

Al Kaufman

Recollections of the 2015 Sam Burks Award Winner

Early in 1967 the Texas company, Architectural Concrete Consultants, for whom I was working, had enough work in California to open an office. We had narrowed the sites to three when we had the opportunity to attend a meeting of the Northern California ACI chapter in Berkeley. To say we were impressed would be a great understatement, we were overwhelmed. At that meeting were concrete icons such as RE Davis, Lou Tuthill and Milos Polivka – to name just a few. I was fortunate enough to be seated by TY Lyn. We decided to open our California Office in Berkeley to be close to all of this concrete knowledge. Thus began my 47 year association with the chapter.

Sometime in 1969 I was asked to give a talk about the history of architectural concrete -- only after I was seated at the head table did pure terror set in. Some of the audience was the not only much more knowledgeable about the history of concrete than I, many were the makers of that history. Nine times since I have had the pleasure of speaking at a chapter meeting. The subjects were varied from Certification programs to concrete on the new Bay Bridge. Every time I start a talk at the Northern California ACI there seems to be someone in the audience much more knowledgeable – which means that one always has to do due diligence research in preparing for these talks.

In 1978 came another great honor, that of serving as a Chapter director. Along with the Directorship came work –the hard work of helping the Board achieve our goal of 50% increase in membership by also serving as Membership Chairman. We were miraculously able to achieve the goal.

My presidency of the Chapter was mostly spent in preparing for the upcoming National Convention in 1984. The Chapter charter was revised to have the inclusion of Northern Nevada in the territory and changing the name to The Northern California and Western Nevada ACI Chapter. The by-laws were totally revised as well.

My assignment on the 1984 Convention Committee was as Contractor Relations sub chair. There was not much to do in this slot except to observe and learn how the local chapter interfaces with National in preparing for a National Convention. This was valuable knowledge as for the 1994 and 2004 conventions in San Francisco I was Chair or Co-chair of the Convention Finance Committee. As I look back , I believe these were the most challenging assignments I have ever attempted. However with a lot of help it was possible for the Chapter to raise over three hundred thousand dollars to support these two conventions.

In 1988 the Board created the local Certification Committee with Jim Van Nest and myself as co-chairs. Certification programs in existence at that time was exactly one – Field Technician 1. In 1989 there was a large push to get Field Technicians certified as it became a Code requirement for anyone doing concrete field testing to have an ACI certification. I must admit that there was a slightly hidden agenda in participation in the Local Certification program at this time. I was National Chairman of the Flatwork Finisher Certification Committee and we

were desperate to put on a trial session for Flatwork Finishers somewhere in the US. Unfortunately Northern California was not first, however we did do a pilot program locally before the program went National. Certification remains as my main activity, both with the Chapter and Nationally, sometimes even Internationally.

In looking back to try to find the highlights of my association with the Northern California and Western Nevada ACI chapter, two things come to mind. First is the opportunity to associate with the leaders of the industry on a personal basis and secondly being thanked on a project by one of the 5,000 or so technicians I have helped achieve ACI Certification.

Thank you Northern California and Western Nevada ACI for a most enjoyable association.