

# 35-year life member



## Joseph Dzierzawski

Joe D. received his B.S. degree in material science and engineering from the University of Michigan in 1988. He went on to supplement his education with management and executive programs at the University of Michigan School of Business Administration and INSEAD in 1999 and 2017, respectively. Since then, he has built a distinguished career in the engineering, manufacturing and materials industries, with a strong focus on capital equipment, intralogistics and metallurgical plant development. With over 35 years of experience, Joe has held prominent leadership roles at various companies including Primetals Technologies, BEUMER, Hatch and SMS. He's led multinational teams on numerous global capital projects while residing in the U.S., Germany and China. Throughout his career, he has driven substantial growth, led multimillion-dollar projects, participated in securing billions of dollars in major capital orders and built high-performing teams. As a published author and patent holder, he has made significant contributions to the evolution of continuous casting and other metallurgical technologies. He has served on the boards of AIST, the AIST Foundation and American Iron & Steel Institute while also serving as a member of the Steel Manufacturers Association. When he's not leading organizations, Joe has a history of supporting community development, is an avid sports enthusiast and a devoted father of two beautiful daughters, and being fitness-focused is a part of his daily routine.



When did you first hear about AISE/ISS and how? Was there someone who introduced you to the association?

I joined SMS Concast in 1990 as a caster start-up engineer. I was fortunate to work with strong leadership/technology pioneers that encouraged me to become involved in both the Association of Iron and Steel Engineers and the Iron & Steel Society. Key career influences were Herb Fastert, president and chief executive officer; Joe Farina, vice president sales and operations; and Mike Poran, vice president engineering. John Correnti was another career influence; my time spent with him in being a part of the project development and execution of both the SeverCorr (now Steel Dynamics Inc. – Flat Roll Group Columbus Division) and Big River Steel projects was invaluable.

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

I joined the Continuous Casting Technology Committee and began writing and presenting technical papers at various conferences, including AISTech. Subsequently, I joined the association's Executive Committee and Board of Directors and the Foundation Board of Trustees as the Treasurer for a seven-year period. Since then, I've remained a member of the Board of Trustees for the last three years, focused on recruiting young talent into the steel industry.

How has AIST membership benefited you in your career?

It's an incredible source to network and establish lifelong relationships. It helped build/guide my career and create countless business opportunities.

Talk about your career path. How did you enter the steel industry? How has the industry progressed from when you started to the present day?

I first started as a melter/supervisor at McLouth Steel, just down river from Detroit. Looking back, my responsibilities were hard to imagine — a youngster just out of college responsible for a crew of 20ish union employees, making molten steel and tapping heats from both a basic oxygen furnace (BOF) and electric arc furnace (EAF) operation while working rotating shifts. The main industry change has been the growth of technology. I was fortunate to be a young engineer with SMS when compact strip production (CSP) technology was in its infancy stage, and while many doubted the possibility of a mini-mill producing high-

quality sheet products, the technology continued to evolve, resulting in the progression of the U.S. producing 70% of its output via EAF steelmaking. This was significantly advanced through smart electrics and automation.

Are there any current projects within the industry you are working on?

I'm proud to be a member of Primetals Technologies, who are arguably one of the market leaders in advancing green steel technology. We just started up the first U.S.-based endless strip production (ESP) plant at Big River Steel – A U. S. Steel Co., which is the most energy-efficient process for producing hot-rolled coil. Also, we're a leader in the European transition to green steel, currently executing major transformational projects at Salzgitter, voestalpine Stahl and Dillinger Hütte.

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

I would highly encourage them to become involved — Technology Committees, local Member Chapter events, papers chair, technical presentations and AISTech, of course. AIST has recently made it easier by creating the Young Professionals Committee to help facilitate involvement. ♦