

Calendar of Events

Look for a Pace Learning representative at the following conferences and workshops this fall.

Conferences

August 21, 2002

Florida Government Expo 2002

Tampa, FL

September 4, 2002

Georgia Adult Literacy

Atlanta, GA

September 23, 2002

Ace of Florida

Tampa, FL

September 26, 2002

**Arkansas Association for Adult
and Continuing Education**

Little Rock, AR

October 6, 2002

**Correction Educators' Association
Region II**

Richmond, VA

October 13, 2002

Alabama Association of School Administrators

Guntersville, AL

October 15, 2002

Miami-Dade Instructional Technology

Miami, FL

November 3, 2002

**Correction Educators' Association
Region V**

Norman, OK

November 6, 2002

National Middle School Conference

Atlanta, GA

November 10, 2002

Alabama Association of Secondary School Principals

Perdido Beach, AL

November 17, 2002

Florida Assistant Principals Conference

Coral Springs, FL

December 5, 2002

Tennessee Education Technology Conference

Nashville, TN

Schedule a workshop or training session for your school or institution. Call 800-826-7223 for details!

"Nothing Teaches Like Success"

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25th Anniversary Issue

Pace Learning 25th Anniversary

Celebrating Success With...
CITY Programs
A Pace Learning Employee

Celebrating Your Success

Pace Learning Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Finding Success Behind Bars

Though Pace Learning was not formed until 1977, you might say that the company's history began in 1961 with the fortuitous meeting of a young psychologist and an idealistic and dynamic warden at Draper Correctional Center in Alabama. Dr. John McKee was Alabama's Director of Community Mental Health when he met John C. Watkins, who was working on a graduate degree in sociology and anthropology at the time.

Dr. McKee wanted to know whether his agency could assist the state correctional facility with meeting prisoners' mental health needs. But Watkins quickly asserted that the prisoners' obstacles were mostly related to their academic failure, and McKee soon began to see his point. Many of the men in the prison system had lived in cycles of failure. They did not know how to read or write, and most did not have successful family relationships or job experiences. The inmates had even failed in crime, Watkins reminded McKee.

What if the prisoners were given the opportunity to succeed at improving their basic skills by getting their high school diplomas, and even pursuing college degrees? The question would consume Dr. McKee for the next 13 years as he, Watkins, and an evolving team of researchers worked on a series of projects to develop individualized learning systems that would teach the inmates efficiently and effectively. With funding from the National Institute of Mental Health, U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Office of Education, they saw results.

Experiencing academic success really could help inmates move forward with their lives.

"Some of the inmates would say, I don't care about an education," Dr. McKee recalled. "But it wasn't a problem, getting them to participate—especially since school was nice and had an air-conditioned work area, and they wouldn't have to work on the prison farm, except at cotton-picking time."

"One of the guards said, *Now doc, don't let them fool you. They're just going to school for a soft lick.*

"I said, *That's just fine. I appreciate whatever the motivation is. I just want to get them there. It's up to me then for them to be productive.*"

While the research showed that the attainment of academic skills and occupational skills did help the inmates to be more successful outside prison walls, Dr. McKee recognized that environmental supports were also important.

Dr. McKee had created a non-profit organization called the Rehabilitation Research Foundation in 1965 to administer the grants that funded his experimental programs. In 1966, Dr. McKee solicited private donations to extend the Draper program beyond prison walls.

The new program was called PACE, which stood for Program for an Achievement of a College Education. The program provided books and tuition for former Draper inmates who were admitted to college.

The program served as a bridge between prison culture and higher education, and through it, many inmates eventually earned undergraduate degrees, two earned master's degrees, and at least one inmate earned a Ph.D.

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from the top

Pacesetter

Purpose

To inform educators of new product developments from Pace Learning and to highlight exemplary educational programs. To update educators on current trends in assessment, curriculum, and instructional design.

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A letter from the President Susan P. McKee, Ph.D.

Dear Friends:

At Pace Learning, we're always changing in order to meet the needs of educators in better ways. As your classrooms have adopted computers, we've fine-tuned our computer-based learning systems. As academic expectations have changed, you've seen our content offerings change. We've grown together. Our products--in your capable hands--have helped to foster the success of countless students. And this year, Pace Learning honors those successes as we celebrate our 25th anniversary.

Perhaps history is most engaging when told by the people who have lived it. That's why, in this special Silver Anniversary edition of *The Pacesetter*, we share the perspectives of people who have been part of the growth of Pace Learning. We hope that their insights and hopes will be as inspiring to you as they are to us.

We also hope that you will be able to attend our Silver Anniversary Celebration on Friday, October 11, 2002. Our customers are invited to visit our facility for an open house from 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. that day. We also welcome our customers to enjoy refreshments at a celebratory reception from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Please call us at (800) 826-7223 for directions to our facility at 3710 Resource Drive in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

We look forward to many more wonderful years with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan P. McKee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan P. McKee, Ph. D.
President, Pace Learning Systems, Inc.

CITY Programs *continued from page 3*

nine systems. Then I had to go back and package them up! That was the way Pace Learning got started, there in the Quonset hut.”

“People were referring to us as one-day wonders. Here today, gone tomorrow,” Earnest laughs. “But we just kept on doing it, and, of course, the company has developed further since then.”

Earnest stayed with Pace Learning until 1980, when his non-profit Innovative Resources received funding to open a CITY day-treatment center in Gadsden, where a juvenile court judge had been eager to start a program. A CITY day-treatment center in Shelby County was the next to open.

In 1983, CITY was named the most innovative juvenile justice program by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. CITY has also received recognition for its effectiveness from the National Governors Association and the U.S. Department of Justice. Earnest was asked to testify before the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate, and his testimony helped institute a requirement for federally-funded juvenile justice programs to include youths’ families in treatment.

Helping Students Experience Success

The first two decades of the CITY program weren’t easy, but Earnest’s optimism managed to survive political firestorms and personal bankruptcy. For a while, the program’s growth could only be described as “stop-and-start.” However, legislators eventually accepted the idea, Earnest renewed the partnership with the Alabama Department of Youth Services, and funding sources were pleased by the results that they saw.

Now, in 2002, there are ten CITY programs in Alabama. They serve 600 to 700 young people each year, receiving an annual total of nearly \$4.2 million in state funding. Local in-kind contributions and federal grants also help to support the programs.

Each center is staffed by teachers and three counselors who serve 30 students referred by the juvenile justice system. After assessment and behavioral observation, students and counselors work together to establish “success plans” that outline each student’s academic and behavioral goals. These plans, evaluated each month, guide counseling and educational efforts. Family members are included, and follow-up

is an important part of the program even after a student has “graduated.”

The program is still meeting—and surpassing—its goals. The cost per pupil is only \$43.85 per day, compared to state institutions’ most recent estimate for pupil expenditures of \$160.00 per day. A recent evaluation revealed that 87 percent of recent CITY program clients committed no new felonies over a period of nineteen months, which included time at the program and follow-up time.

Earnest says that he still believes that educational failure helps to initiate the cycle of failure that lands young people in the juvenile justice system. “Successful people don’t go to institutions,” Earnest notes. “Kids succeeding in school don’t go to institutions. When we were operating the original program in Tuscaloosa, the kids were functioning four years below their chronological grade level. Today, thirty years later, our students are functioning, on average, three years and three months below their chronological grade level.”

“We track academic gain,” Earnest says. “We have consistently, over thirty years, gotten five months of academic gain per month with our kids. We are currently running 6.7 months of gain per month. I use Pace Learning materials because they work.”

Earnest believes that the emphasis on individualized, self-paced learning helps make Pace Learning materials so effective. Also, he points out, immediate feedback helps students and teachers to learn more efficiently. CITY’s teachers like the program because they handle less paperwork and can see students succeeding as they master manageable segments of materials.

While he regrets his criminal past, Earnest believes that the changes in his life have strengthened him. “When they start using the Pace Learning materials,” Earnest notes, “I tell the kids, *I was the guinea pig for this program*. And I urge them to make the most of their learning experiences.”

“Quite honestly,” Earnest says, “if it weren’t for John Watkins and Dr. John McKee, and the opportunity that they gave me to be part of the research at Draper, there’s no way that I’d be where I am today. I’d probably be dead. What John and John did for me, that’s what CITY is trying to do for the young people in our communities.”

If you would like to share teaching strategies, PaceWare® tips, ideas for using Pace Learning products, or other insights, complete the online form at www.pacelearning.com/ps2402.html, or call us at 800-826-7223.

Celebrating Success with a Pace Learning Employee

When Susan Franklin took a part-time job at Pace Learning in 1980, she envisioned it as a temporary gig. "I'd been a stay-at-home mom, and I thought that I would just be working on the IRIS system," Franklin recalls. "But as you can see, twenty-two years later, I'm still here!" Franklin gradually took on more responsibility and currently serves as Pace Learning's Accounting Manager.

According to Franklin, strong leadership has helped the company to thrive. "Susan is not afraid of change and challenge. She's not afraid to try something new, and I admire that. If a new idea doesn't work, she'll just move on to a better solution."

Franklin has seen many changes during her time at Pace Learning. "I had the pleasure of participating in the move to our spacious, pleasant facility at Resource Drive. I saw John turn over the presidency to Susan, and watched her run with it. I've observed the evolution of our sales models, and have been part of the shift towards offering electronic versions of our products."

What is the most critical factor in Franklin's satisfaction as an employee? Her co-workers, she says, are the company's greatest asset. "Susan has a knack for surrounding herself with people who are bright and energetic. It makes such a difference to know that your peers are dedicated, competent professionals."

What's more, Franklin notes, Pace Learning's motto of "learning through success" applies to every person who works for the company. "When we hire new employees, we select people who want to continue learning and growing as professionals. No one is bored, because we're all being given the opportunity to work towards our potential." This philosophy, Franklin says, allows employees to advance their careers, while benefiting the company.

Franklin is also encouraged by her faith in the quality of the company's products and its approach to customers. "A few years ago, a young man walked in the front door to deliver a package, and I happened to be in the lobby. I heard him say, *My goodness, this is Pace! This company taught me how to read—I wouldn't have my job if I hadn't used your programs.*"

Such episodes have bolstered Franklin's enthusiasm for her job. "I believe in our products—there's nothing else like them. And even if I'm not personally creating the products or telling teachers about them, I'm playing a necessary role in distributing our learning systems to the struggling students who need them. At the end of the day, I know that I've done worthwhile work. I feel satisfied when I go home, and that's important."

Celebrating Success with CITY Programs

Ed Earnest is an unlikely candidate for the life he now leads as founder and director of the Community Intensive Treatment for Youth (CITY) Programs of Alabama, a string of comprehensive day-treatment centers that aim to help troubled young people. Yet his past is what has inspired his three decades of efforts to stop the cycles of failure in the lives of juvenile offenders.

Escaping a Culture of Failure

At the age of 11, Ed Earnest faced 27 charges of burglary. He spent the next several years sliding in and out of Alabama's Boys' Industrial School. Eventually, in 1960, a judge sent sixteen-year-old Earnest to Draper Correctional Center. Earnest, seeing the familiar faces around him, soon realized that his fellow juvenile offenders had, like him, simply "graduated" to Draper, a state prison.

At Draper, Earnest participated in educational research conducted by warden John Watkins and Dr. John McKee. He used the Individually Prescribed Instructional System (IPIS) to prepare for a GED. By the time he left Draper in 1966, Earnest had escaped from the prison once. Yet the warden believed that Earnest would not be in trouble again. His message was clear: *I want you to stay out when you get out of here.*

Working to Save Kids in Trouble

Earnest enrolled at the University of Alabama in 1967, benefiting during his first semester from a college scholarship program created by McKee and Watkins. While pursuing his bachelor's degree, he also worked full-time as a counselor at Ridgecrest Children's Center. Earnest began to wonder if there was a way to keep young people out of institutions, where their negative behaviors were often reinforced.

He believed that part of the answer could be found in juvenile offenders' chronic academic problems. With that in mind, Earnest obtained funding for his experimental CITY program, a day treatment program with an educational component, in the summer of 1970. "One of the program's goals," Earnest notes, "was to reduce the commitment of Tuscaloosa County kids to the state by 50 percent. The second was to demonstrate greater effectiveness when compared with institutional programs, based on lack of conviction of a new offense. And the third was to show we could do it at less than half the cost."

Earnest used the IPI system developed by Dr. John McKee, along with behavioral change and family assistance components to help achieve these goals. At the core of the program was the belief that these kids, regardless of their troubled pasts, could succeed.



Ed Earnest shakes hands with Guy Hunt, who was Governor of Alabama at the time.

worked," Earnest recounts. "Everything was moving along fairly well." When the program opened, 23 young people from Tuscaloosa were in juvenile institutions; a year later, this number had been reduced to two.

Attempting to Expand CITY

But a rocky road was ahead, when Earnest attempted to expand CITY through working with the Department of Youth Services in the early 1970s. As Earnest notes, "I thought that if we could show we'd met our three goals, we'd be welcomed with open arms. I was naïve."

At the time, the centers hired employees through the authority of the State Personnel Board, and Earnest found the state's candidates to be underqualified for the open positions. He lured state employees from one of the training schools instead. "I thought," Earnest recalls, "if I try to build another seven programs under these conditions, I'll just be creating another level of ineffective shuffling for these kids."

Earnest resigned in the fall of 1976 and soon went to work with Dr. John McKee in Tuscaloosa, who was then attempting to disseminate information about the IPI System he had first developed at Draper. Within a year, Dr. McKee created Pace Learning as a corporation.

"We got a Quonset hut in Alberta City," Earnest remembers. "It was John, me, and a part-time bookkeeper. I designed a brochure, using data from the CITY program, and mailed it out to Georgia. I made ten calls in Georgia during my first sales trip and sold

"It

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Celebrating Your Success

Imagine that you have a struggling student who is working hard to overcome life's obstacles in the classroom. (Not hard to imagine, is it?) At first, your student believes that her academic goals are impossible. But, over time, your encouragement and her steady progress work wonders: you have a successful student!

Of course, her success will likely lead to even more challenging endeavors, like going to college or pursuing a good job. And she's really proud of what she's done, with your help. But where are the cheering crowds, the tickertape parades, and the applause that your student deserves?

Too often, life's accomplishments go unmarked. As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, Pace Learning is also celebrating your success—and your students' success—with the creation of a new scholarship program. As we announced last spring, this year we will begin an annual tradition of awarding up to five \$500 scholarships to students who have made significant academic progress while using Pace Learning products. The nominating instructor of each winning student will receive a \$500 Pace Learning product voucher.

The deadline for the 2002 competition has already passed, and we will be announcing the names of scholarship winners and their instructors in October. However, it's not too early to begin preparing for next year's competition. We encourage you to contact Pace Learning for an application and additional information by calling (800) 826-7223.

25th Anniversary *continued from page 1*

Expanding Our Reach

For years, Dr. McKee kept one foot in the field of mental health and the other in the field of education. In the early 1970s, he worked with students at a juvenile institution in Mt. Meigs, Alabama. He then moved to Tuscaloosa, where he served as a consultant at Bryce Mental Hospital in order to oversee Judge Frank M. Johnson's court order upholding the right to treatment for mental patients. Finally, in 1977, Dr. McKee decided to create a company that would apply his research findings to meet the needs of a growing number of education programs across the nation.

That's when Pace Learning came into being. Initially, most of Dr. McKee's customers were prison education programs, but soon the company was expanding its markets. Adult education programs, for instance, were hungry for tools to help their students pass the GED. The Individually Prescribed Instructional System (IPIS), developed by Dr. McKee at Draper, was tailored to help teachers manage instruction effectively for students who

wanted to pass the GED.

"I figured, if it could work in prisons, it would work in other settings," McKee explains. "The company was created to provide a more effective method of dissemination for our learning systems. It also gave us the opportunity to develop further these learning systems for the benefit of public education."

In the early 1980s, school systems across the nation began to use competency tests to measure students' progress toward academic standards. That's when the company's offerings evolved to include Competency Cabinets correlated to the high school math, language, and reading curricula.

"The schools started using them far and wide for specific remediation of skill deficits," Dr. McKee recalls.

"Some schools would use our learning systems in the classroom. For example, a math teacher might use the math section of the system. Other schools would create what they called learning centers, where the students would have access to the math, language, and reading sections."

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As Dr. McKee explains, "We're still a basic skills company—we serve kids and adults who have not been able to learn well at all through standard instructional systems or traditional classrooms. We offer tools, methods, and concepts that will help these people achieve goals that are out of their reach unless they get a high school education or a GED. We consider ourselves to be advocates for these struggling learners—and the educators who want so desperately to reach them."

Because of the company's dedication to meeting the actual needs of actual learners, customer service is the lynchpin of the business's operations. "Our customers' feedback and our own research have helped us to fine-tune and add to our product line," current Pace Learning president Dr. Susan McKee notes. "We've been seeking feedback from customers since our beginning, and our recently created Customer Advisory Board will strengthen those efforts further."

Looking to the Future

Over the years, the content areas covered by Pace Learning's learning systems have expanded to include reading, language, basic math, advanced math, writing

skills, employability skills, and life skills. Dr. John McKee points out that expansion of content areas remains a priority for the company's research and development department.

The formats of the learning systems have also evolved. Print systems have been available since the company's beginning. In the early 1990s, Pace Learning began to offer PaceWare®, software allowing educators to utilize the most current technological resources as they strive to meet students' individual needs.

As Dr. John McKee explains, "The computer can be a marvelous teaching machine if it has good programs, and we've committed ourselves to having the very, very best programs not only in terms of instruction, but also in terms of learning management. We want to make sure that the educator can collect relevant information about the progress of each student, keeping the management of learning at his or her fingertips."

The combination of print-based programmed instruction and its computer-based software presents a powerful, highly successful learning combination. With the widespread availability of Internet

access, Dr. Susan McKee predicts that many customers will soon be using a web-driven version of PaceWare®. This will provide students with access to learning systems at any time from any location that has Internet access.

In addition, employees are working to find ways to help educators improve the pace of students' learning. As Dr. John McKee explains, "We want to devise strategies that will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of student learning. Many students who use our learning systems are trying to make up for lost educational time. Sometimes they are many grade levels behind. So it's important, especially when we're talking about learning basic skills, to help them pace themselves to move quickly but thoroughly through our systems."

What has enabled the company to thrive over the past twenty-five years? Dr. Susan McKee says that Pace Learning employees practice what they preach. "Just as the students we serve are learning through success," she says, "we, too, are learning through success. We are constantly striving to improve our offerings and services to meet the needs of today's learners."

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