



Sustaining Member of the Month Ernie Chinchilla retires from Siemens

In 1964, I left my home country of Costa Rica to begin my life in the United States in Norwalk, a small town in Connecticut. I was a young, 18-year old emigrant, full of ambition and with a strong desire to succeed. Initially it was very difficult for me to adjust to my new home, having left all my family in Costa Rica and lacking any knowledge of the English language.

I started working in a factory where they manufactured slippers; the majority of the employees were from Puerto Rico which made it a lot easier for me to communicate.

A year later, I realized that for me to be able to learn English I needed to go to school and change jobs. I saw an advertisement in the newspaper where a company called Automatic Signal was looking to hire wire assemblers. I started working at Automatic Signal on April 5, 1965. Management at Automatic Signal saw in me a young person eager to learn. I took several English courses and went to night school to earn a degree in Business Administration.

In 1965, I met a young, beautiful, blonde-haired, green-eyed, native of Costa Rica named Ana Lucia. We married in 1969 and have been blessed with three wonderful children: Kenneth, Jennifer and Derrick.

In 1982, I was transferred to Clinton, Massachusetts where I became Vice President of manufacturing. In 1987, Automatic Signal and Eagle Signal merged and I started traveling to Texas. In 1991, I was transferred to Texas as the general manager of the traffic control division. That same year, I started attending the IMSA trade shows and I have been a member ever since. It has been my honor to be part of this professional organization.

Here in Texas, our three children went to college and earned their degrees: Kenneth in electrical engineering, working in that capacity for an Austin company for the last 12 years; Jennifer in psychology and Derrick in communications. Jennifer pursued a career with the Federal Government and is now an FBI special agent. Derrick is a successful marketing executive in Boston.

In 1997, Siemens purchased Automatic/Eagle Signal. Siemens asked me to take over the international sales responsibilities out of the Austin, Texas office. This role has allowed me to travel the world and work with and meet many wonderful people.

Now, after 44 years in the traffic control business, the time has come for me to say good-bye. It has indeed been a tremendous experience.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has provided me with their support and advice throughout the years.

In the near future, I am going to spend most of my time building our ocean-front dream home on the pacific coast of Costa Rica.

God bless you.

Ernest (Ernie) Chinchilla

Comments about Ernie:

Ernie will be sorely missed. Many, many thanks to our friend and fellow IMSA member!

Bill Moroski

Ernie Chinchilla has a nickname "Double E Laser". The double E refers to "Ernesto Enrique" and the Laser refers to his ability to fix things and get the situation straight no matter how messed up they might have been. He was my boss for a number of years and we will all miss his wit, generosity and sincerity.

Robert Nims

Ernie is one of the good guys...

He always greets people with a friendly demeanor and smile. Ernie is very knowledgeable, respectful, and honest (never trying to sell anyone ocean front property in Arizona). He willingly assists others in any way he can. Yet, he is humble enough to say when he does not know the answer - then he goes out of his way to find the right person or source to help solve the problem.

Ernie - Several of us have known you for more than half of your 44 years in the industry. We have enjoyed working with you throughout your career. We will miss your wisdom and presence at the future conferences. Congratulations on your retirement plans!

Belinda & Richard Gurley and the Southwestern Section IMSA

I'm very happy for Ernie as he seems at peace with retiring and starting a new chapter in his life. Forty four years with one company is loyalty at its best. I know he will greatly be missed by his colleagues, partners, and customers. The one thing I'm going to miss, and would like to say about Ernie, is he is a man of his WORD. He is one of the most honest people I know in the traffic control industry. You just don't find people like him in today's world anymore. I feel very honored to call Ernie my friend and I look forward to visiting with him and his wife Ana for many years to come.

Best regards, Carl Zabel

Ernie is a true "personality" in the traffic business.

Regards, Scott Evans VP of Engineering