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Zahr family accepts 15th N.H. Construction Industry Ethics Award

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The late John Zahr, formerly president of Harvey Construction Corp., has been honored by a panel of judges as the recipient of the fifteenth annual New Hampshire Construction Industry Ethics Award. The award honors the "individual, business or organization that, through its words and deeds, best demonstrates a commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards in construction." The presentation was made to Zahr's family on June 9th at Associated General Contractors' Build New Hampshire Awards Dinner, held at The Derryfield.

Zahr died on September 8, 2010 at age 64 from injuries sustained in a bicycling accident.

After earning a degree in Construction Management from Wentworth Institute in 1966, Zahr enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where he served as a Seabee in Vietnam and Antarctica. In 1975, he graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell with B.S. in Civil Engineering, and joined Harvey Construction Co. that same year as a project manager/estimator, later rising to the rank of chief estimator.

In 1992, he and his partner, the late Connie Jodoin, founded Harvey Construction Corp., building upon the 53-year history and reputation of its predecessor, ultimately growing the restructured company into one of New Hampshire's top 10 privately held firms. Harvey Construction Corp. is responsible for numerous landmark projects, including Manchester Airport, Catholic Medical Center, Manchester City Hall, Currier Museum, St. Paul's School, Franklin Pierce Law Center, Manchester Boys and Girls Club, countless educational facilities and more.

"John was the epitome of what the New Hampshire Construction Industry Ethics Award represents," said John Whiting of The Rowley Agency, Harvey's long-time bonding agent, who serves on the award's selection committee and nominated Zahr. "No one in the industry was better liked or more respected. Subcontractors, architects, engineers and clients all knew they'd always be treated openly and fairly."

An electric contractor with whom Zahr partnered on dozens of projects says, "We enjoyed working with him because he treated us in a straightforward and respectful manner, paid our bills on time, and didn't practice unethical tactics like bid shopping."

"He lived by the simple philosophy that you should treat people the way you would want to be treated," said Rob Prunier, Harvey's executive vice president. "He consistently displayed the highest level of ethics and integrity in every area of his business and personal life."

Zahr's leadership created "the Harvey culture," a small company atmosphere that fosters honesty, passion and teamwork, where people are valued for their knowledge, skill, experience, dedication and ethics, not just on the job, but in the communities where they live and work. As a result, Harvey staff members often spend their entire careers with the company.

"John took the time to mentor his key employees and others in the industry, instilling in them the

right way to do things, so his legacy will continue," said Longchamps Electric's Kevin Duffy.

Zahr's commitment to the betterment of the industry was unequalled. He served on the Associated General Contractors of NH board of directors for 12 years (1998-2009), including terms as president, senior vice president, vice president and secretary/treasurer, and was an AGC of America national director for five years. He also served as a member of the AGC Building Committee for 10 years, including a term as chair.

Community involvement was a passion, and a centerpiece of Zahr's life. At the time of his death, he served on the boards of the Squam Lakes Association and New Hampshire Institute of Art, was a member of the Manchester Boys and Girls Club Building Committee, and president of the Bedford Crimeline.

He also encouraged his employees to actively participate in the community, and did not hesitate to offer the company's support when asked. Among the organizations Harvey has assisted either financially or with "sweat equity" are the United Way, Palace Theatre, Police Athletic Leagues, Catholic Medical Center, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Building Together, Manchester Boys and Girls Club, Nashua and Greater Manchester Family YMCAs, St. Joseph Hospital, Big Brothers Big Sisters, The Hundred Club of NH, Rivier College, Easter Seals NH, Bishop Guertin High School and many area youth sports programs.

In addition to a plaque, the award carried with it a \$1,000 donation to the recipient's charity of choice, which the Zahr family designated to go to the John Zahr Memorial Endowment Fund, established to support the operations of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of New Hampshire. CASA is an advocate for the state's abused and neglected children, and was one of the many charitable organization to which Zahr volunteered his time and talent.

The New Hampshire Construction Industry Ethics Award was established and is underwritten by David Wood, a nationally recognized writer, publisher and marketing consultant specializing in the construction industry. His newsletter, Words from Woody, has won 25 awards, including being a three-time recipient of the Construction Writers Association's prestigious T. Randolph Russell Award. In 2005, Wood was presented with the Silver Hard Hat, that organization's highest honor.

Previous recipients of the award have been William Clark of Clark Masonry Construction, Milford; William Walker of The MacMillin Company, Keene; Samuel Audley of R.S. Audley, Inc., Bow; Levi Ladd of L.K. Ladd, Inc., Concord; Jack McDevitt Jr. of McDevitt Trucks, Inc., Manchester; Tom Avallone of Cobb Hill Construction, Concord; Jim Morrill of Morrill Construction, North Haverhill; Mark and Rick Charbonneau of Continental Paving, Londonderry; Leighton A. White of Leighton A. White Inc., Milford; Rich Lambert of Procon, Inc., Hooksett; Tom Palazzi of The Palazzi Corp., Hooksett; Ron Severino of Severino Trucking, Candia; Paul Morin of Tarkka Homes, Weare; and Bruss Construction of Bradford.