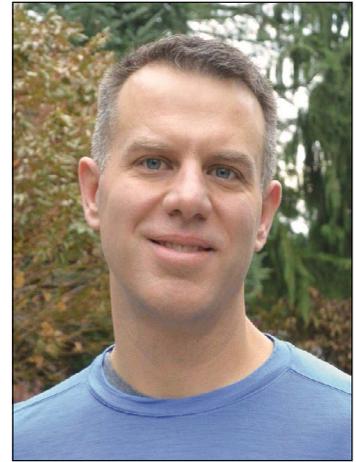


Tell us a little bit about yourself, your background and how you got involved with the Foundation.

I knew I wanted to be a carpenter at a very early age. My dad was a carpenter and I was lucky to have a family who supported my decision to join the industry. I learned about the Construction Management program at Washington State University and knew it was a perfect fit. My dad was involved with the AGC through Wilcox Construction so when I went to WSU, Bob Wilcox told me about the Foundation's scholarship program. I filled out the paperwork and was introduced to Bob McEachern, a Foundation board member who was also a former member of my fraternity. He encouraged me to apply. However, when I did, I received a letter back saying they didn't give scholarships to WSU students—only UW students. I called Mr. McEachern and told him what happened and he said, "I'll call you back." A short time later I received a call back from the AGC and they said, "You're going to be our first WSU recipient." It was the "Bob McEachern Scholarship," named for a man who had been very involved with the Foundation. My tuition was paid in-full from my sophomore through senior year. During my time at WSU I established a friendship with Bob McEachern. He would bring me to jobsites and give me tours of the projects he was working on—I always left feeling inspired and amazed.



Matt Lessard
President, Wilcox Construction
AGC EF Board Member

After college, how did you continue to stay involved with the Foundation?

I started going to AGC meetings a few years ago. I was interested in giving back and helping people just like Bob helped me. He gave me a really great poem called "The Bridge Builder." He kept it in his wallet. It's about a man who's building a bridge and another man approaches him and says, "Why are you spending your whole life building this bridge?" The man responds, "I'm not building it for myself, I'm building it for the people who come after me." It was never about the money with Bob; it was about taking the time to help someone succeed from the next generation. I hope to continue Bob's work through my involvement with the Foundation.

"Get involved and you'll find the spot where your true passion lies. Find something that speaks to you and makes you say, 'This is what I want to do.' And then you need to have the guts to do it."

How did you decide to give your first gift to the foundation?

When I was younger I gave my time and effort because that's all I had, but I still wanted to contribute. When you are older and have the money to contribute—do. The young people should get others involved and give their time. You also have so much to learn. Honestly, every time I sit at a board meeting I learn something new. I know that I will gain more than I will ever be able to contribute.

In your opinion, what is the most important work the Foundation does?

I believe scholarships are the most important because it demonstrates to others that there's value to education and joining our industry. The award amount should be on par with a football scholarship. I like that we are looking for well-rounded people and

giving scholarships. It seems that halfway through college you start really figuring out what you want to do. Getting a scholarship can change someone's life – they graduate with a marketable skill – and can go on to build a high rise building that will forever be part of a city skyline.

How did you get involved with the GET program and what inspired you to involve the Foundation?

I was thinking about the Foundation's investments. Giving out \$1,000 scholarships doesn't make that big of a difference when you look at how expensive tuition is now. I'd rather give out scholarships that are \$10,000 or more, much like the full-ride I received when I was an AGC EF scholar. When I looked at the GET program, it seemed to me like a good way to do that, and it will have more buying power 20 years from now.

As a former scholar, do you have any advice for current scholars wanting to get involved with the Foundation?

My advice — just do it. Start getting involved. When I first started with the foundation, I was part of the continuing education committee, but I knew my true passion was helping with scholarships. Get involved and you'll find the spot where your true passion lies. Find something that speaks to you and makes you say, "This is what I want to do." And then you need to have the guts to do it. 📌