



**Human
Factors
and
Ergonomics
Society**

FELLOW PROFILE

Name: Rodger Koppa

**Degrees, certifications,
etc.:** BA 1958
MA 1960 (Psychology)
PhD 1979 (Industrial
Engineering)
Registered Prof. Engr.
(Texas)
Certified HF Prof. (inactive)
BCPE

Current status: Associate Professor
Emeritus, Texas A&M
University, College Station
TX



Biography (How you got involved in the field, your major career activities and milestones):

Aerospace industry in 1961, leading to the Apollo Program as an on-site contractor in lunar surface operations. After Apollo, worked in transportation human factors and especially assistive technology for disabled drivers; earned PhD at Texas A&M and joined the faculty in 1982, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in HFE until 2001. In retirement continue to teach a senior design elective in HFE. Chaired 12 PhD and 35 MS committees 1982-2001.

Employment History (List top 5 positions):

1961-67, Human Factors Engineer, Ling-Temco-Vought Astronautics Div, Dallas, TX
1967-1972, Crew Performance Specialist, General Electric Co, Houston Operations, in support of NASA Apollo Spacecraft Program Office and Lunar Surface Operations, Flight Crew Operations Directorate
1972-2001, Associate Research Engineer, Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
1982-2001, Associate Professor, Human Factors Specialty, Dept of Industrial and Systems Engineering, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

What were your significant contributions to the field?

One of 7 that planned, trained, and provided crew coordination for lunar surface operations extravehicular activities (EVA); prime trainer on Apollos 13 and 16. We were among the pioneers in bringing HFE to the space program.

Developed the first comprehensive set of standards for automotive adaptive devices and vehicle modifications for the State of Texas vocational rehabilitation agency, based on research at Texas A&M and participation in Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) committee on adaptive devices

Mentored 12 doctorates and 35 master's to become professionals in HFE. Most of them are still active in HFE or related fields.

Did you receive any notable awards or recognition during your career?

1969, General Electric Apolloneer Award

1985, elected Fellow of the Human Factors Society

2000, Trinity-Charley Wootan Directors Career Achievement Award for Research, Texas Transportation Institute

Which articles in the journal *Human Factors* would you say were the most influential to you and your research or practice?

Alphonse Chapanis's article called "Words, Words, Words" (*Human Factors* Feb 1965) probably made the most impression on me—the need for effective procedures development and design, by pointing out that verbal/written communication was very often the real interface between operators and the equipment. There were many others in *Human Factors* that helped me over the years, but Al's article was very special at the beginning of my career.

Please provide any links to your online articles, essays, blogs, Wikipedia pages, etc., that pertain to your research, publications or practice.

Nothing online, have been inactive in research since 2001.

What advice would you give someone considering HF/E as a profession?

After 50 years in the field, I still find it stimulating and fascinating, which much work yet to be done. As a crossroads field drawing from many facets of engineering, psychology, medicine, and social science, there's room in HFE for people from many different technical backgrounds. You will be the human operator's friend in technology. As that advocate, you will face skepticism, dismissal, and opposition to making changes that they think are "gold plating," but actually can make a difference, sometimes a crucial one. Grow a thick hide and get into those trenches! You won't be sorry.