# Kenneth E. Blazek

52-YEAR AIST LIFE MEMBER

2015 AIST DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AND FELLOW

Kenneth Blazek was first introduced to the predecessor societies of AIST when he was an undergraduate student at Purdue University in the Metallurgical Engineering Department. The department encouraged all the students to join both the ASM and AIME with a special joint fee for both organizations. He has remained a member of AIST ever since.

"My first involvement with the organization was when I presented a paper at the Pittsburgh chapter meeting in 1974 that won the F.L. Toy Award. I became involved in committee meetings and other parts of the organization after my move to Inland Steel from U. S. Steel in 1983. I was very active in the organization. I served on the Board of Directors for several years, was a member of the Ferrous Metallurgy Grant Committee and also belonged to the Process Technology Committee for many years. I chaired a special course about the use of electromagnetics in the industry in the early 1990s. My involvement waned for about 10 years because of assignments to areas not related to steelmaking until


*Blazek was one of the winners of the AIST 2013 Continuous Casting Best Paper Award, which was presented at AISTech 2013 in Pittsburgh, Pa., USA (left to right): Rudolf Moravec, Garrett Flick, Ron O'Malley (presenter of the award), Blazek and Nicholas Gregurich.*

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about 2005, at which time I started contributing papers to the conferences on a regular basis. In fact, at one time I interviewed for a position at the Iron & Steel Society (ISS) as a successor to Larry Kuhn, who was the ISS founding executive director."

Blazek has won numerous awards through the years, including the F.L. Toy Award, the Open Hearth Conference Award for the second-best paper at the 1974 Open Hearth Conference, a first-place Hunt-Kelly Award, a second-place Hunt-Kelly Award, the Continuous Casting Best Paper Award (twice), and, most recently, the Distinguished Member and Fellow Award.

"AIST membership has been very beneficial. It has provided a conduit for making people aware of my research, it has helped establish professional contacts beneficial to performing my job functions and it has helped me determine my professional career path.

"There has been significant change in the industry over the years due to the disappearance of many of the integrated steels companies, which have been combined with other integrated mills. I have seen research in the industry change from the investigation of issues that have long-term value to those related to the everyday operation of the mills. I have seen the disappearance of fundamental research, which leads to most research being applied research. I have also seen research centers for steel transformed into organizations which could more accurately be called 'operations technology departments.' I have also seen the managers of most production facilities become more technically savvy about their areas of control instead of just managers who depend on their staff to make technical decisions."

When asked what he would tell a new graduate just coming into the steel industry, Blazek said, "I would tell him/her that it is critical to professional advancement and understanding of industrial technology to be involved in AIST."

*Ken Blazek received his B.S. degree from Purdue University in 1965, his M.S. degree from the University of Michigan in 1966, and a Ph.D. in metallurgical engineering from Purdue University in 1971. He began his career in the steel industry as a research engineer at the U. S. Steel Research Laboratory in the rolling mill roll section. He then progressed to senior research engineer in the casting section, then the process metallurgy section, and finally the product metallurgy section. He then moved to Inland Steel, first as a senior research engineer, then section manager — casting, technical project leader for the development of a rheocaster for steel and other high-temperature alloys, staff scientist, strip casting project manager, and group leader — electrical sheet steels. Now at ArcelorMittal USA, he is principal engineer (staff scientist), continuous casting. Throughout his career, he has conducted pioneer research that has led to significant advancement of continuous casting technology. He has won numerous awards, has been awarded seven patents and has published more than 70 technical papers.*