

# Door Security + Safety

DHI'S PUBLICATION FOR DOOR SECURITY + SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

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## Hospitals, Health Care and Assisted Living

**SDC**  
Security Door Controls

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## RECALLING INNOVATIONS IN ELECTRONIC LOCKS



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The rich history of the door and hardware industry is highlighted by people and companies that drove innovation for decades. Their critical contributions moved us forward into what is now called the door security and safety industry, encompassing hardware and technology in all its forms to ensure life safety for everyone.

In this issue, we introduce a new column, "Unlocking History," which will commemorate many notable achievements.

If you have a notable historical story to share, please contact *Door Security + Safety* Editor-in-Chief Al Rickard, CAE, at [arickard@dhi.org](mailto:arickard@dhi.org) or 703-402-9713.

### THE WIDESPREAD USE OF ELECTRONIC LOCKS WE SEE TODAY WAS DECADES IN THE MAKING.

Arthur V. Geringer, the founder of Security Door Controls (SDC), was a forerunner in this area. His innovations in electronic locking systems and technology enabled the widespread adoption of electrified hardware by the door hardware and security markets.

Born in 1923, Geringer grew up in his father's architectural hardware business in Chicago. When he was just four years old, his parents got him started in the industry by letting him stack hinges.

After serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, he worked at a contract hardware firm before moving to an automatic door firm. While employed there, Geringer earned his certification as an Architectural Hardware Consultant in 1952, allowing him to combine his industry experience with his energy and passion for innovation.

In 1971, he was asked by the California State Fire Marshal to create a failsafe bolt lock for perimeter doors that would unlock automatically when the power was removed. His first solution was rejected because it relied upon springs to unlock—deemed unacceptable by the fire marshal.

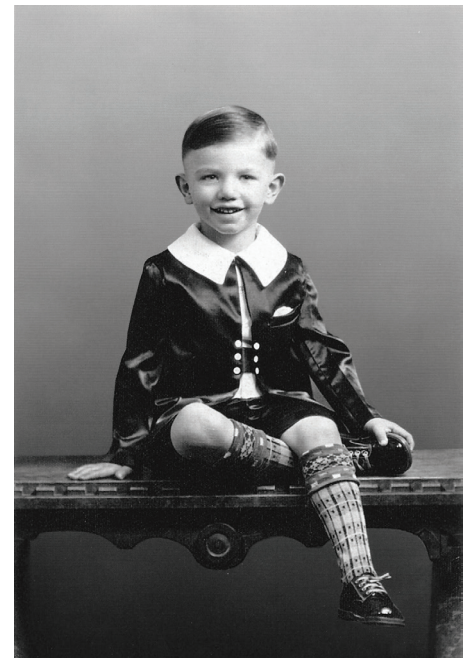
Undaunted, Geringer remembered seeing small magnetized toy dogs that would repel each other when one dog smelled the other dog's tail. He realized a solution was there. He invented the FS23 series electric bolt lock, which utilized two repelling magnets to repel the bolt from the strike even if the spring should fail. The fire marshal immediately approved it.

In 1972, Geringer patented the lock and approached his employer

to manufacture it. However, his employer didn't share his intensity and enthusiasm for developing electric locking capabilities.

Geringer decided to form a company with his wife, Mae. Together, they founded SDC in Tarzana, California, and began manufacturing the FS23 Series Electric Bolt Lock. This past year, in 2022, SDC celebrated its 50th anniversary.

A miniature train with a battery powered sound chip used to make the engine noise and train whistle also stimulated Geringer's imagination. This became the catalyst for the invention



Art Geringer got an early start in the industry, stacking hinges at age 4.





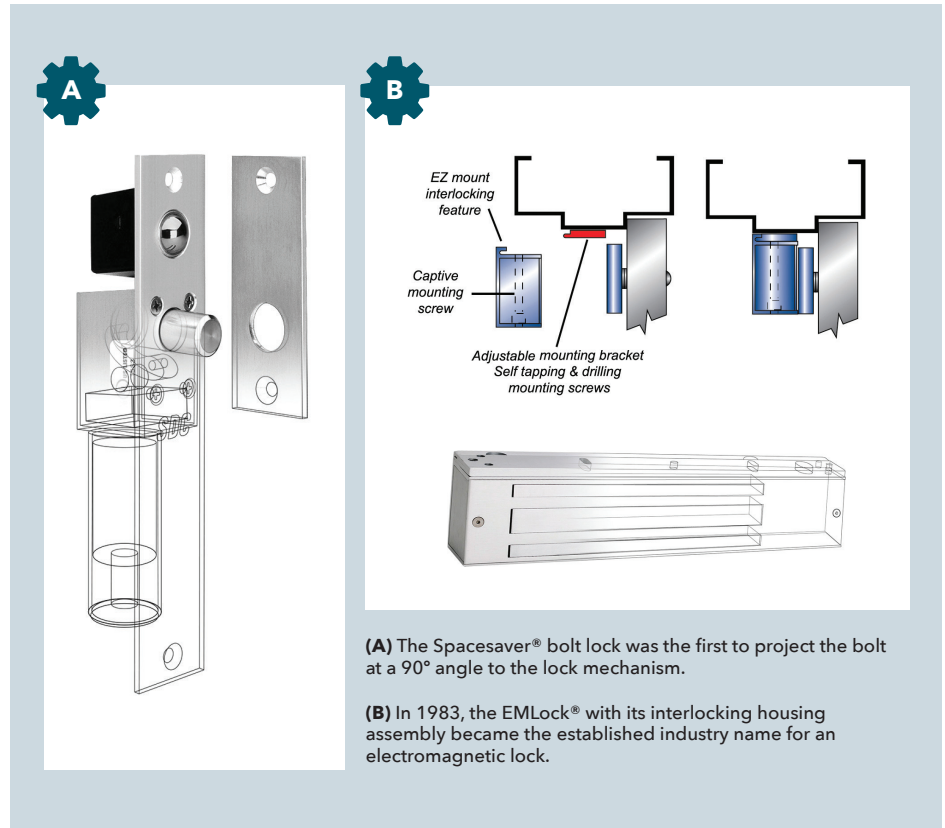
Art and Mae Geringer founded Security Door Controls in 1972.

of the first delayed egress lock with a human voice stored on a chip in the lock. The design evolved into today's fully integrated electromagnetic delayed egress lock—the SDC ExitCheck® 1511S—with a visual countdown and verbal audible alerts.

Geringer created many other patented inventions and innovations. For example, in 1975 he invented and filed the patent for the Spacesaver® bolt lock design—the first bolt lock to project the bolt at a 90° angle to the lock mechanism. Spacesaver® is a fundamental innovation in electronic access control, now commonly used everywhere.

During the 1970s, Geringer's was one of only two locks in the country approved for locking commercial stairwell and perimeter doors. As the inventor of numerous electronic lock designs, he is credited with ushering in the modern era of access control hardware.

In 1983, SDC launched its first electromagnetic lock, known as EMLock®. Later, after multiple improvements and patents, EMLock® became the established industry name for an electromagnetic lock and is still synonymous for electromagnetic locks today.



**(A)** The Spacesaver® bolt lock was the first to project the bolt at a 90° angle to the lock mechanism.

**(B)** In 1983, the EMLock® with its interlocking housing assembly became the established industry name for an electromagnetic lock.

SDC also patented an interlocking housing assembly for magnetic locks with captive mounting screws, and incorporated it into EMLocks®, making it the first product to utilize an interlocking quick-mount assembly for ease of installation. The interlocking mounting plate enables positive attachment of the lock to the mounting plate prior to fastening, and provides increased mounting integrity by distributing stress evenly, alleviating pressure to the mounting screws.

In 1996, SDC released the UR Series Universal Microprocessor Door Control Module, the industry's first

field-programmable, multi-station access hardware controller with six application modes to allow control of multi-door interlocks, mantraps and communicating bathrooms applications via onboard logic. This product earned the Security Industry Finest Award from the Security Industry Association.

Geringer received the DHI Founder's Award in 1991, which is the association's most prestigious award. It recognizes significant and outstanding service to DHI and the door security and safety industry over an extended period of time. +