



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Closing Remarks

Author(s)

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Description

Closing remarks regarding Robert Boisjoly's attempts to divert the Challenger disaster.

Body

All of you must now evaluate your careers and emerge with the knowledge and conviction that you have a professional and moral responsibility to yourselves and to your fellow man to defend the truth and expose any questionable practices that will lead to an unsafe product. Don't just sit passively in meetings when you know in your heart that you can make a constructive contribution and also be prepared to share your ideas with others and to compliment others for their ideas, especially when their idea is better and may even replace yours. After all, you have a responsibility to promote the best product for a company and put personal pride aside. This is the best way to cultivate colleague respect and friendship, which in industry always results in a positive long-term benefit for you, the company and its product line.

I wish that the *Challenger* disaster had never happened and since I cannot turn the clock back, I hope that if anything good can result from this tragedy, then I desire that all academic institutions and professional societies will recognize the importance of teaching ethical behavior in decision-making situations by using actual case histories like this one to demonstrate what was wrong so everyone is

aware and prepared for what to expect when confronting a similar situation requiring an ethical decision.

I have been asked by some if I would testify again if I knew in advance of the potential consequences to me, my family and my career. My answer is always an immediate yes. I couldn't live with any self-respect or expect any respect from others if I tailored my actions based upon potential personal consequences resulting from my honorable actions. As a result of this paper and other exposures to real case histories, I hope that your answer will also be yes.

I hope and expect a drastic improvement in ethical decision-making practices and employee treatment for promoting ethical conduct as a result of my law suits, talks and this paper. Maybe together as colleagues we can all accomplish the second goal in my law suits and eliminate or at least significantly reduce unethical decision-making practices within our industrial and government communities.

I will never forget and I hope this nation will never forget, especially the engineering community, the supreme sacrifice that the seven *Challenger* astronauts paid by forfeiting their lives for such an irresponsible launch decision. May we always remember astronauts Jarvis, McAuliffe, McNair, Onizuka, Resnik, Scobee and Smith for their courage and dedication to this nation's space program.

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Notes

Author: Roger M. Boisjoly, Former Morton Thiokol Engineer, Willard, Utah.

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Discipline(s)

Aerospace Engineering
Engineering
Mechanical Engineering