

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

The dawn of the 1960s found the American Vocational Association actively involved in both the national and the international arenas. A cultural agreement between Russia and the United States resulted in an exchange of visits between Russian and American vocational educators. At the request of the U.S. Department of State, the AVA sponsored a two-week tour of U.S. vocational schools in February 1960. In May of that same year, three American educators, including AVA past president H.H. London, visited vocational schools in Russia. They returned to report their concerns to the nation regarding the expanding vocational education plans of the Soviets in the economic phase of the Cold War.

In the domestic arena, AVA officers worked with the Senate Special Committee on Unemployment Problems on a report that recommended a considerable expansion of vocational education for both youth and adults. The final report recognized the AVA and included quotes from the *AVA Bulletin*.

A National Power

The largest peacetime vocational education appropriations funding to that date was passed for fiscal year 1961, despite President Eisenhower's recommendation for a \$2 million cut in funds. But there was soon to be a new administration in the White House, so the AVA wrote to both presidential candidates to obtain their views on vocational education.

The Democratic Party's candidate, John F. Kennedy, responded on August 17, 1960, with a letter stating that, "The continuation of federal funds for vocational education at the full amounts authorized by existing law is vital to the security and economic health of our nation." He reaffirmed his party's platform to, "further federal support for all phases of vocational education."

The Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, did not send his response until October 7, 1960, but he too expressed support for strengthening vocational education.

The American Vocational Association played a major role in the passage of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, a three-

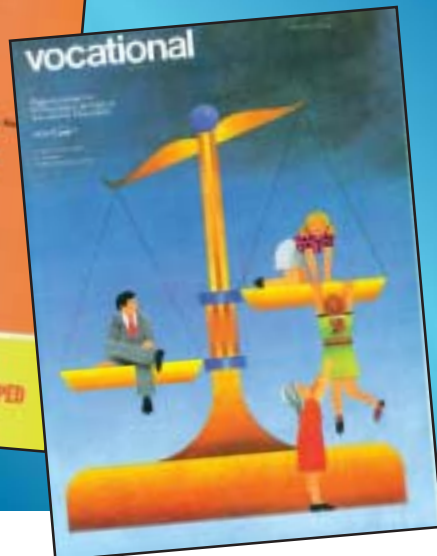


AVA's new official emblem was unveiled at the 1961 convention. It was designed by Daniel F. Gabrill, Jr., an instructor in the industrial design department of the New Bedford Vocational High School in New Bedford, Mass.



“Vocational education was created by society for its own benefit. Its design is socio-economic; its major concern is the well being of people, with a focus on their occupational life. Few people have considered that vocational education was constructed upon a consensus of sound judgment about fundamental and enduring values, or that the model contains built-in, self-adjusting quality controls.”

**—Melvin L. Barlow,
AVA Historian, 1967**

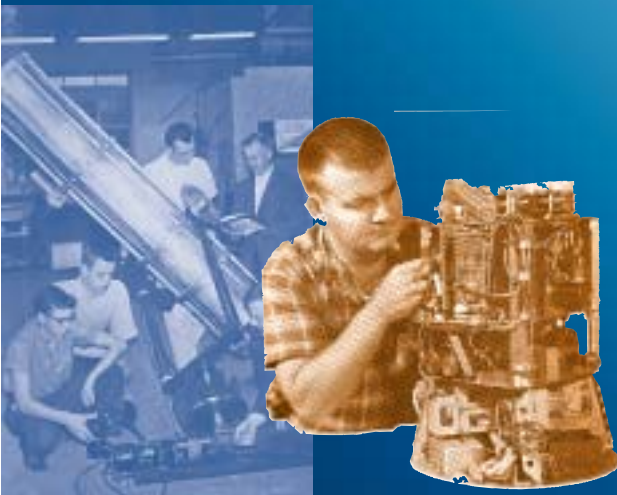




President Kennedy meets with the Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education



President Johnson with AVA Executive Secretary Mobley at the signing of the Perkins Act



year program that authorized additional funds for the training of unemployed and underemployed workers. As a result of an argument fought and won by the AVA, this training would be handled by existing vocational education authorities at the federal, state and local levels.

The association helped establish President Kennedy's Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education and worked cooperatively with the panel in 1962. Members of the panel included two past presidents of the AVA. That same year, the First National Seminar on Research in Vocational Education was held at Purdue University, and the AVA Research Committee was one of the sponsors.

The Perkins Act

When the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (The Perkins Act) was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, it became the most comprehensive vocational education measure that had ever become law in the history of our nation. It authorized a new permanent program of federal assistance for vocational education amounting to \$60 million for fiscal year 1964. After rising to \$177.5 million for fiscal 1966, funding would become \$225 million in subsequent years. The act provided that vocational programs be available for persons in high schools, for those out of high school available for full-time study, for unemployed or underemployed persons, and for those who have academic or socioeconomic handicaps that prevent them from succeeding in regular vocational education programs. For the first time, federal funds would also become available to construct new vocational schools. Eight AVA representatives, including Executive Secretary Mobley, were present at the historic signing.

The Space Age

The exploration of space helped define the 1960s. It symbolized our ongoing competitiveness with the Soviet Union, and it symbolized the new technical skills needed by our workers. We were not only exploring the new frontier of space, but we were also exploring new frontiers in science and technology. The changing needs of industry and science were creating a greater need for technical personnel to supplement engineering and scientific staffs.



A portrait of M.D. Mobley hangs in the ACTE library that bears his name.



Lowell A. Burkett was the executive director of AVA from 1966 - 1977. Because of his encouragement of interns in the AVA headquarters, the Board of Directors authorized the Burkett Professional Internship when he retired.



“Rockets and satellites must be conceived and planned in every detail, but that alone would never get them off the launching pad,” AVA President E.M. Claude wrote in 1960. “The general public has rarely been advised, and the mass of our educational leaders have so far failed to realize that the great multitude needed to solve our future manpower needs will be skilled technical workers.”

Some Major Shifts at AVA

In 1964, AVA moved its headquarters into its own building at 1510 H Street, N.W., but they were soon forced to move out of the building when excavation for a government building on an adjacent site seriously damaged the foundation of the AVA building. The damage was so bad that the building was then condemned. The final settlement from the government made it possible for the association to pay off all of its liabilities and receive clear title to the property.

Another major shift for the association occurred on December 31, 1965, when M.D. Mobley retired as executive secretary. From his beginning as a vocational agriculture teacher in Georgia, Mobley had risen to a place where he was called by *Harper's Magazine*, “Washington’s most successful lobbyist.”

Melvin L. Barlow, AVA historian, wrote of Mobley, “Four presidents and a decade-and-a-half of Senators and Representatives have learned that when they get the word from Dr. Mobley, it is the truth.”

Mobley was succeeded by Lowell A. Burkett, but the title was changed to executive director, which was what M.D. Mobley had always thought it should have been. When he died in 1967, Mobley’s family requested that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to a memorial at AVA. Today, the M.D. Mobley Memorial Library at ACTE’s headquarters houses historical documents, research materials and other information regarding career and technical education.

There were two major events for AVA in 1968. In July, the association moved into its newly rebuilt headquarters at 1510 H Street, N.W., and in October, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. This landmark, far-reaching legislation was the result of a three-year effort by Congress and included funds for research, residential vocational

education and cooperative education. AVA provided Congress with data and testimony that helped to determine the needs for expansion and improvement of vocational education. It passed both the House and the Senate by unanimous votes.

New Challenges in the 70s

With the war in Vietnam still being waged, Lowell Burkett, AVA executive director, was invited along with 28 other educators to join the annual Bob Hope Christmas tour. The group's mission was to motivate servicemen toward utilizing GI Bill benefits to continue their educations after being discharged. Burkett returned from Vietnam with appreciation for the dedication of our troops there and with hope for the future of the country. "We in vocational education have a great responsibility to the veterans who will be returning to civilian life," Burkett wrote in the March 1970 *American Vocational Journal*. "As a profession, we are obligated to fight for the resources that will make it possible for these young men and women to return to and become an integral part of our social and economic life."

The association continued its prominent national role as the new decade began by sponsoring a National Study on Accreditation of Vocational-Technical Education that was funded by the U.S. Office of Education, but there was a new administration in the White House and a new philosophy that challenged the concept of federal funding for vocational technical education.

President Richard Nixon sent a letter to the 1969 AVA convention stating, "As you know, I am a great believer in vocational education. In my view, vocational educators bear a very special responsibility, for you are the men and women who help millions attain the skills which keep our complex society moving."

Nixon then vetoed the vocational and technical education appropriations that had been passed by Congress for the fiscal year that began July 1, 1970. But the House was able to override the veto with a two-thirds majority, and the Senate vote sustained the override. Nixon had resigned from office by the time the Education Amendments Act of 1976 had been passed.



David E. Graf was the first vocational educator awarded the honor of National Teacher of the Year. Graf, a teacher of vocational education and industrial arts at Sandwich Community High School, Sandwich, Ill., received the award in 1968.

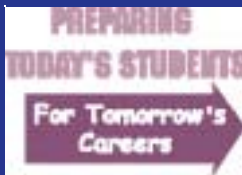


AVA officers leave the White House after the ceremonial signing of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968

Want Career
Success?
**GET CAREER
SKILLS.**



In 1967, the AVA Assembly of Delegates established a Vocational Education Week. The tradition continues today with a celebration of Career and Technical Education Week each year in February.



“Such encouragement of economic and vocational literacy in an increasingly complex society can be the beginning of an understanding of the world of work for both the child who is to use his hands to shape our future and the one who is to use his mind to help direct our destiny.”

—Dr. George E. Ewan, President of the National School Boards Association in the October 1970 *American Vocational Journal*.

Issues of Society

During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, our nation began to recognize the potential that African American, Hispanic and Native American students had to offer, and with that recognition came the realization that greater opportunities in higher education must be made available for those students. The emotionally or physically challenged, displaced homemakers, incarcerated juveniles and adults, and the workers whose jobs were being made obsolete by new technology were also being seen as educable individuals who would be able to give something back to society in return.

AVA's members had already established a history of educating nontraditional students and students with special needs. The AVA Task Force on Vocational Education in Urban Areas made recommendations for educational improvements in large metropolitan areas in the early 70s, and the association studied ways to improve opportunities for women.

The AVA Program of Work for 1970-1975 was to address the great challenge of the new decade, which it defined as, “America's deep concern for the manpower needs of the economy and the dignity and worth of each individual.”

Accountability

The Education Amendments of 1976 reauthorized the Higher Education Act of 1965 and extended several of its programs, including community services and continuing education programs. It also created a new federal program to support guidance and counseling. The legislation provided for basic state grants for vocational education support, work-study and cooperative education, and a portion of the basic state grant was set aside for disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

The new legislation also included an issue that has come to the forefront in recent years—accountability. The Education Amendments Act of 1976 called for the National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE).

Gene Bottoms, who succeeded Lowell Burkett as executive director, wrote in the April 1978 *American Vocational Journal*, “As an association, we are challenged to show our concern for excellence. Our future credibility and influence with policy makers depends in part on the commitment we make today to have something to say about the quality of vocational programs in this country.”