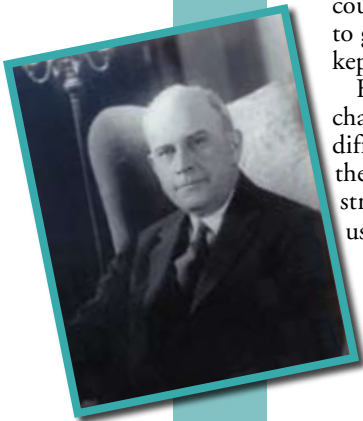


Hardy Cross

March 2005



(Note: The Publisher recently received a copy of this letter. Although the article ran over a year ago, it is never too late to remind ourselves of the lasting impacts that great engineers have on the profession and its members.)

Gesund's recollections of Hardy Cross, and how the legendary professor assisted and inspired him, underscores how the influence of great men and women in our profession continue long after they are gone. Haven taken one of Cross's last classes 50-some years ago, Gesund may well be one of the few Cross-trained professors left still teaching. Even though Cross's Moment Distribution Method, one of the most powerful analytical tools in the later half of the 20th century, is now somewhat obsolete because of modern-day computers, his approach to problem solving is not. His concept of sketching a structure's deformed shaped still provides designers with great insight into truly understanding structural performance – a useful way to develop intuitiveness. Something much needed in today's world of sterile computer printouts, analysis and design. ■

Richard G. Weingardt, P.E.

Mr. Weingardt,

I have just read your article on Hardy Cross in the March 2005 issue of STRUCTURE® magazine. Thank you very much for it. I took Hardy Cross's senior course on structural design in 1949-'50, and his graduate course in the same subject in 1952-'53, his last year of teaching. He had also offered me financial support to go to graduate school, and when the U.S. Army interfered shortly after my graduation in June 1950; he kept the support for me until I was released from active duty in summer of 1952.

Hardy Cross was a real gentleman and a great teacher. I still remember him, one foot on a wooden chair, his large stomach with a gold watch chain across it resting on the back of the chair, lecturing on the differences between real design and theory. He insisted that we study how structures behave by sketching them in their original and deformed shapes, and only let us learn moment distribution of all his many structural analysis innovations. I still have the notes I took in his classes, and his wisdom has been very useful in my own teaching. ■

Thank you again.

Hans Gesund, Dr. Eng'g., P.E.

Professor of Structural Engineering, University of Kentucky

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