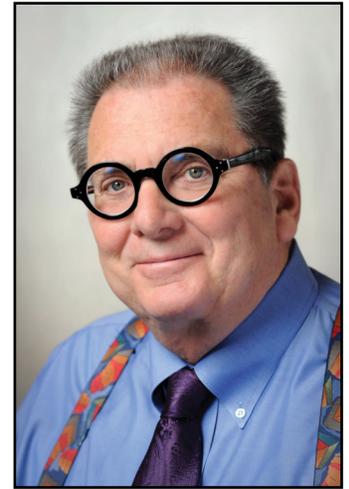


Gene, tell us about your history with the Seattle construction industry.

I am a transplant from the New York/New Jersey area. After the Army, I came out to Seattle in 1965. Boeing was hiring and I accepted a position in their construction management department, staying for two years until the company's first layoffs. I happened to be supervising one of the projects that Ferguson Construction was doing at Boeing. Ferguson hired me, and the rest is history. I have been at Ferguson Construction ever since.

What was your initial involvement with the AGC Education Foundation?

I knew Bob Landau well, and he spoke with me about the AGC of Washington's desire to create a foundation that would focus on educating the industry. It resonated with me. At the beginning of launching a foundation, you have to define the mission, then gather supporters and convince them that you know how to use their money with efficacy. That was the biggest story we had to tell. Most importantly, in order to tell the story, we needed to bring our money to the table. I presented the story to Hugh Ferguson, and Ferguson Construction was one of the many founding donors. Terry Deeny, Frank Young and Bob Landau convinced me that the Foundation was going to become a stellar example of what a group of people could do when they got together for a common mission. My 35-year involvement has been a phenomenal experience for myself and Ferguson Construction. I see bigger and better things every time I meet with the Foundation staff.



Gene Colin
Ferguson Construction CEO

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

Education is by far the Foundation's most important work. Its focus on educating the AGC members is a priority. This starts at the executive level by charging the management with embracing a corporate culture of continued learning, then passing it on through middle management, and then to the folks with their boots on the ground in the field.

“The return on investment does not have to do with funds; it has to do with people.”

Is there a particular Foundation program that impresses you?

Yes, the Foundation's Construction Adventure Camp was wonderful to observe this summer. I could see the minds of these young folks clicking into gear when something was presented to them. Their enthusiasm and excitement was evident when they spoke of building their tool boxes and visiting jobsites. The Foundation has been wise to begin introducing students to construction from a young age — what seems very small could wind up with a very large impact.

As a donor, what do you see as your return on investment when selecting the Foundation as part of your charitable giving?

I think the return on investment has nothing to do with a typical return on investment, but it has to do with an investment in the individual who is making their way through the programs, and who ultimately pursues a career in construction. By getting kids started out through the summer camp, it interests them in construction. This engagement eventually draws students to not only think about college, but to think about an education in terms of how it relates to construction careers. Not everybody has a notion that they want to go to college, and I think the Foundation fills that gap. The return on investment does not have to do with funds; it has to do with people.

What do you see as the Foundation's greatest impact on the industry?

The industry is continuing to see the Foundation as a resource, and depends upon the Foundation for specific courses and programs. I remember when “safety” was just a word in the dictionary. Now, safety has become its own department in the AGC, which started through the Foundation's safety courses. In terms of its greatest impact, it is seen as a resource organization that the trades, the universities, and the community colleges, like South Seattle College, can partner with to expand opportunities within the industry.

Long term, what do you hope for the future of the Foundation?

The Foundation must continue to offer distinctive and helpful educational experiences for the members and their employees in the office and in the field. It should continue to strive to be the lead career resource organization for the construction industry. 📌