Bernard Ray (Bernie) Pierce

1947 – 2012

Many from the greater world of MVS performance were saddened to learn that Bernie Pierce passed away on October 4, 2012. We will greatly miss a guiding light telling us how to navigate the innards of MVS.

Longtime CMG members knew Bernie well, for they often relied on his expertise. We were all touched by his work.

Some people have the gift of explaining things in simple terms to reveal the underlying concepts and techniques. Elements of MVS are quite complex. Many an unfamiliar technician will fail to get the how/why/when, the tips and tricks, that make the software understandable and working with it easy.

> *"Bernie was a true mentor, leader and consummate professional... I respected his dry wit and his amazing way of making the complex seem simple, the sign of a true genius".* --Steve Kinder, Senior Technical Staff Member at IBM

He mentored countless colleagues and conference attendees over his 42 years in the IBM mainframe world. And we will be forever grateful for his efforts.

The Bernie we knew:

In 1970, he graduated from Clarkson University with both a Bachelor and Master of Science Degrees in mathematics. Immediately, he joined IBM in Poughkeepsie. It didn't take him long to become a Senior Technical Staff Member (STSM), a title attained by less than two percent of the employees.

> *"I remember starting to work with Bernie back in 1975. He was in the circle of experts on MVS that I always viewed with awe of their technical knowledge. I continued to work with Bernie on the hardest problems up through this year" –Don Ault,* Senior Technical Staff Member at IBM

He became a go-to guy for the operating system in many ways. First and foremost, his technical expertise and grasp of the material brought people to ask his help. With his ability to clarify the options to solve problems that younger team members faced, his fame rested as well on his clear, concise communication skills and his genial manner. Though he was very approachable, many were in awe of his keen intellect and hesitated briefly before asking for his time. Afterwards, they were very appreciative of the kind, gentle, respectful way in which he handled their questions. He explained their circumstances and options so that they understood what could be done. Just after Expert, Mentor is the most frequent noun applied to Bernie.

> *"I have known Bernie since I first started working for IBM in 1978. He was always someone that everyone I knew respected. But it wasn't just how intelligent Bernie was, he was a really great person. In all the years I've*

known him, and of all of the times I have gone to him for assistance, no matter how basic my question was, he always treated me with respect." -- Bill Rooney, Senior Technical Staff Member at IBM

He didn't just sit in his office reading and waiting to explain stuff -- he innovated and owns over twenty patents and has at least one outstanding patent for [Affinity Dispatching Load Balancer with Precise CPU Consumption Data](#). He was constantly exploring possibilities with the software: ways to make it faster, provide better service or functionality, make access easier, get better and more meaningful statistics. For years, he worked with SRM (System Resource Management), RMF (Resource Management Facility) and the OS. He became known as Mr. SRM.

> *"I worked with Bernie for over ten years. He was a genius and a mentor that I turned to frequently, even after I left Poughkeepsie. I spoke with him recently and it was Bernie asking me to shepherd a young colleague of his. He was generous with his time, thoughtfulness, knowledge and kindness. I enjoyed talking with him about work, math and the Adirondacks".* --Donna Eng Dillenberger, *IBM Distinguished Engineer*

In 1982 Bernie wrote an IBM Confidential [paper](#), An Automated Workload Manager for MVS. Another nine years passed before development of Workload Manager (WLM) began. Answers don't always come as fast as we'd like. He was always planning, thinking, devising methods to make performance issues easier to understand and to provide more functional solutions.

In the early 1990s during the development of the first release of the Workload Manager and before the actual release, Bernie was offered a "golden" retirement package. An offer that he deemed too good to refuse, left many of his mentees very nervous. So they had to "man up" and figure it out without his generous help after he left for Candle Corporation.

Candle made the most of his efforts. In 1998 Bernie was nominated for CMG's Albert A. Michelson award for his extensive achievement in computer performance measurement. Incidentally, Candle Chairman and CEO Aubrey Chernick (1995), and George Dodson, director, IT management consulting (1997) were previous recipients.

> "*We are pleased that CMG has recognized Bernie for his high standards and dedication to excellence," said Chernick. "His leadership and expertise in the Parallel Sysplex arena have helped keep Candle on the leading edge within the mainframe market.*"— [Aubrey Chernick](#), Founder and Chairman of Candle Corporation

Bernie was recognized for his leadership and innovation in performance analysis and design at both IBM and Candle. At the time, he was principal consultant, S/390 Parallel Sysplex, leading a team of consultants focused on performance and capacity issues for MVS and the Parallel Sysplex environments. He also was responsible for the performance analysis and performance design of OMGAMON II ® and the Candle Command Center ® for OS/390.

He was the chief technologist for application characteristic profiling and heuristic algorithms for the Workload Manager in support of the Parallel Sysplex, which led to two patents for determining the appropriate means of capturing application resource demand characteristics in a form that is usable by software algorithms that control factors such as online session destination, dispatching priority and multiprogramming levels. Bernie led the analysis and design effort to deal with capacity issues associated with the design of MVS for multiprocessors. These inventions, generally known as the "true ready queue" and "reduced preemption," were instrumental to the scalability of symmetric multiprocessors.

> *"I'm pleased to be recognized as a contributor in the dynamic field of computer performance management, where the challenges are more significant today than at any time in our history. I've enjoyed being able to help customers around the world improve the performance and efficiency of their computing environments".*—Bernie Pierce, Principle Consultant Candle Corporation

In 2004, IBM bought Candle and Bernie was once again an IBM employee. The purchase was probably due to some of his work--the reason given was: The acquisition is a response to market demand for more fully functional tools. Customers want end-to-end solutions. They don't want 15 different vendors who provide point solutions, and the customer becomes the integrator. IBM will seek to integrate Candle's mainframe-based tools for tracking system performance with its Tivoli monitoring software. Big Blue will also further tie Candle's tools for managing distributed systems to IBM's database and server software products, the company said.

Bernie took customer problems seriously and investigated their performance concerns. In 2006, Geoff Adams wrote to him about the unnecessary and wasteful CPU time consumption related to excessive SRM time-slice processing. He investigated and championed the fix that would save all customers a potentially significant amount of CPU. In the MXG blog, he credited Geoff with locating the problem: "All z/OS users owe Geoff Adams at National Australia Bank three cheers. He and his colleagues persuaded IBM that the capture ratio decline on the z9 EC compared to a z990 was a real problem and IBM determined that SRM was the major reason." He wasan honorable person who was unafraid to share the stage with others.

> *"Bernie was the kind of IBMer we do not take for granted. He was bright, had strong opinions, was willing to debate based on the facts he had and was not afraid to use his intuition.*" --Kelly Ryan, Customer Service Representative at IBM

He gave due credit and fixed the problem, the kind of guy we all will miss. He had a positive effect on many, even non-technical staff.

> "*I know Bernie from the IBM cafeteria, and he was always so friendly, always with a smile. He spoke of his grandchildren with such pride. I will miss his presence.*" --Michele Santoro, IBM cafeteria staff

Bernie was recently employed as Senior Technical Staff Member (STSM) for System z Hardware Development, zOS Programming, and Performance Analysis.

> "*He was a true pioneer and 'idea man' in the field of z/OS performance. If part of your job involves the performance of z/OS, processors, PR/SM, WLM, SRM, storage management, the MVS dispatcher, IEAOPTxx, zIIPs, zAAPs, HiperDispatch, and many other areas, then you, too, were touched by Bernie Pierce. Our industry was created and built by people like Bernie. I want you to know he was kind, and smart, and patient, and a great guy to have a beer with. If you search the internet you will find reference to his many papers, patents, articles, presentations, and list of awards. He was a true giant in the field of operating system performance, and specifically of z/OS performance. I will miss him greatly.*"—Peter Enrico, Lead z/OS Performance Analyst and Instructor, Enterprise Performance Strategies

> "*I was honored to work with Bernie at IBM, Candle and SHARE. He was brilliant yet approachable and was able to present and discuss complex topics with ease and clarity. Bernie was always good company and respected by all he met.*"— Steve Samson, Senior Technical Staff Member at Candle/IBM.

At the 2008 SHARE meeting in Orlando, Cheryl Watson of Watson & Walker gave a lunchtime presentation, *The Tips Your Mentor Forgot to Mention.* It was intended to provide information for attendees new to mainframes and/or performance as part of the zNextGen project. Due to the huge interest at SHARE, she has added a section called "z/OS 101" to her widely read subscription newsletter. Follow the link to page 11, where one can find references to Bernie's work that will be very helpful to the zNextGen learner. But do not expect that will be the last we'll hear of him. He's written for CMG, SHARE and IBM technical manuals. A Google search will provide many links for your enjoyment and education.

Because of his huge footprint in mainframe support and clarification, his patents and life's work will continue to influence a new generation of people. He will be sincerely missed by those of us who relied on his expert guidance and he will be fondly remembered, even by some of us who never got the opportunity to meet him.

Note Unlinked quotations are from the Ploughkkeepsie Journal Guestbook Memorials