DAVIS

BY WILL MARSH

A working, growing organization like Tektronix can be compared in some ways to a fairly complex machine. A machine like this requires a large assortment of gears, cams, pins, bolts and nuts - lots of nuts.

The fly wheel is sort of a regulating device which smooths out bursts of energy into an even flow, and prevents changes of load from stalling the driving source. This is where BOB DAVIS fits into the Tektronix machine. Orders come in the forward end, and scopes go out the after end, and Davis is somewhere in between flying around at high speed (ever try to keep up with him?).

Bob was born in Seattle when the year 1919 was almost done and began early to exhibit the characteristics of a Character; in short, he was a Precocious Child. Time is an insidious mocker to most of us, but to Bob, Time is a gracious friend; an unidler guy is hard to find. As an uninhibited urchin he invented circus parades to the vast entertainment of the neighborhood. He also embarked on a miniature circus project including seats, tent, circus wagons, and all the trimmings. His sister made costumes for the doll performers and helped paint the posters; then the whole show was displayed at the school. Again, this small-size power plant proceeded to print a weekly newspaper, taking ads, reporting (Editor, please note), editing and printing. As a matter of current interest, the first Tektronix forms were printed with his equipment.

Bob's inherent mechanical ability was undoubtedly shaped and polished in his father's automobile shop. The elder Davis was completely competent mechanically; witness the fact that he built his own car in 1912, and drove it from Indiana to Seattle. This is an ideal situation for learning - able teacher and willing pupil.

Somewhere in this picture a clashing color appears. It's improbable, unlikely and perhaps even irreverent, but it's there. This man with dextrous digits, with wheels in his wig, and brawn in his back is, also, (this kills me) a twinkle-toed terpsichorean. I mean it. He used to be half of an exhibition dance team; I can't help it - it's irrefutable.

Well, close your mouth and unarch your eyebrows, and we'll continue. Bob left the University of Washington in 1942 to join the U. S. Coast Guard. During the greater part of the war he was stationed at Seattle Repair Base as Radio Technician. Here Bob worked with a large sector of potential Tektronix. JACK MURDOCK, MILES TIPPERY, HOWARD GAULT, MILT BAVE and KEN WALLING were there during some part of Bob's tour of duty.

After this fascinating and frustrating period our lad of the large larynx returned to the University of Washington to stain his shirts with $KMnO_4$ and burn his pants with H_2SO_4. In between shirt-stainings and pants-burnings he built a house, and concurrently and practically simultaneously expedited materials for a construction company. I sure get tired just thinking about this.

In the summer of 1948 he started in the engineering department of Tektronix doing chassis layout in unusually competent manner.

During Tektronix' breeches-busting expansion, after the move to the new plant, he was needled by necessity to organize purchasing. Somehow, at this time, he got his coattails caught in the gears of production. After flailing about madly for awhile, he came out riding the machine. Now, like a one-man band, he tootles and thumps on assembly, stock, purchasing, test, ceramics and transformers. The music may not sound so hot, but it sure looks good on the bonus check.

Once in awhile you run into a "natural", a guy you can put on any kind of a job with confidence, a guy who can find out how, if he doesn't know how. These individuals are seldom often, but we've got him.

Davis is a determined doer, not one to be hindered by protocol or practice. Although a formidable adversary in argument, he bears no malice and (I hope) harbors no grudge.

Well, that's the top of the Davis as he looks from here. They invented a word for guys like this: indomitable.