

Tom Ralls Memorial Scholarship Winning Essay

By Eddie Burns, Customer Service Manager, Southwestern Controls, Dallas, TX

Part of the Tom Ralls Memorial Scholarship Application Criteria was to provide an essay detailing the applicant's desire to attend the University of Industrial Distribution program. The following essay was submitted by the winning applicant, Eddie Burns.

Why I would like to attend the “University of Industrial Distribution”

When I was five years old the edge of the counter where I would place my bowl after emptying it of some form of breakfast cereal, was all I could see. Anything else on that counter was a mystery to that little five year old. On those occasions when I was curious about what else was out of my reach, I would strain my neck and try to peer over the lip of the counter. Most times I could barely catch a glimpse of some other dishes, envelopes (mail) or the holy grail of counter fodder; some form of sweets. Cake, cookies, or even chips would be left out of reach, not hidden, just placed where a five year old couldn't reach them. If I could have gotten my hands on them I would have eaten until I was sick.

When some years had passed my little brother, four years my junior was walking by another counter in another city in another house. I noticed he was straining his neck trying to see what was in a bowl left on the counter. Not saying anything I pretended to watch television as he made his way around the counter trying to get a better look. Being nine years old, I could easily see that the bowl held left over candy from Halloween that was not given out to Trick-or-Treaters a few days before. When I noticed a little hand with fingers reaching for the bowl I stood and did what I should not have done. I showed my brother how to get a chair and stand in it, to reach the bowl himself. He must have eaten 25 or 30 pieces before I noticed and made him stop.

Having to tell my parents why he was sick was not the worst that came about from this ordeal. Not only did I have to watch what was on the counter, I had to follow my little brother around the house and make sure there was nothing for him to climb on because he hadn't learn to respect heights or more importantly understand that those things out of reach on the counter were a mystery for a reason; his own good.

As a manager at Southwestern Controls my goals (in this order) are; to help others succeed, help the company reach its vision, and provide a living for my family. How the story above fits into this and the question “What benefit will I, my company and the Industry receive by my attending the University of Industrial Distribution Program” can be explained like this: Myself, I'm like a nine year old boy, knowing some of the how's and why's of the industry but still needing further instructions on how to teach other little brothers/sisters how to reach the mystery in the bowl, without causing myself more work. They in turn will work smarter increasing their value to the company and help the company reach its goals.

Years later when those same brothers/sisters are getting ready to show their Co-workers how to stand in the chair they will remember what I taught them about how to reach the mystery in the bowl. They will smile and pass on what I learned at the “University of Industrial Distribution” so future generations of young industry employees will not go home with sick stomachs!