, Allen Wood, Roebling, Geneval, Crucible, McClouth, and Colorado Fuel and Iron.

If you were to recommend AIST to a new graduate just coming into the industry, what would you tell him/her?

One of the things I found most gratifying when I was on the Board of Trustees was working on scholarships. I would connect with a new graduate coming into the industry by relating my experiences. I tried to open their eyes to the often-unappreciated attractiveness of a career in steel. During my nearly 50 years in industry, any time it became difficult to sustain my enthusiasm for what I did, I remembered that the people in this industry are some of the most talented visionaries in the business world, and that's why they've kept it together through all the adversity. I'm privileged and blessed to have worked with them.

When I was asked "why do you stick with this business?" I'd say it's the quality and caliber of the people that was most rewarding to me. We're the most efficient steel industry on earth, and one of the most environmentally friendly industries on earth, because steelmaking is largely recycling — and we recycle most of our products. So it's truly a sustainable business. I believe that we're finally going to have the level playing field we've lacked for four decades.

It was refreshing and gratifying to see the level of intelligence and academic achievement we were starting to attract. This is the raw, undeveloped talent that is the real fuel for the metals industry. I've long believed there are only two real ways to generate wealth: (1) get it out of the ground, as a crop, ore, oil, etc., and (2) manufacture something. Most of the world's business comes from one of these two, and there's a chance for a graduate to actually generate wealth in two ways, because the steel industry does both. ✦