



*Jesse F. Core*

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1913-1993

By F. F. Aplan, J. M. Mutmansky, and R. V. Ramani

Jesse F. Core, age eighty, died at his home in State College, Pennsylvania, on November 29, 1993, after a long battle with cancer. He was alert, energetic, and interested in his profession up to the end. Jesse was a Distinguished Member of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration (SME) (1975) and an honorary member (1978), Legion of Honor Member (1986), and Erskine Ramsay Medal recipient (1971) of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers (AIME). He was elected a member of the National Academy of Engineering in 1981.

Jesse was a native of Ford City, Pennsylvania, where he attended both grade and high school, and he graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 1937 with a degree in mining engineering. He was elected a distinguished alumnus of Penn State in 1966. While still in college, he began work as a coal miner with Hillman Coal and Coke Company. In 1938 he joined Pittsburgh Coal Company as an engineer, rising through the ranks of chief mining engineer and divisional engineer. He joined Buckeye Coal Company in 1947 as chief engineer of coal mines and later served as chief engineer for Island Creek Coal Company at Holden, West Virginia. In 1951 he joined the Frick District of United States Steel Corporation as district mining engineer, advancing to chief engineer and general superintendent of the Frick District. In 1958 he was named vice-president in

charge of coal operations for U.S. Steel Corporation, including operations in Alabama, Colorado, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, and West Virginia.

He retired in 1976 and became an adjunct professor of mining engineering at Penn State. His citations for both honorary membership in AIME and for the Erskine Ramsay Medal emphasized two major hallmarks for his career: promoting mine safety and assisting younger engineers to develop their full potential. Under his leadership, U.S. Steel developed a well-respected, comprehensive coal mine safety program. The lead article in the *Wall Street Journal* for January 19, 1973, cited U.S. Steel and Jesse for establishing the best safety record in underground coal mines. Jesse continually stressed that a safe mine was also a very productive mine. He was also known to be a strong mentor and an excellent role model for young professionals. This was manifested not only at the corporate level, but also by his service as an active member of the Old Timer's Club, which gives yearly awards to outstanding seniors in mining engineering at many of the country's leading universities. His assistance as an adjunct professor at Penn State is another example of his desire to help younger engineers.

He was active in many professional societies and groups, including the SME Coal Division. He served as chairman of the Coal Division of the American Mining Congress and was a past president of the Coal Mining Institute of America and of the Mine Inspectors Institute of America. He was a cofounder and first chairman of the Keystone Bituminous Coal Association, a member of the National Mine Rescue Association, the American Iron and Steel Institute, and the Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute. He was a registered professional engineer in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia and held papers as a Pennsylvania fireboss and as a first-grade coal mine foreman. Jesse was the kind of engineer that was interested in many phases of engineering. This interest quickly translated into a love of railroads and railroading, initiated because most coal is moved by rail. He had an extensive book and video library of railroads and he took every opportunity to travel by rail. He spoke

authoritatively on both the old narrow gauge roads and modern diesel practice. Jesse loved all aspects of mining and was an active mining history buff. This included an intense interest in the history of coal mining in both anthracite and bituminous coal mines, the Molly Maguires, the development of the United Mine Workers of America, and in hard rock mines in both the United States and abroad. He had a lifelong interest in geology, especially of Appalachia and the U.S. Southwest. His abiding interest in Southwest geology quickly extended to the mining and to the Native American art of that region. Shortly before his death, he gave all of his mining, geology, and railroading materials to his colleagues and his collections of minerals and paintings of mining scenes to Penn State's Earth and Mineral Sciences Museum.

Jesse's interests did not stop here. He was active in the Boy Scouts of America, holding various positions in the Allegheny Trails Council. Further, he was chairman of the Catholic Committee for Scouting for the Diocese of Pittsburgh and received the Silver Beaver and the St. George Awards for his service to scouting.

Since coming to State College, Pennsylvania, Jesse continued his services to his chosen profession. He was appointed by President Carter as a member of the President's Commission on Coal. At Penn State, he participated in resident and continuing education courses, and his views on educational, research, and industrial matters were sought out by the faculty.

His wife of fifty-one years, Margaret, predeceased him in 1992. He is survived by his daughters, Margaret of Pittsburgh and Mary Katherine Mitchell of Cincinnati; a brother, Daniel of Duluth; and three grandchildren. Jesse will be long remembered by his friends and acquaintances as one who proved one man can make a difference.