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Bertram honored with 22nd annual New Hampshire Construction Industry Ethics Award

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Gary Bertram (right) recipient of the 22nd annual New Hampshire Construction Industry Ethics Award, with the award's founder and sponsor, David Wood

Manchester, NH Gary Bertram, retired executive of Hutter Construction, New Ipswich, N.H., received the 22nd annual New Hampshire Construction Industry Ethics Award at the AGC Safety Awards Dinner at The Derryfield Country Club. 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.”

In addition to a handsome plaque, the award carries with it a \$1,000 donation to the recipient's charity of choice. Bertram requested that the donation be split between Teen Challenge New England, which brings life-changing hope to addicts and their families, and the American Heart Association.

A Chicago native who grew up in Michigan, Bertram earned an associate's degree in Technology from Gogebic Community College in Ironwood, Michigan. Following graduation, he moved to New Hampshire in 1972, spending six years doing structural steel detailing and estimating for Seppala and Aho Construction.

In 1978, Bertram joined Hutter Construction, signing on as a laborer and quickly moving up to assistant project manager. He was named vice president in 1985, and continued his rise over the next 30 years, serving as executive vice president (1990), president (2000) and executive vice president (2008), retiring in 2015 after 36 years with the company. During the vast majority of that time he oversaw the project management and estimating staff, and handled preconstruction services for all of Hutter's projects.

Praise for Bertram is universal throughout the construction industry.

“He is the epitome of honesty, integrity and professional standards,” said Bill Norton, president of Norton Asset Management, who has known Bertram since Gary's Seppala and Aho days. “In

hundreds of meetings, I have never seen him lose his temper or his professionalism. He has a quiet, calm, stick-to-the-issues approach in the construction world, where things tend to escalate much too quickly. He had been a mentor to many and an excellent role model for anyone who has had the opportunity to work with him and see him in action.”

Bob lafolla, president of Myriad Management Group, has known Bertram for more than 20 years and worked with him on a number of projects as an owner’s representative. “Gary has set a level of honesty and truthfulness that is unrivalled in our industry, and his calm demeanor produces cooperation rather than confrontation. I would happily start any project with Gary with a handshake, knowing that any issues that may arise would be dealt with fairly and professionally.”

Bertram also earned the respect of his fellow contractors during his long career. “Whenever I bested Gary in a hard bid where we finished 1-2, I was not only thrilled at having the low number, but I knew that I had the right number if he finished a close second,” said Eric Hastings of Engelberth Construction, who has competed against Bertram for 25 years. “If the company that I was employed by was facing Gary’s company in an interview for a construction management project, I knew it would be extremely difficult to win because of Gary’s presence. The architects who had previously worked with Gary already knew that he brought integrity and fairness to the projects from start to finish. The owners who met Gary at the interview for the first time would quickly sense what Gary would bring to their project.”

Bertram was also held in the highest regard by his colleagues at Hutter. “Gary’s integrity and fairness, along with a fierce defense of the truth, helped build the strong reputation that Hutter enjoys today,” said Lars Traffie, now president of the firm. “My father and I trusted him to help bridge the successful transition of leadership from the first generation to the second in our family business. Gary was a tremendous help in mentoring me through the process.”

Bertram’s impact on the community has also been significant. Among his many activities, he has served on the New Ipswich Board of Adjustment and the town’s Building Committee for several school projects. Throughout his career, he was often recruited as an independent expert witness on construction matters.

The New Hampshire Construction Industry Ethics Award was established and is underwritten by David Wood, a former nationally recognized writer, publisher and marketing consultant specializing in the construction industry. His newsletter, Words from Woody, 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.