

editor's note



THE OTHER MORNING I ASKED MY DAUGHTER IF SHE COULD NAME ANY FABRICATORS.

After a moment's thought, she came up with Bob Owen and Terry Peshia. It was a remarkable pairing, since the AISC Board of Directors had voted just a few days earlier to award them the Robert P. Stupp Leadership Award, the Institute's highest honor (along with its sister awards, the J. Lloyd Kimbrough Medal for designers and the Geerhard Haaijer Award for educators).

The Stupp Award is given in special recognition to individuals who have provided unparalleled leadership in the steel construction industry and have had an outstanding impact on advancing the use of structural steel in the construction industry.

(A little truthiness: I really expected my daughter to answer the question exactly as she did thanks to a wonderful trip my family took to the Canadian Institute of Steel Construction Annual Meeting five years ago. At the time, Bob Owen's company owned a plane but was in the process of selling it. Bob, an avid and skilled pilot, was also going to the meeting and offered me a "ride." I politely declined, since I was bringing my whole family, but he said to bring them all—"I love kids" was his response. He was also giving Terry Peshia and his lovely wife Connie a ride. Terry spent much of the flight talking with my daughter and at one point pulled out a Chinese Checkers board and taught her to play. Upon our return to Chicago, Terry gave the set to my daughter. She attempted to decline, but he explained that he had only bought the set to play with her on the flight. It's just the type of people Bob and Terry are.)

Of course, Bob and Terry are not receiving this important honor just because my daughter likes them. Each have brought an important focus to their involvement with AISC.

Bob will always be thought of for his international involvement. He pushed us to reach out and learn from our counterparts in the United Kingdom and other countries. He made us think about the metric system. And he reminded us that others may do things not just differently from us, but also better. Of course Bob wasn't just focused internationally. He served on numerous committees (and also served a term as Chair of AISC's Board of Directors) and was always willing to devote time to advance the domestic structural steel industry. Just as importantly, he allowed his staff to devote valuable time and resources as well. He is well aware that AISC's success depends on the commitment of its many invaluable volunteers and he has always supported and aided that effort.

Terry also brought something unique to the table. For many years, he has been the go-between in AISC's relationship with the erection community—and that expertise proved essential in the development and advancement of the Erector Certification program. Terry also is in the unique position of being located in relatively close proximity to AISC's headquarters. So when we need a fabricator on short notice, or when we need to show new staff a fabrication shop, he's always been available. He too has served on numerous committees, including being very active in AISC's University Relations efforts (and, as with Bob, served a term as Chair of AISC's Board of Directors). An early supporter of the steel sculpture program, Terry has donated more than one sculpture and usually has one ready to go for any university in need (I think I noticed one in front of his shop the other day when I was driving my daughter to a dance competition in Aurora, Ill., Garbe Iron's hometown).

But for all their individual accomplishments, what I most appreciate about both Bob and Terry is their unofficial status as wise men. Every organization needs these elder statesmen who bring perspective and wisdom to a discussion. I always enjoy the spirited debates at board meetings, and I know when the discussion becomes too emotionally charged either Bob or Terry will step in and present a reasonable compromise.

The Stupp Awards will be presented at the AISC Annual Meeting on September 24-25. This meeting, which is open to all members of the Institute, typically attracts 200 leading fabricators. Unlike the Steel Conference, which offers technical programs and a large exhibit hall, the Annual Meeting focuses on business issues and allows for networking in a more intimate setting. (For more information, visit www.aisc.org/annualmeeting.)

I hope to see many of you there to help AISC and the steel industry honor Bob and Terry.

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