

I was born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1941, and spent the first 18 years of my life growing up and attending boarding school. Right after school, I was conscripted for 6 months into the local army, which proved to be a powerful learning experience. The most important thing I learnt is that I am not cut out for a military life; I question orders too much. At various times I was also shot at, machine-gunned and grenaded, all by my own side. It wasn't personal; I was with other people at the time, and by good luck and ducking we all escaped injury.

Once discharged, I was on a plane to the UK to become a student at Queens University in Belfast, doing Chemistry for the future as a world-famous biochemist. By year 2, this idea had abandoned me, but I persevered to the end. Around the same time, I read an article by Prof Floyd about his new M.Sc. Ergonomics degree at Loughborough College of Advanced Technology, and knew that was what I really wanted to do. Serendipity struck; I left Belfast to join Lyons Bakery in London (it didn't include chemistry) and two years later the management decided they needed an Ergonomist, and I was tapped on the shoulder. One thing led to another and I became a lecturer in the Department of Ergonomics and Cybernetics in 1968, and have never left. Nowadays I am a Visiting Fellow in the Wolfson School of Mechanical, Electrical and Manufacturing Engineering, in their Systems Engineering group, still practicing.

What fills me with most pride in this timeline is that I was able to help a host of good young people qualify as Ergonomist/HF professionals, who are now spread across the five continents, benefitting both themselves and their communities with their skills and knowledge. They are truly an impressive band.

My career included research, and I am happy to say that none of it involved experiments in a University laboratory. It was all conducted outside, in industry, working alongside other professionals, mainly in the Automotive, Aeronautical and Defence industries. It taught me a deep respect for what engineers can achieve when they are fully involved and have proper, professional management and support, and had access to Ergonomics input.

Nowadays, faced with climate change and a damaged planet, I have moved on from the ergonomics of industry to the wider topic of the ergonomics of society, particularly the problem of creating sustainable, long-lasting communities. It's a very promising area for the discipline, with big rewards for society. All of Ergonomics and systems-thinking is involved in this, and an important component of the ensemble, as a driving force, is the Resilient Citizen. You will not be surprised to know that this individual, to a significant extent, is an Ergonomist.