

Retired DPM Executive Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

By Brad Kane



Charles Pinckney, 2010 recipient of the Construction Institute's Lifetime Recognition Award

A man who dedicated 30 years of his life to bettering the construction industry will receive the Construction Institute's Lifetime Recognition Award at the organization's annual awards dinner June 23.

Charles Pinckney, who led Diversified Project Management's charge in Connecticut, is the fourth recipient of the lifetime achievement award in the 35 year history of the institute.

"I'm overwhelmed by it," Pinckney, 69, said. "It was more than a little surprising when I found out I was receiving it."

Pinckney began his foray into the construction industry in 1977 when he co-founded Interspace Design, a design-build company. Nine years later, he created Pinckney Associates, a design and consulting firm. In the early 1990s, Aetna pegged Pinckney as its head of design and construction, making him responsible for all six million square feet of Aetna facilities.

It was in 1996 that Pinckney's role in central Connecticut construction became vital to the industry when he helped Boston-based Diversified Project Management expand into Hartford and later Stamford. His biggest contribution was helping the firm establish its role as a representative for owners, overseeing construction projects to make sure client needs were met on time and on budget.

Pinckney sold his stake in Diversified Project Management in 2007 but stayed on full-time for three years to help with the transition. Although retired, he still consults part-time for the company.

"It is a great way for me to exit," Pinckney said. "It was a great 14-15 years of my life. It was wonderful."

The Construction Institute first caught Pinckney's fancy during his Aetna days, when he helped the non-profit organization adjust into its new space on the University of Hartford campus. He was impressed by the organization's ability to pull in contractors, property owners, subcontractors, architects and other components of the industry into one room focused on a collaborative effort.

"I've gotten much more out of it than I ever put into it," Pinckney said. "It is a pretty remarkable place."

In addition to his many roles within the industry, Pinckney carried the torch for the Construction Institute since the early 1990s. In the volunteer organization, he worked in many board roles — as the chairman, the vice-chairman, the board secretary, the board treasurer and currently sits as the chairman of the Board of Advisors.

Lifetime Recognition Award winners have "contributed greatly to their associations, to the construction industry, and to the institute itself," said William Cianci, executive director for the Construction Institute.

Pinckney's award highlights the Construction Institute 35th annual membership meeting and awards dinner from 6-9 p.m. June 23 at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville. The organization also will hand out its Distinguished Achievement Award and Distinguished Service Award at the ceremony.

Founded in 1975, the Construction Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit run associated with the University of Hartford. The organization maintains six employees, nearly 300 members and runs under a board of volunteers. The main purposes include education and collaboration among the various sectors of the construction industry.

The institute first handed out the lifetime award in 2006, and only three people received the honor before Pinckney. The award is not automatic every year, only when somebody truly worthy is available, Cianci said.

This year's Distinguished Achievement Award recipients are honored because they have furthered the institute's cause of making the construction industry less fragmented and more focused on a common goal.

John Tocci, CEO of Tocci Building Companies; Phil Bernstein, vice president of industry strategy and relations at Autodesk AEC Solutions; and Scott Simpson, principal and senior director at KlingStubbins; — all from the Boston area — will receive the achievement award collectively for pushing building information modeling as an industry solution.

Building information modeling, or BIM, is a 3-D computer modeling technique where all components of a building's construction are laid out electronically before construction begins. By constructing facilities electronically, everyone from the architects to the subcontractors understands exactly how everything fits and what parts are needed for construction.

“This is a total cultural change for the industry, but these people have been leaders in it,” Cianci said. “So much of the problems in the industry relate to constructability.”

The Construction Institute's Distinguished Service Award will be presented to Peter Hentschel of Hartford-based Tecton Associates for his role in making the institute a leading educational and informational resource in the area.

This is the ninth year for the Distinguished Service Award while the Distinguished Achievement Award has been handed out since 1983.

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