



eventually earned his associate's degree in general studies at Lansing Community College (Michigan) in 1989. Goeddeke then studied professional aeronautics through an independent program at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla., and received his bachelor of science degree in 1994.

From 1994 to 1995, Goeddeke took an educational leave from work to pursue a master's degree in human factors at Embry-Riddle. The program allowed him to explore the underlying reasons for mishaps and accidents. "I thought that you can't just blame people for all the accidents," said Goeddeke.

The classes that earned him the advanced degree taught him that, in fact, human error isn't entirely to blame for accidents — companies also need to integrate "human-factor solutions" into how they operate. This discovery inspired Goeddeke to pursue a graduate-level degree in business administration at Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla. "I got my MBA and I was really into it," said Goeddeke. So much so that he didn't stop there. "I thought, well I'm going to get a Ph.D. — and I did." In 2004, Goeddeke graduated from the University of Florida in Gainesville with a Ph.D. in management.

The UAW-GM Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) helped Goeddeke realize these impressive academic achievements by removing a substantial portion of the financial burden associated

with higher education. Other than the educational leave he took to get his master's degree, TAP covered nearly all his tuition costs. "It was really nice not to have the financial stress," he said.

Goeddeke is relieved that he's finished with school — sort of. He is due to retire from GM soon and hopes to embark on a new career in academia. "In a way, that's like still going to school," he said. ■

» TAP

# A Man of Letters

After 28 years of higher learning, Frank Goeddeke is hanging up his cap and gown

BY JOHN PATRICK PULLEN

**L**ike many college students who work full time, Frank Goeddeke had his share of struggles keeping life balanced. His shifts on the assembly line at Lansing in the early 1980s were certainly a challenge for his academic career.

"I have to admit, I wasn't always as focused as I should have been," said Goeddeke of his younger self. The result: low grades and a couple of trips to the registrar, who suggested Goeddeke take some time off before returning to his studies. He agreed it was a good idea.

"I decided I wasn't going to come back unless I was going to be able to make it to all my classes," said the UAW Local 653 member. It was a good plan, because five academic degrees, 28 years, and 467.4 college credits later, Goeddeke has made it to nearly every class since recommitting himself.

To make up for lost time, Goeddeke took 23 credits one semester — the equivalent of two full-time academic course loads — in addition to work. And though Goeddeke missed out on a lot of things outside of his job and the classroom, he refused to quit until his thirst for knowledge was satiated. "A lot of it was knowing that if I stopped, I'd never pick it up again — that was probably the last 10 years," he said.

Goeddeke's incredible academic career began when he graduated early from high school at the age of 16. In community college, he changed majors several times but

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Skilled tradesman Frank Goeddeke has amassed 467.4 college credits over the last 28 years. This is how that looks on his resume:

- **Certificate in Millwright Technology**, Lansing Community College, 1986
- **Associate's degree, General Studies**, Lansing Community College, 1989
- **Bachelor of Science, Professional Aeronautics**, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 1994
- **Master of Aeronautical Science**, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 1995
- **Master of Business Administration**, Rollins College, 1999
- **Doctor of Philosophy, Management**, University of Florida, 2004