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An Essential Element

Society old-timers were saddened to learn of the recent passing of Erskine Harton. For those not familiar with the special contributions Erskine has made to the Society, this note is meant to convey a little of what his dedication, initiative and helpful spirit has added to the International System Safety Society. Erskine was an early disciple of system safety in government-funded programs, active in the DC Chapter, elected a Fellow Member and served as Society President from 1987 to 1989. He is best remembered, by those of us who worked with him, for his upbeat attitude and readiness to help out — especially with those setting up new chapters. However, it was his role in the establishment of a permanent headquarters for the Society that Erskine best deserves recognition as a *Hero of the ISSS*.

Of the many essential elements associated with the functioning of our professional society, the activities performed by our headquarters must be considered among the more critical. For many years now, our members have become used to having their membership-related issues resolved, their dues payments recorded, and membership contact information duly updated. Our Officers have had the benefit of being able to rely on Cathy Carter, who faithfully

operates our headquarters function, to provide the continuity and day-to-day operation of our Society.

However, it has not always been this way. Prior to 1987, maintaining the administrative function was a default responsibility of the President, who would have to delegate this activity to someone, or as was often the case, just take care of it him- or herself. This meant that, during these earlier years of Society history, there was considerable movement of Society administrative functions and addresses. While not fatal, it was not an ideal situation for our ever-growing organization.

When Erskine became Society President, he decided to implement a better way to handle the administrative activities. He obtained Executive Board approval to utilize the annual administrative budget appropriation to lease a suitable office in Sterling, Virginia, and to hire a part time administrative assistant. It wasn't long until Erskine was able to hire Cathy Carter, who had been working in an adjacent office, and providentially was looking for a new position. Cathy has ever since been a reliable and very able member of the team and a major contributor at our conferences. Next year will be her 30th with the Society — another *Hero of the ISSS*. ●