

SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY



COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY

1919 - 2019



SHEET METAL WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION LOCAL UNION NO.19

1301 SOUTH COLUMBUS BOULEVARD, PHILADELPHIA PA 19147
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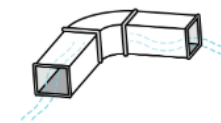
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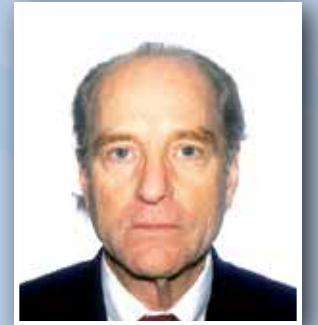
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SMCA GENERATIONS HAVE READIED US FOR OUR FUTURE

By chance rather than honor, it falls upon me as the Executive Director/CEO of the Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Philadelphia and Vicinity on the 100th Anniversary of this Association's Charter to make a few comments and observations.

First, we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the SMCA charter, but not the 100th birthday of SMCA. Like so many children of the late 1800s and early 1900s, SMCA was not brought into the world in an institution, hospital or court room but at the kitchen table in an unknown row home somewhere in the Philadelphia area. Our records indicate that the unchartered organization existed as early as September of 1900 – we know that Sheet Metal Workers Local Union No. 19 was chartered in December of 1887, and we can only assume that its employing contractors began meeting around that same time.



Trade associations date back as far as craft and merchant guilds in ancient Rome, Greece and China, but they have flourished amid the social and economic freedoms of the United States. Trade associations are part of the American culture. Noted French historian and political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville recognized as early as 1835 that Americans "constantly form associations." He went on to state:

"[Americans] have not only commercial and manufacturing companies, in which all take part, but associations of a thousand other kinds, religious, moral, serious, futile, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive. . . . Wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association."

Philadelphia has been home to the oldest craft guild in the United States since 1770, the Carpenters Company, located in Carpenters' Hall, which still operates today.

There is a uniquely complex Body of Law concerning associations in the United States and the work they do. Bringing competing businesses together to achieve common goals is no small task, especially when it comes to collectively bargained contracts. SMCA and Local No. 19 can trace their roots back to the passage of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in 1890; this legislation arguably created the concept of Multi-Employer Bargaining, the base of SMCA's very existence.

There are a few axioms repeated throughout the history of SMCA. Clearly Misters Gassner, Clemence, Call, Donovan, Tinney and Scott shared these very thoughts:

- I have always received more from the Association than I put into it;
- Some of my best friends are my toughest competitors – they are the only ones who seem to understand my problems;
- We are all stronger if we stand together;
- If only my competitors knew "this" we would all be more competitive and/or more profitable; and
- I should have gotten involved in my industry sooner.

Reviewing SMCA's history reveals three generations of leadership prior to today's:

- The Founders – who initiated the organization and pursued the charter;
- The Formers – who benefited from the efforts of The Founders and brought structure to SMCA; and
- The Re-Formers – who saw the strengths and weaknesses of the operating SMCA and infused a new life and purpose into SMCA.

All of these men and women have acted responsibly, reacted appropriately and demonstrated the vision to see that the road is paved for their successors. Just as Mr. Bygott did in 1969, we should pause and recognize the vision of these generations of leadership.

Setting aside technology, perhaps the single most visible change within SMCA over the last 50 years has been the inclusion of women and minorities in the construction industry. The glass ceiling has been smashed by women serving as SMCA directors and officers. There are now several women- and minority-owned businesses in SMCA's membership. SMCA works alongside Local No. 19 to diversify the sheet metal industry; as a result, we can proudly say that SMCA's workforce, the Local No. 19 membership, is one of the most diverse in the Greater Philadelphia labor community.

SMCA's current leadership, the fourth generation, the agents of change, continue to look to the future of the industry. As they lead SMCA into its next 100 years, it is imperative that they continually ask the critical questions and seek the best solutions. To that end, the SMCA Strategic Plan stands tall as THE MOST SIGNIFICANT organizational initiative in recent SMCA history. The Strategic Planning Process assures that this and future generations of SMCA leadership will guide the industry and this association to new heights.

William F. Reardon, CAE
Executive Director/CEO



SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Friday, November 22, 2019

6:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.

Museum of the American Revolution
101 South Third Street, Philadelphia

DINNER & CELEBRATION

George Washington Tent Show during the Evening

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SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS

ASSOCIATION AT 100 YEARS

A CENTURY OF SERVICE TO PHILADELPHIA AND VICINITY

The six contractors who signed the application for the Sheet Metal Contractors Association (SMCA) to be chartered in the County of Philadelphia, which they eventually received on November 24, 1919, recognized that cooperation among sheet metal contractors was absolutely necessary to establish order in the construction industry and promote good business practices. As such, the SMCA charter states:

“The corporation is formed to foster, protect and promote the welfare and interests of those engaged in Roofing and Sheet Metal Work by obtaining prompt and reliable information as to all matters affecting its members, by procuring uniformity, harmony and certainty in the relations existing between employers, employees and others and to further such other business which may appear to be for our welfare and interests.”

Those six contractors who also signed the SMCA charter were Thomas Sprowle Gassner, Victor B. Clemence, John A. Call, William Donovan, Walter H. Tinney and J. Scott. Only one of those companies represented by the original signers of the SMCA charter remains in business today, The Wm. J. Donovan Co., Inc.

For no less than nearly two decades, repeated attempts by sheet metal contractors in the County of Philadelphia dating back to at least September 21, 1900, to be chartered as an official organization within the county were all rebuffed by the county’s Common Pleas Court. On that particular day, a judge in Common Pleas Court No. 3 refused the application for a charter submitted by the Sheet Metal Contractors Association (SMCA) of Philadelphia, the next day’s *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported, on the basis, “I am of opinion that the law authorizes the incorporation of companies to encourage and protect the trade and commerce of the community generally, and not to promote and protect the trade and commerce of the community engaged in carrying on some particular trade as a means of private livelihood or profit.”

During that time, the quasi-official SMCA and its contractors were also often engaged

in conflict with Local Union No. 19 of the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers’ International Alliance (forerunner of the Sheet Metal Workers’ International Association and currently the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers), which represented the workers of its closed-shop contractor members. For instance, in November 1905, SMCA declared its contractors’ shops would be non-union “open shops” after the local “refused to abide by and recognize the agreement” between the contractors and the union, as SMCA declared in an announcement in the November 29, 1905, *Inquirer*.

Regardless of the court’s consistent snubs and in deference to the need to negotiate with the union, SMCA sheet metal contractors held firm to their collective belief that they should be bound as an organization to bargain with Local No. 19 on behalf of the industry’s

MINUTES SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

PHILADELPHIA & VICINITY

MINUTES OF PRELIMINARY MEETING OF THE SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA AND VICINITY BUILDERS EXCHANGE - JUNE 10, 1919 - 7 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Tinney
Mr. Linck
Mr. A. Bohem
Mr. Childrey of Camden
Mr. Donovan
Mr. Bragg of Wm. English Co.,
Mr. John Long of S. Faith Co.
Mr. John A. Call
Mr. Thos Gassner

Unanimous opinion that organization be formed.

Mr. Thos. Gassner by assent elected, temporary Chairman.
Mr. John A. Call, by assent elected Secretary.

Moved and seconded that the organization be known as -
"THE SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA AND VICINITY"

It moved and seconded that Secretary and Chairman officially notify on proper stationery of the Association, all sheet metal contractors that the association will discuss the agreement presented to the sheet metal contractors by the Union before any individual discusses same.

CAMDEN

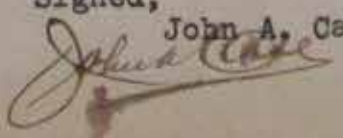
Metallic Mfg. Co.
Dexter Mfg. Co.
Stranwich & Scott
Sheet Metal Construction Co.

Motion that Chairman appoint a committee of three members to draft a Constitution, By-Laws, and Code of Practice to be presented for the approval of the association by following meeting.

Committee appointed.

Mr. Call
Mr. Linck
Mr. Childrey

Moved and seconded that committee report with constitution, etc., by date, June 18th, 1919, Wednesday.

Signed,
 John A. Call,
Secretary.

Minutes of the first preliminary organizing meeting of SMCA held June 10, 1919.

100 Year



Anniversary

FIRST ORGANIZING MEETING ATTENDEES

These nine contractors attended the first SMCA preliminary organizing meeting held on June 10, 1919, at the Builders Exchange in Philadelphia:

A. Bohem
Mr. Bragg
John A. Call
Ralph D. Childrey
William J. Donovan
Thomas S. Gassner
J. Edward Linck
John Long
Walter H. Tinney

employing contractors. In fact, so strong were their convictions that they began formally meeting as a body on June 10, 1919, at 7 p.m. in the Builders Exchange - more than five months before they would finally receive their charter from the court.

The nine contractors in attendance during that first meeting were of the "unanimous opinion that organization be formed," they recorded in their meeting minutes. Subsequently, they appointed a committee of three members to draft a constitution, by-laws and a code of practice and officially named themselves the "Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Philadelphia and Vicinity."

More than five decades later, SMCA Administrator **H. J. Bygott Jr.** would reflect on the organization's origins in its 50th anniversary newsletter, "It is evident that far-sighted men recognized the need for cooperation in order to bring about order in the construction industry and promote good business practices. The SMCA founders' commitment to reaching that objective was, perhaps, no more apparent than when during that first meeting, the attending contractors further moved to have their new secretary, Mr. John A. Call, and temporary chairman, Mr. Thomas Gassner, "officially notify on proper stationary of the Association,

all sheet metal contractors that the Association will discuss the agreement presented to the sheet metal contractors by the union before any individual discusses same."

During its next meeting on August 7, 1919, SMCA approved a motion to advise Local No. 19 "that it would be convenient for the executive committee to meet their executive committee on Tuesday, August 12, 1919, to confer on the proposed agreement of the Association. Immediately after, meeting attendees also voted to instruct the SMCA secretary to notify its attorney "to proceed at once with application for charter for the Association."

SMCA subsequently subscribed for a charter with the County of Philadelphia on August 20, 1919. Six officials of the Association signed the application.

As the Association waited for a response, however, Local No. 19 went on weeks-long strike against SMCA beginning September 1 after the two sides could not reach agreement on a new contract, for which the contractors

CHARTER SIGNED AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

The SMCA charter of November 24, 1919, is signed by six contractors:

John A. Call
Thomas S. Gassner
J. Edward Linck
Victor B. Clemence
Frank S. Meade
Walter H. Tinney

Six contractors are listed on the charter as members of the first SMCA Executive Committee:

John A. Call
William J. Donovan
Thomas S. Gassner
Victor B. Clemence
J. Scott
Walter H. Tinney

SINCE 1919 *Continued after next page.*

SMCA/RSMCA PRESIDENTS

Thomas Gassner 1919 – 1921	Clarence B. Espenshade 1951 – 1954	Frank P. Manfredonia 1977 – 1979	Michael J. McGee 1998 – 2000
William C. Meade 1921 – 1931	William C. Kulzer 1954 – 1956	Melvin J. Wind 1979 – 1980	Robert J. Kryszczak 2000 – 2002
William English 1931	John C. Decker 1956 – 1957	Ernest R. Menold, P.E. 1980 – 1983	Robert E. Johnston, Jr. 2002
W. Roy Eichberg 1931 – 1935	Richard Peabody 1957 – 1961	Robert E. Linck 1983 – 1984	John A. Burke 2002 – 2004
Cameron F. Stains 1935 – 1940	Robert C. Linck 1961 – 1962	Daniel Driscoll 1984 – 1985	Richard J. Borradaile 2004 – 2006
Philip Bender 1940 – 1942	Raymond P. Ecker 1962 – 1964	John L. Hughes 1985 – 1986	Ernest J. Menold, P.E. 2006 - 2008
William J. Donovan 1942	Benoit L. McMahan 1964 – 1965	Fred Hershman 1986 – 1987	Patricia I. Kryszczak 2008 – 2010
William J. Tinney 1942	John C. Decker 1965 – 1967	James M. Foley 1987 – 1988	Roger K. Hofmann 2010 – 2012
L. William Ewing 1942 – 1947	Robert B. Miller 1967 – 1969	William J. Knecht 1988 – 1989	Matthew Sano 2012 – 2014
J. H. Coonce 1947 – 1949	William J. Knecht 1969 – 1971	Samuel Levitt 1989 – 1992	Gary G. Luthe, Sr. 2014 – 2016
George H. Duross 1949 – 1951	Robert E. Linck 1971 – 1973	John L. Hughes 1992 – 1994	Robert E. Johnston, Jr. 2016 – 2018
William J. Ambrose 1951	Oscar Hershman 1973 – 1975	Edmund J. Bransfield 1994 – 1996	Kenneth Wurst 2018 – present
Samuel W. Saling 1951	Ray Sweeney 1975 – 1977	Ernest R. Menold, P.E. 1996 – 1998	



were offering a new wage rate of 80 cents per hour and a 44-hour work week. In response, the Association announced in a September 22 letter to the union that it would “operate our plants on the Open Shop principle,” after hiring the Saile Detective Agency to investigate the advisability of doing so.

At long last, the Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Philadelphia and Vicinity received its charter on **November 24, 1919**, from Judge Howard A. Davis of the Court of Common Pleas No. 3 of the County of Philadelphia. In the SMCA Golden Anniversary newsletter of 1969, Administrator Bygott pondered on behalf of the Association, “Fifty years ago, this was a big step for a contracting group to take, and we imagine that it took a lot of work to hold the infant group together.”

THE 1920s BUILDING UP STRENGTH EARLY ON

To help strengthen the organization, SMCA immediately affiliated with and became active in both the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors’ National Association (SMACNA) and SMACNA of Pennsylvania when they were founded in 1948 and 1970, respectively. Throughout the century to come, SMCA would continuously participate in the programs, conferences and conventions of each, duly putting its mark on the sheet metal contracting industry while associating with invaluable industry allies.

Internally, SMCA formed a Labor Committee that would confer with its Local No. 19 counterpart to address issues that would arise between the two organizations. For instance, during the Association’s meeting on March 17, 1920, it adopted a motion that the Labor Committee should “urge the union to make a special effort to bring in non-union members of this Association to closed shops.”

Then on November 18 of that year, SMCA unanimously decided to admit the Master

During the 1920s, the national headquarters of the National Association of Sheet Metal Contractors of the United States, of which SMCA of Philadelphia and Vicinity was a chapter, was located in Philadelphia at 608 Chestnut Street. SMCA of Philadelphia member contractor **Edwin L. Seabrook** served as the National Association’s secretary during much of that time.

Roofers into the Association as members after those roofing contractors had expressed a desire to partner with the sheet metal contractors. Subsequently, a formal invitation was extended to the Master Roofers Association, informing its contractors that they would be admitted for membership upon payment of \$15 per member, representing an initiation fee and dues for the balance of the fiscal year ending in April 1921.

That month, the Roofing and Sheet Metal Contractors’ Association of Philadelphia invited SMCA to combine the two organizations into a single industry entity. During its April 21, 1921, meeting, SMCA formed a committee to investigate a merger, after which the Association voted on April 26 to join with the Roofing and Sheet Metal Contractors’ Association and meeting minutes indicate the amalgamation was “carried out unanimously” during a special meeting on May 3, 1921, at the Hotel Lorraine in North Philadelphia.

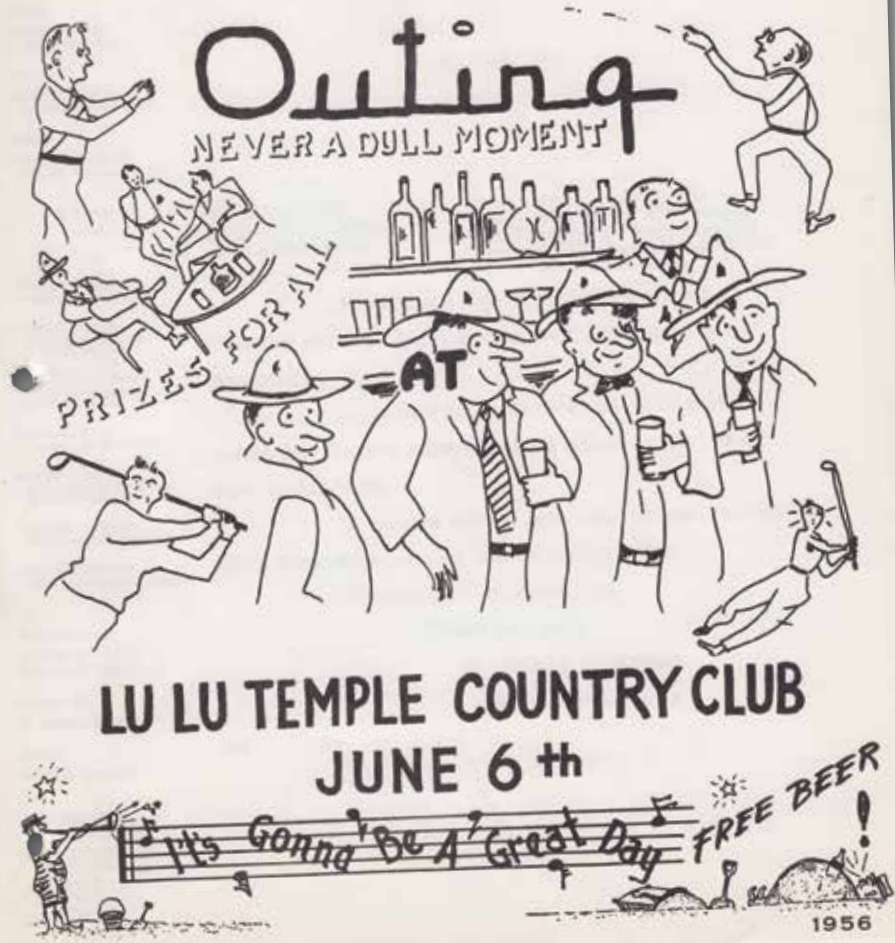
By that year, SMCA had also associated with the Committee of 23, a group of the area’s 23 construction trade associations. At that time, SMCA supported the committee’s drive to establish open-shop, non-union conditions for the building trades in and around Philadelphia.

Meanwhile, SMCA was negotiating with Local No. 19 on a new contract, but when talks broke down the union went out on strike in July 1921. SMCA, however, adopted a resolution during a special meeting held on July 26, 1921, declaring it “unequivocally”

ROOFING AND SHEET METAL INDUSTRY DAY

sponsored by

THE ROOFING AND SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
OF PHILADELPHIA AND VICINITY



avored the open-shop principle after all 15 member contractors attending the meeting voted for open shops – which it announced with an advertisement in the July 27 *Inquirer*. What’s more, the Association further declared that it would not enter into an agreement for the year 1921 with Local No. 19 and it would instead maintain its 90-cent-per-hour pay rate for “first-class mechanics.”

As work picked up into the coming years and the area experienced a coinciding shortage in manpower, on April 1, 1923, SMCA raised the

wage rate for journeymen of Local No. 19 to \$1 per hour.

However, the Association continued to favor open-shop conditions, and during its April 17, 1924, meeting it unanimously passed a resolution affirming its commitment to the “American Plan,” a nationwide set of anti-union strategies used by employers during that decade that deemed unions to be “un-American.” It further resolved that “there shall be no change that would bring about a closed shop condition in Philadelphia.” Subsequently, as conflict with the union persisted, all members of SMCA were operating as open shops by March 1925.

But as the second half of the 1920s progressed, SMCA apparently was either dissolved or went defunct or on hiatus for undocumented reasons and did not operate as a formal organization possibly for as long as late 1925 into early 1930. It would not be until a year into the Great Depression, the historic economic and human catastrophe that officially began when the stock market crashed on October 29, 1929 (history’s “Black Tuesday”), that SMCA would re-organize on October 14, 1930. During that “first official meeting” of the revived organization, the 12 member contractors in attendance passed a motion to “revise the old by-laws of the Association.”

The group adopted the name “The Sheet Metal Contractors’ Association of Philadelphia and Vicinity” on October 20, 1930, and a committee submitted the updated by-laws

during the next SMCA meeting on October 21. In addition to reiterating the name of the organization, the statutes also stated that its purpose would be to “foster and promote the welfare and interests of those engaged in roofing and sheet metal work”

What’s more, the by-laws dictated SMCA’s re-commitment to union sheet metal workers. In particular, one section even stated, “Any person, firm or corporation engaged in the sheet metal industry, having a properly equipped shop in employing sheet metal workers, members of Local Union No. 19 of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association ... in the City of Philadelphia and territory in the vicinity thereof, shall be eligible for membership”

The SMCA meeting of November 12, 1930, focused in part on cooperation between the Association and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, meeting minutes indicate.

THE 1930s

COLLABORATION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

A primary point of discussion during SMCA meetings throughout the first years of the 1930s was collaboration with the Roofing Contractors’ Association. On January 20, 1931, in fact, an SMCA committee submitted a report on combining the two organizations – although that again did not come to fruition in the immediate future.

With the effects of the worsening Depression mounting, SMCA also dedicated much of its time to industry issues; for example, in early 1931 a committee existed to explore and report on ventilating laws as they pertained to sheet metal work. Another committee was also appointed during that time to prepare a working plan “regarding the control of price cutting and the allotment of work to the members of the Association,” which was approved during its March 3, 1931, meeting.

SMCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

These are individuals who committed their time and energy to the sheet metal industry well beyond that which was required of them.

Robert W. Donovan
Ernest R. Menold, P. E.
Joseph H. Shaw
Elmer M. Knapp
Daniel J. Driscoll, P. E.
Edmund J. Bransfield
Roger Hofmann
Richard J. Borradaile

As the Depression maintained its stranglehold on Philadelphia and the nation, on August 4, 1931, SMCA unanimously agreed to grant a request by Local No. 19 for an extension of the current \$1.30-per-hour wage scale.

The following day, SMCA was one of 21 representatives of the construction industry at a meeting in the Midday Club that formally established the **Philadelphia Federation of the Construction Industry**. According to the August 6 *Inquirer*, the Federation “for the first time united the bankers, realtors and architects with construction and allied interests in a concerted effort to stabilize the industry.” To that end, the organization would provide “a central agency through which construction problems can be submitted to a board representative of all branches of industry for solution and remedy.”

But as the economic turmoil deepened, in April 1932, SMCA suggested to Local No. 19 that it accept a 30-percent reduction in wages that had been recommended by the Builders Exchange in an effort to offset the ongoing adverse impact of the Depression. Subsequently, on June 7, 1932, the contractors and the union agreed to a cut in the wage rate from \$1.40 to \$1.25 per hour, which would be effective May

10, on all new work contracted after that date and continuing into and throughout 1935.

That year, the Sheet Metal Workers International Association created and implemented its **Standard Form of Union Agreement**, which was to be used by local unions around the country as the basic structure for collective-bargaining agreements with their respective signatory contractors' associations. SMCA and Local No. 19 subsequently adjusted the Standard Form to reflect their current \$1.25-per-hour wage scale. *(The union and the Sheet Metal Contractors National Association – forerunner of today's Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association, or SMACNA – would negotiate the final Standard Form of Union Agreement in 1947. However, the agreement's two-step grievance procedure that provided for a Joint Adjustment Board and then an appeal procedure caused frequent deadlocks and costly work stoppages, according to "A*

History and Explanation of the Standard Form of Union Agreement for the Sheet Metal Industry" authored by attorney Robert J. Fenlon in March 1997. Subsequently, in 1955, the National Joint Adjustment Board was established with full authority to resolve contract grievances.)

Feeling the acute surge of non-union competition produced by the lingering consequences of the Depression into the second half of the 1930s, SMCA in June 1937 offered Local No. 19 a new wage rate of \$1.37-1/2 cents per hour for a new, first-ever multiple-year contract. As part of the contract, SMCA included provisions in the agreement "whereby the local would accord members of the Association better protection against non-union aggression," according to its June 22, 1937, meeting minutes.

However, as the construction industry remained stagnant into mid- and late-1939, SMCA rebuffed a request made by Local



RSMCA School for Sketchers instructors (left to right) Paul Cuneo, Raymond Burchacki and Stephen Lanois, 1960s.

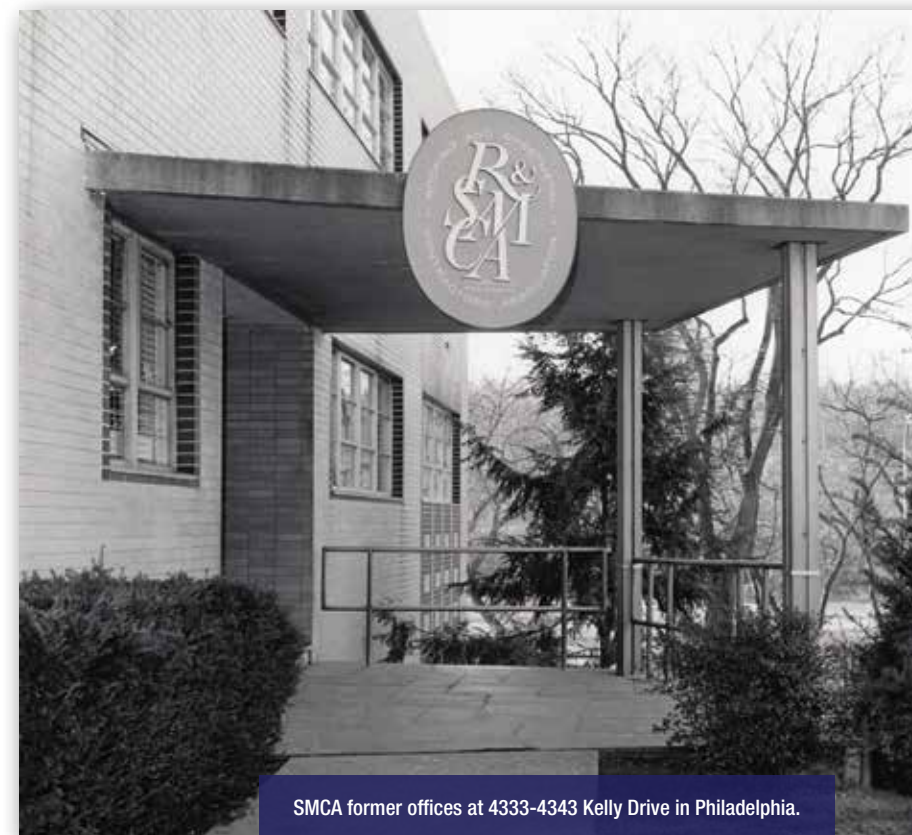
SMCA/RSMCA OFFICE LOCATIONS

SMCA of Philadelphia held its first meetings beginning in 1919 at the [Building Exchange](#) at 18 South 7th Street in the city. Beginning the following year, however, the Association moved around often, first to [The Hotel Adelphia](#) at Chestnut and 13th streets and then to the [Hanover Hotel](#) at 12th and Arch streets. In the 1940s, RSMCA used the [Master Carpenters and Builders Company](#) at 152A Locust Street for meetings, which was succeeded by [Jesse's Restaurant](#) at 22nd and Walnut streets through the late 1940s.

In the early 1950s, the Association established an office at [1900 Arch Street](#) in Philadelphia. By the early 1970s, it had relocated to a new location in a suite at [1845 Walnut Street](#) in the city.

Then in 1973, RSMCA purchased a building of its own at [4333-4343 Kelly Drive](#) for its administrative offices and training space. After more than 20 years in that location, the recently renamed SMCA moved on October 1, 1995, to Lee Park (a former Lee Tire Company office and manufacturing plant) at [1100 East Hector Street](#), Suite 185, in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

SMCA officially moved into its current office headquarters at [955 Louis Drive](#) in Warminster, Pennsylvania, in early 2018. The office features a state-of-the-art classroom that allows the Association to conduct education and safety programs on the premises.



SMCA former offices at 4333-4343 Kelly Drive in Philadelphia.

No. 19 in a May 26, 1939, letter for a wage increase and instead responded that "due to conditions ... a decrease would be in order." Subsequently, that September, the Association and the union agreed on a new wage scale of \$1.50 per hour effective September 1, 1939, for all new contracts, and a special rate of \$1.40 per hour for all work contracted before that date and effective until January 1, 1940, after which that special hourly rate would increase to \$1.42-1/2 before again increasing to \$1.50 on June 1, 1940.

THE 1940s

PARTNERS WITH THE ROOFING INDUSTRY

In its most dramatic effort to date to bolster its position within the construction industry, SMCA formally merged with the Roofing Contractors' Association and the Slate Roofing Contractors' Association on April 15, 1940. The new **Roofing and Sheet Metal Contractors' Association of Philadelphia**



SMCA current offices at 955 Louis Drive in Warminster, Pennsylvania.

and Vicinity (RSMCA) held its first meeting that day in the office of the Master Carpenters and Builders Company on Locust Street in Philadelphia – and it would remain together until 1990, when the two trade groups would split and the SMCA would be re-established.

The new RSMCA by-laws stated in part that the purposes of the Association were to “foster and promote the business interests of those engaged in the (1) composition roofing and waterproofing business; (2) the slate and tile roofing business; (3) the sheet metal and roofing contracting business; and (4) the sheet-metal ventilation business in the City of Philadelphia and its vicinity.” Other provisos of purpose included establishing “just and equitable principles of trade and maintaining uniformity in the letting of contracts in connection with said businesses;” acquiring, preserving and disseminating “accurate and reliable business information as to all matters affecting its members;” and securing

“harmony uniformity and certainty in the relations between employers and employees and said businesses.”

To those ends, the RSMCA further provided that each group it represented were to elect a three-member Arbitration Committee that would “handle all (relative) matters arising between members of the Association and organized labor.”

Of course, one of the Association’s primary focuses continued to be managing its relationship with Sheet Metal Workers Local No. 19. Additionally, at that time and for the next 50 years, it would also attend to the **Slate and Tile Roofers Local No. 113** and **Composition Roofers Local No. 30** of the United Slate, Tile and Composition Roofers, Damp and Waterproof Workers Association – and RSMCA created three committees to each deal with the respective trade represented by its contractors: sheet metal workers, slag roofers, and slate and tile roofers.



Attendees for an RSMCA Balancing and Adjustment School beginning in September 1968 include Bud Carominico (seated, far left), instructor William G. Eads, P.E. (seated, second from left) and George Gardner (seated, far right).

Even through contractors on March 3, 1941, voted to postpone any additional negotiations with Local No. 19 over a new contract “since the demands of the union were so far different from the position of the Association,” the two sides would come together on an agreement. That year, with work picking up as the nation strengthened its military while **World War II** was already raging on other continents, RSMCA and the union were able to consummate a new contract in May providing for a \$1.50-per-hour wage scale.

In October, however, RSMCA rejected a request by the slag roofers’ union for an increase in wages before their contract expired “due to the fact that it would establish a precedent of opening up agreements before their expiration dates and cause demands to be made by other unions,” the Association declared during its October 6, 1941, meeting.

After the United States officially entered the Second World War following the December 7, 1941, Japanese attack on the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, RSMCA took part in the war efforts as much of the country’s manufacturing and construction industries were converted for wartime production. During the war, Association members were involved in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, where military ships were constructed at a record pace, including the large, modern battleships U.S.S. New Jersey and U.S.S. Wisconsin.

Early in 1942, RSMCA also participated in the formation of the **Associated General Contractors Council** and assisted in developing its rules and by-laws. The Association officially joined the Council with a vote during its April 20, 1942 meeting, resolving to “be governed by its recommendations and suggestions regarding all matters properly within its jurisdiction.”

But as the war continued and escalated into 1943, by late that year, the union sheet metal industry experienced an “acute” shortage of skilled mechanics. In that situation, while

RSMCA President **Walter H. Tinney** resigned his position in May 1942 after he was called into active duty as a captain in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II.

Local No. 19 had applied to the U.S. Wage Adjustment Board for an increase in its hourly rate, which RSMCA opposed, the contractors during their November 8 meeting unanimously voted to “adhere strictly to the terms of the agreement and do nothing that would injure the Association’s position in its relation with Local 19.”

The sheet metal employers and employees did reach a new agreement in early 1945 that provided the union workers with a new, \$1.72-1/2-per-hour rate. The pact also included a supplemental addendum by which RSMCA agreed to raise the rate to \$1.75 per hour “at a definite time after the cessation of hostilities with Germany.”

Before the war ended in September 1945, RSMCA also took action against the U.S. Navy, after it proposed to have its own men perform roofing maintenance and repairs on Navy facilities in and around Philadelphia without seeking general bids.

After World War II and into the second half of the 1940s, a sharp increase in construction also resulted in a dramatic increase in RSMCA membership. Likewise, the need for skilled union sheet metal workers also escalated, and in an initial response to that dilemma, the Association in November 1945 reported to the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council that it was willing to reopen the current agreement “and make satisfactory revisions in the wage rate.”

But during that time, RSMCA still had to adhere to decisions of the Wage Adjustment Board. In one particular board “adverse” judgement in December 1945, as the Association’s December



Past RSMCA President William C. Kulzer (right) receives a President Plaque for his service from RSMCA President William J. Knecht, circa 1969.

10, 1945, meeting minutes describe it, its members had to cease paying a \$1.65-per-hour rate – but the contractors approved a motion to “cooperate with the union to try to get the rate approved eventually.”

For the balance of the second half of the decade, RSMCA spent a large amount of time discussing and debating agreements, through their respective negotiating committees, with the sheet metal and roofing local unions. In May 1947, for instance, the Sheet Metal Committee offered Local No. 19 a rate of \$2.10 per hour, which represented a maximum increase allowed under an existing formula devised by the Building and Construction Contractors’ Council. The Composition Roofing Committee offered Local No. 30 a 5-cent-per-hour raise that was rejected by the union, and the Slate and Tile Roofing Committee offered a new \$2.10-per-hour rate to Local No. 113, which had been on strike and agreed to return to work with the new scale.

Meanwhile, RSMCA during its May 5, 1947, meeting advised its member contractors that it “needed full cooperation on the part of every member of the Association” and cautioned them “not to sign separate agreements” with the unions. As a result, negotiations were, at times, contentious – even to the point at which during the RSMCA general meeting of June 3, 1947, it held a secret ballot of its sheet metal employers in which each wrote on a sheet of paper “the highest rate to which he thought the committee should agree.”

Also that year, the federal government on June 23, 1947, passed the **Labor Management Relations Act of 1947**, also known as the **Taft-Hartley Act**, that amended the 1935 National Labor Relations Act to prohibit unions from engaging in six perceived “unfair labor practices.” These included amendments that imposed on unions the same obligation to bargain in good faith that the N.L.R.A. placed on employers and that prohibited secondary boycotts against neutral employers during a dispute with another employer. Subsequently, RSMCA would be required to ensure its contracts were in compliance with the act.

Meanwhile, RSMCA took definitive action that year to stop jurisdiction disputes between unions that resulted in work stoppages, which in the past had adversely affected many of its contractors’ projects. To that end, the Association urged its members to write to their congressmen and senators to inform them that RSMCA was in favor of a ban on jurisdictional strikes.

The contractors also continued to advance their relationship with the unions; in doing so, during the late 1940s, RSMCA contractors established a **Welfare Fund** for union employees into which it paid hourly stipends for a health-insurance benefit for members of the sheet metal workers union.

THE 1950s

TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SERVICE

By the 1950s, RSMCA had begun to take on a more social and educational mission. With that evolving purpose, the Association’s meetings were providing instruction on topics such as how to run an effective contracting company, and its contractor members were better-supporting improved labor-management relations and began financing training programs for employees in order to keep them up-to-date with modern technology.

To further evolve its new direction, RSMCA even formed a committee for “reactivating” the organization. During the Association’s December 4, 1951, meeting, that committee even recommended that RSMCA “make a new start and reorganize along more active lines and then engage the services of a full-time secretary.”

Meanwhile, RSMCA authorized a new agreement with Local No. 19 that would run from December 1, 1950, to April 30, 1952. It would provide an hourly wage scale of \$2.57-1/2 April 30, 1951, and then a scale of \$2.75; in addition, the pact provided a 7-1/2-cent-per-hour contribution from contractors for each hour worked by the local’s members into the union’s new Welfare Fund.

Then on January 6, 1954, RSMCA created a new **Advisory Board** through an amendment to its by-laws that was unanimously adopted by the membership on January 26. The board, which would have equal power and voice as the Board of Directors, would consist of past presidents so that the Association would continue to have their “advice and counsel.”

Industry standards and regulations that would benefit their contractor members also garnered more attention from the Association during that period as well. For instance, during the mid-1950s, the organization gave considerable discussion and action to roofing

SMCA

MELVIN J. WIND AWARD RECIPIENTS

Named in honor of past RSMCA president Melvin J. Wind, the award recognizes an individual’s contributions to the sheet metal industry.

William C. Kulzer 1981	Bobby D. Roaten 1999
Robert W. Donovan 1981	Michael J. McGee Sr. 2001
Oscar Hershman 1982	Dietrich Rose, P.E. 2002
William J. Knecht 1982	D. Robert Buccini, P.E. 2003
Daniel J. Driscoll 1983	Elmer M. Knapp 2004
Ernest R. Menold, Ph.D., P.E. 1984	Robert J. Kryszczak 2006
Frank P. Manfredonia 1985	John A. Burke 2007
John L. Hughes Jr. 1986	William F. Reardon, CAE 2008
James M. Foley 1987	Richard J. Borradaile 2009
William Hamada 1989	Ernest J. Menold, P.E. 2010
Joseph H. Shaw 1990	Roger Hofmann 2012
Samuel Levitt 1991	Vincent Del Vacchio 2014
Seymour S. Cohen 1995	Thomas DeMusis 2017
William G. Eads, P.E. 1997	Matthew Sano 2018
Edmund J. Bransfield 1998	

and re-roofing guarantees, working with local architects through its Architects Committee to create a “Proposed Guarantee Limits,” which the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.) approved in May 1956. The limits for Roofing Sheet Metal Work, Slate Roofing and Waterproofing, which the A.I.A. forwarded to each of its members

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FORMED IN 1940s

The Sheet Metal Contractors National Association was established and chartered in New York State in 1943 as a non-profit national organization. RSMCA of Philadelphia sent a delegate, William J. Donovan, to a convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1945 when the “new” National Association was officially formed.

In 1956, the organization changed its name to Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) to capitalize on the growing public interest in air conditioning. The following year, RSMCA accepted the SMACNA charter as its chapter in Philadelphia.

SMACNA Executive Secretary J. D. Wilder attended an RSMCA meeting on October 21, 1958, to “welcome” the Philadelphia chapter into the National Association.

with a recommendation that they be “governed accordingly in writing specifications on future work,” included a maximum two-year guarantee against leaks and defects in workmanship for sheet metal work.

There was also discussion within RSMCA during the second half of the 1950s on the possibility of the three unions with which it was dealing combining into one union. While Association members felt such a merger would produce a more efficient system of negotiating contracts, an amalgamation was never effected by the unions.

During that time, RSMCA members also agreed to provide Local No. 19 with the recently established **Sheet Metal Workers' Pension Fund of Southeastern Pennsylvania**, which was included in a new contract that went into effect on May 1, 1956. As a provision of that agreement, employing contractors would pay 10 cents per hour worked by the local's members into the pension fund.

Among additional actions and duties performed by RSMCA as it continued to develop and bolster its operations toward

serving its membership, in 1959 the Association took on the issue of adopting a Construction Bidding Practices Code of Greater Philadelphia. After RSMCA provided its members with a thorough explanation of the code and a venue in which to discuss it thoroughly during its May 19, 1959, meeting, the membership voted that day to approve of the Code.

In a sign that its members were taking to the RSMCA's extended outreach, its 1959 **annual golf outing** held on June 17 had hosted an “all-time high” of 198 members and guests for the event's dinner.

Among ongoing activities to benefit its membership that year, the Association also created a committee that would attend a demonstration that September on three power-actuated tools for the sheet metal industry and report back to the body on the presentation. What's more, by the end of the decade, the RSMCA and its union partners were operating three different training schools four evenings a week.

THE 1960s MAKING ADVANCES TO BENEFIT ALL

Into the next decade, RSMCA and Local No. 19 continued working to bolster and promote the union sheet metal industry in and around Philadelphia; to that end, in early 1960, the **Industry Fund of the Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Philadelphia and Vicinity** was created. The majority of the Association's Board of Directors voted during its January 17, 1961, meeting that the program would be subsidized by a 2-cent hourly contribution as part of the new collective-bargaining agreement to be signed in 1963, and RSMCA declared that all non-Association contractors would automatically be subject to its conditions.

As a result, during the decade and into the decades to come, promotional literature on training and recruitment would constantly

be distributed to schools and qualified young people. Additionally, educational materials would become a part of a continuing communications program for architects, engineers and contractors, and labor-management relations would take up a major portion of the Association's functions.

Notably, while deliberating that fund during the meeting, RSMCA also discussed “the protection of the union's vacation, pension and welfare funds,” after which the Association's trustees “urged all members to cooperate by advising them of any information or circumstances which would be helpful to them.”

The following year, RSMCA took an even greater step in its efforts to sustain and advance its evolving mission while striving to keep pace with ever-changing economic and political environments when on April 18, 1961, its member contractors signed a **Declaration of Trust** that set up its **industry advancement programs**. Those programs involved a more-intense focus on education, research and experimentation to “formulate high quality standards of sheet metal and roofing construction” – in order to demonstrate RSMCA's continuity of purpose of improving

the roofing and sheet metal industry to the best of its contractors' collective ability.

At their singular core, the industry advancement programs were a “formulation of uniform sheet metal and roofing specifications and high quality standards of sheet metal and roofing construction,” as well as a means to create and improve state and municipal codes and other programs that would “provide safe, adequate and improved sheet metal and roofing work.” Additionally, the programs would compel RSMCA to study and make recommendations “with respect to the establishment of uniform practices for the improvement of the industry” and to encourage and promote “trade practices that would eliminate unfair competition and/or the exploitation of the roofing and sheet metal industry.”

Meanwhile, RSMCA also increased its political activity during the 1960s, as several pieces of legislation that would affect the roofing and sheet metal industries were introduced at state and national levels. For instance, during its August 13, 1968, meeting, the Association approved appropriating \$3,000 “for expenses of the **Mechanical Trades Industry Committee** in promotion of favorable legislative action on a state level.”



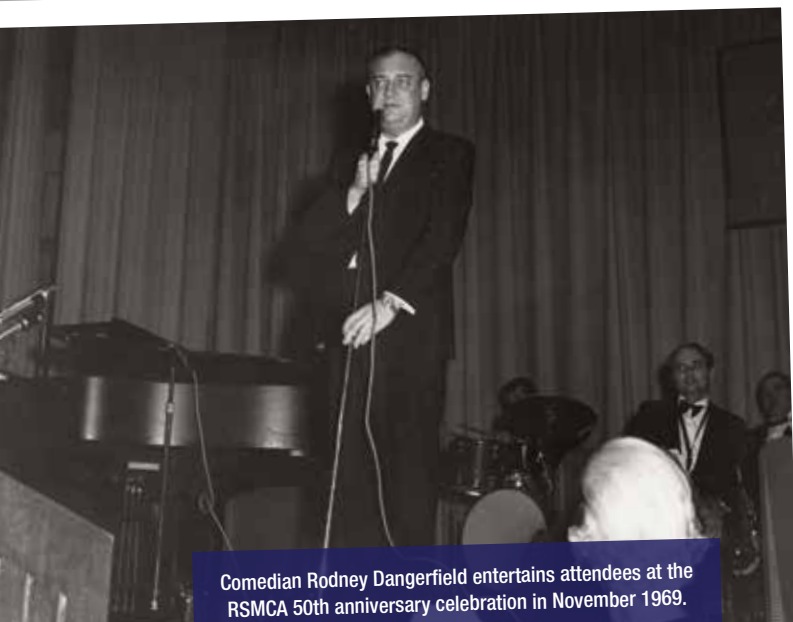
Members and guests enjoy the RSMCA 50th anniversary celebration in November 1969.



Importantly, during that racially charged decade in which affirmative action was introduced on a national level, RSMCA and Local No. 19 supported the **Philadelphia Plan**, a federal government order implemented in 1969 that required federal contractors to meet certain goals for hiring minority employees in order to combat alleged discrimination by specific building trades unions. Subsequently, on

January 19, 1969, the Association's sheet metal contractors and the union signed an agreement of understanding that "commits the Roofing and Sheet Metal Contractors Association and Local 19, Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, to cooperate with the (Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations) in efforts to eliminate job discrimination," according to the next day's *Inquirer*.

The pact was specifically designed to spur recruiting and hiring of blacks and Puerto Ricans in the sheet metal trade. It required that advertisements for employees would be composed to reflect the integrated nature of a company's work force, and when journeymen, apprentices or limited apprentices are sought, ads would be placed in ethnic newspapers as well as in newspapers of general circulation, according to the *Inquirer*. What's more, each employer and the union were required to designate separate officers to serve as Equal Opportunity Employment Coordinators "to assure that non-discriminatory hiring practices are followed."



Comedian Rodney Dangerfield entertains attendees at the RSMCA 50th anniversary celebration in November 1969.



RSMCA Executive Director Thomas A. Armstrong (left) poses with comedian Rodney Dangerfield (right) during the Association's 50th anniversary celebration in November 1969.



Members enjoy an RSMCA Christmas reception in 1969.

Additionally, employers and the union also agreed to "guide, counsel, and encourage employees who possess basic qualifications and aptitudes to participate in advancement training programs, solely on the basis of qualification skills," the newspaper reported. The RSMCA also agreed to prepare brochures and other aides through its Industry Advancement Program that described employment opportunities "for presentation to students in vocational, public and private schools," according to the newspaper. The association also promised to take other steps to "promote interest in the sheet metal trade, and to make jobs in the trade available to qualified applicants of all races."

(Nearly half a decade later, the government would extend the Philadelphia Plan in December 1973 after the sheet metal workers were one of two trades that fell short of its minority goals, with minority workers accounting for only 12 percent of the total manhours worked in the sheet metal trade, according to a report in the

December 28, 1973, Inquirer. At that time, RSMCA Executive Director Thomas Armstrong expressed in the newspaper the belief of Association contractors that voluntary programs to increase minority employment would work better than the Philadelphia Plan. "It's our honest opinion that the Philadelphia Plan should have been eliminated," he said. "The plan hasn't been as effective as we feel it should have been. I guess it's just a basic philosophical thing with many people that if you're going to impose something on them they won't work as hard on it as if it's voluntary.")

When RSMCA reached its 50th anniversary in November 1969, it could already look back on a growing legacy of commitment to its members and industry while also showcasing its ability and willingness to change with the times. By then, for example, among the many programs it offered its contractor members, the Association had just put a new **Supervisory Training Program** in place and it also had been operating a two-year **Sheet Metal Sketchers** course.

What's more, at 50 years, RSMCA boasted an impressive roster of projects on which its member contractors had worked over the previous five decades, including many of the city's most iconic and endearing structures, such as the beginnings of **Veterans Stadium**, the current **U.S. Mint** facility built in 1969 and countless structures for the region's many universities. Some of the other seemingly innumerable projects included the terminal building at **Philadelphia International Airport**; Philadelphia's **Municipal Services Building**; the built-up roofing system of the **Villanova University Falvey Memorial Library**; the **Nabisco** Philadelphia plant; **Bucks County Community College**; the **Temple University Biology-Life Science Building**; the **Honeywell** factory in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania; the **Federal Reserve Bank** in Philadelphia; and the **Socony Vacuum Lab** in Paulsboro, New Jersey.

RSMCA contributions and commitments allowed Administrator Bygott Jr. to unequivocally declare in the Association's 50th anniversary newsletter, "Through the past five decades of its existence, true strides have been made in the Roofing & Sheet Metal industry."

THE 1970s

NEXT-LEVEL LABOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS

With the City of Philadelphia in the process of major urban renewal efforts as it entered the 1970s, RSMCA began its second half-century as an important contributor to the city's continuing growth.

The Association was funding its own continued development at the time as well. Those outlays included operation of all of its training programs, such as sketching school; testing and balancing; executive management seminars; and safety, roofing and architectural programs.



Instructor Raymond Burchacki teaches during an RSMCA School for Sketchers, circa 1970.



RSMCA Board of Directors, circa 1970 (left to right): Oscar Hershman, Richard Peabody, Raymond P. Ecker, Robert C. Linck, William J. Knecht, Robert W. Donovan, Ralph E. Cooney, George H. Duross, John C. Decker and Henry J. Bygott Jr. (RSMCA Executive Director).

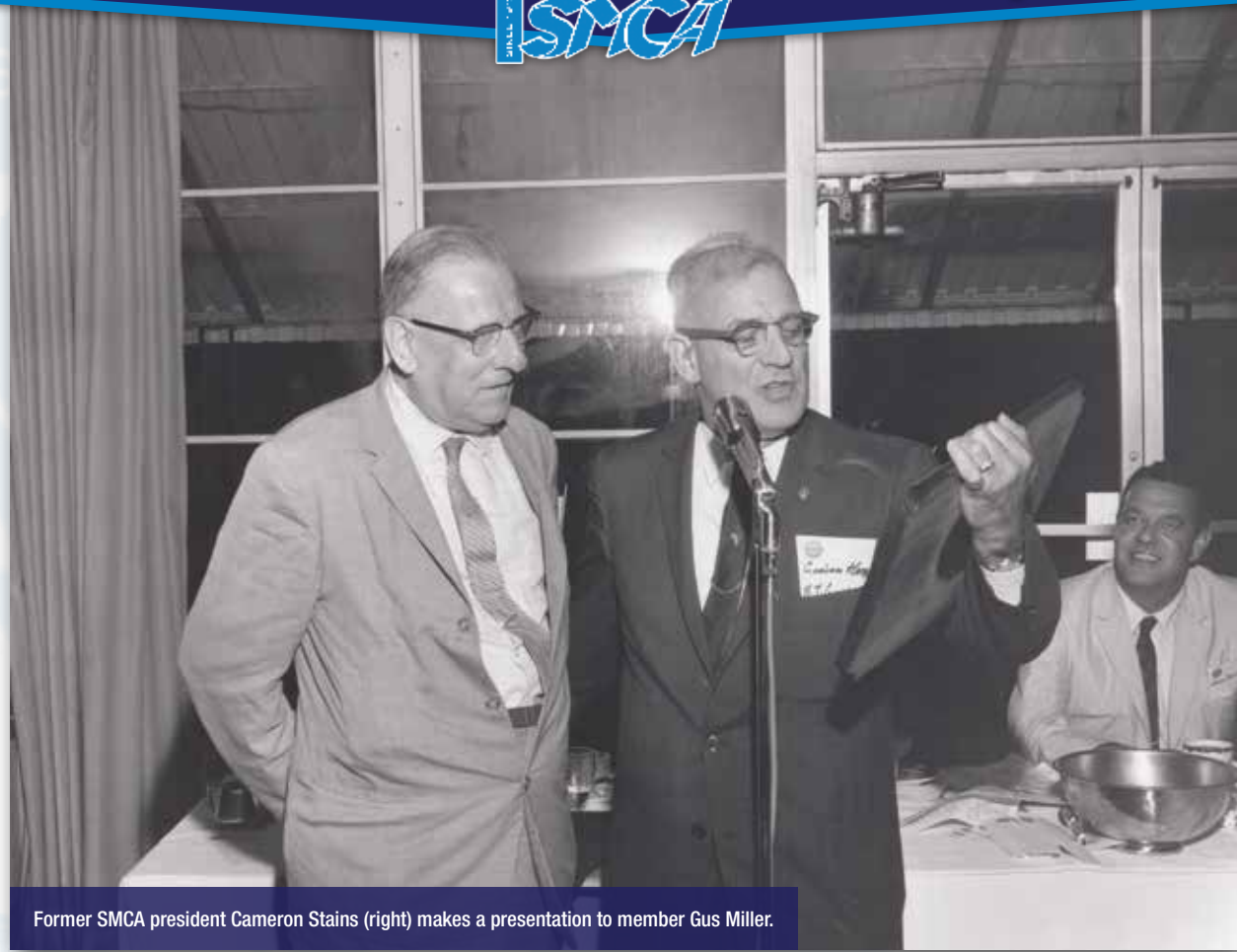
But an increasing number of jurisdictional disputes between the United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association was becoming an issue for the union sheet metal industry during the early 1970s. In response, RSMCA in December 1970 outlined procedural steps to be taken by contractor members in the case of such clashes, which could involve correspondence between the RSMCA and the international unions, communications to the National Joint Board and injunctive proceedings with the National Labor Relations Board.

To further help support its cause and provide service to the sheet metal industry, RSMCA representatives participated in the initial organizational meeting for the establishment of the **Pennsylvania State Association of Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors**. Held December 2, 1970, representatives from Pittsburgh and central Pennsylvania also worked to launch the new organization in 1971.

That year, RSMCA launched its first-ever **advertising and promotional campaign** under its new **Public Relations and Advertising Committee**. The crusade, which included radio advertising and employee newsletters, was deemed successful by the Association after it received more than 35 direct calls in



RSMCA Vice President Robert E. Linck (left) and President William J. Knecht present a portrait of former President Robert C. Linck to the Association in 1970.



Former SMCA president Cameron Stains (right) makes a presentation to member Gus Miller.

its offices as a result. Despite a cut in funding to the committee, in 1972 it still ran a series of ads in various publications throughout the year and completed an educational brochure that was used during enrollment for that year's training programs.

Those included an **Effective Communications** course for its member contractors, which RSMCA also began in 1971.

Two years later, RSMCA purchased two new buildings on East River Drive Philadelphia in February 1973 to serve as its new offices and training facility. The Association passed a resolution approving the purchase on February 27 at a price was \$487,500, and improvements to the buildings would amount to an additional \$74,000.

But a lingering recession prolonged issues RSMCA and its contractors had faced in 1972



Apprenticeship Training Committee RSMCA representatives Oscar Hershman (left) and Cameron F. Stains, who served as chairman of the committee.

into 1973. However, the Board of Directors remained committed to planned expansion plans for the new year, including a raise in the Industry Fund budget from \$260,000 to \$353,000. This substantial portion of the Association's expenditures would allow it to continue and enhance activities in labor-management relations, of which meetings and administrative expenses involved in contract negotiations with locals 113, 30 and 19 made up the major portion.

RSMCA was still to take on many issues it would attempt to solve through internal statutes and programs as well as working with and through federal, state and local legislatures. In July 1973, for instance, the trustees of its Industry Fund adopted a policy for handling problems that arise from time to time in the

roofing and sheet metal industry. With it, the trustees decreed, "It is the policy of the Industry Fund, in order to carry out the purposes for which it was created, to engage and pay for activities that will promote the general welfare of the roofing and sheet metal industry." Those stipulations included the payment of legal expenses in jurisdictional disputes or discrimination issues resulting from the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Also that year, RSMCA took part in inaugurating the **Delaware Valley Environmental Balancing Bureau**, which ultimately became a local chapter of the National Environmental Balancing Bureau (N.E.B.B.). Through the certificate program, a firm would be certified to test, balance and adjust air and hydronic systems by meeting specific requirements established by the N.E.B.B.



Past RSMCA presidents and an executive director gather on December 18, 1974.



Sitting at the head table during the RSMCA Annual Awards Dinner held at the Riverside East Restaurant on November 21, 1978, are (left to right) Bob Shispinski, Ernest R. Menold, Oscar Hershman, Tom Armstrong, Melvin Wind, guest speaker City of Philadelphia Representative Joseph La Sala and roofers union representative Frank Manfredonia.

But on May 1 the following year, the 1,500 members of Sheet Metal Workers Local No. 19 went on strike for the first time in 53 years for 11 weeks after the union failed to come to an agreement on a new contract with RSMCA. A major issue in the dispute was the contractors' refusal to include in their contract offer a national program of under-employment benefits known as SASMI - the Stabilization

Agreement for the Sheet Metal Industry.

During the work stoppage, interest-free loans were made available through funds from contractors from across the country to RSMCA members affected by the strike, which disrupted work on at least 35 large construction projects in Philadelphia, according to the June 26, 1974, *Inquirer*. The longest major work stoppage in the Delaware Valley region, it was finally ended on July 14 when the two sides reached a settlement.

Following the prolonged strike and with non-union competition on a seemingly unabated rise, the following year the two sides agreed to a new, three-year contract in April 1975 that would provide annual increases that would raise the Local No. 19 total package of wages and fringe benefits from \$12.11 per hour to \$14.31 per hour. In addition, the union roofers also made concessions with the RSMCA in contract negotiations that month.



RSMCA members (left to right) John Huckler, Melvin Wind and Phil Glasner, 1974.



RSMCA member Robert Linck speaks with City of Philadelphia Representative Joseph La Sala during the Association's Annual Awards Dinner on November 21, 1978.

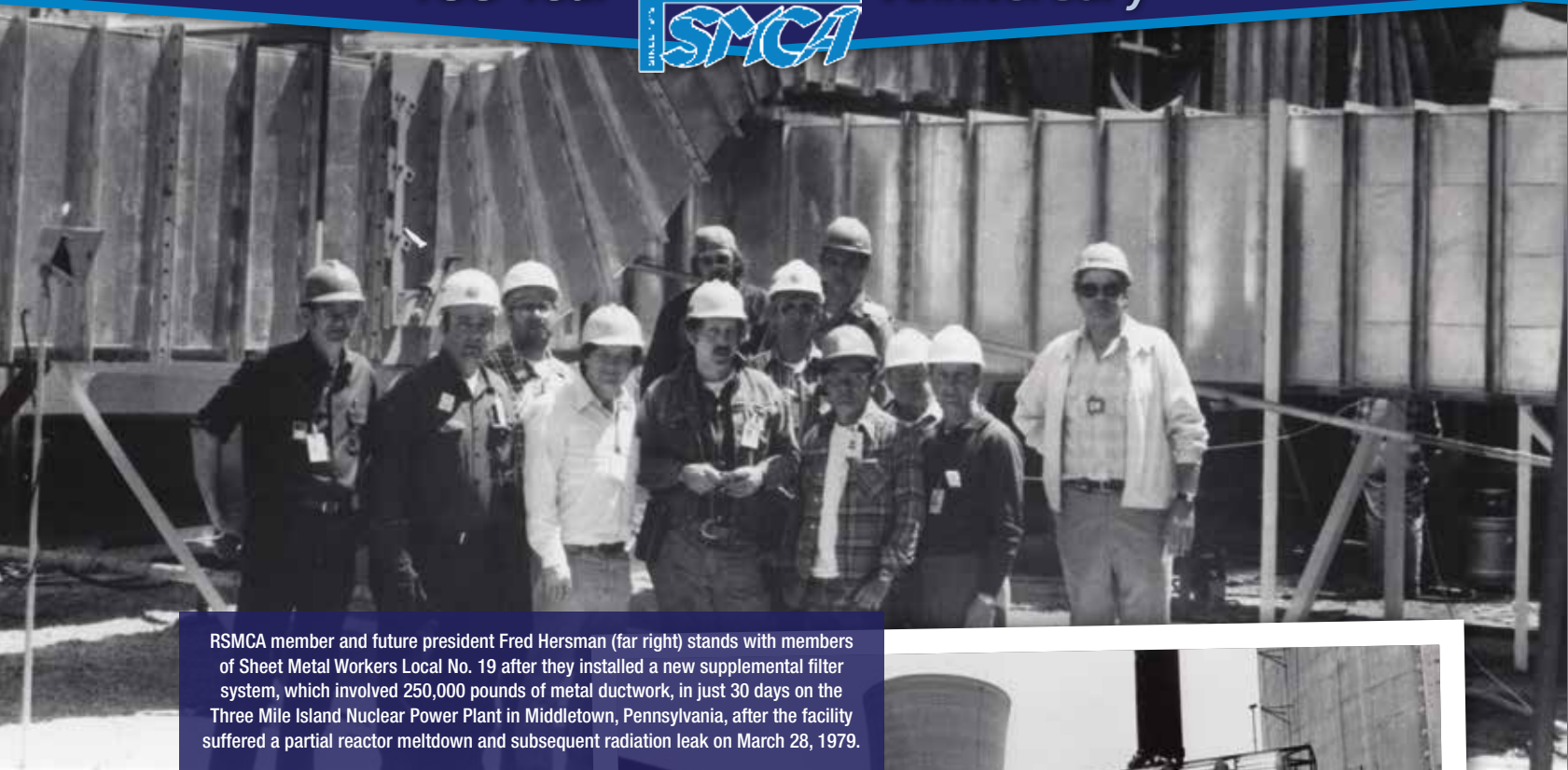
"The trend so far has been conciliatory," RSMCA Executive Director Armstrong told the April 19, 1975, *Inquirer*. "The (union members) are aware of the tremendous competition they're having with the non-union segment of this industry."

RSMCA jointly sponsored a program along with Sheet Metal Workers Local Union No. 19 in 1979 that created the first female pre-apprenticeship training in sheet-metal working. That October, five women were selected to participate in the program, for which they were paid \$5 per hour while undergoing 52 weeks of on-the-job training under the industry's Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee; those women were Minnie E. Lott, Carol A. Henry, Bonnie Sue Shaw, Deborah Cheeseman and Mary Lou Nolan.

When the Roofers Local No. 30 contract was set to expire three years later, its contractors and the union settled on a new, three-year agreement on April 18, 1978, that would give the local's 1,000 roofers an average 50-cent-per-hour raise in each year of the pact. (The contract was similar to agreements reached earlier that week by 20 other construction unions, including the sheet metal workers, the April 29 *Inquirer* reported.)



Future SMCA Board of Directors member Tom DeMusis (center) receives the "Outstanding Apprentice" award for HVAC in the graduating class of the Sheet Metal Workers Joint Apprenticeship Committee of Philadelphia and Vicinity program in 1978.



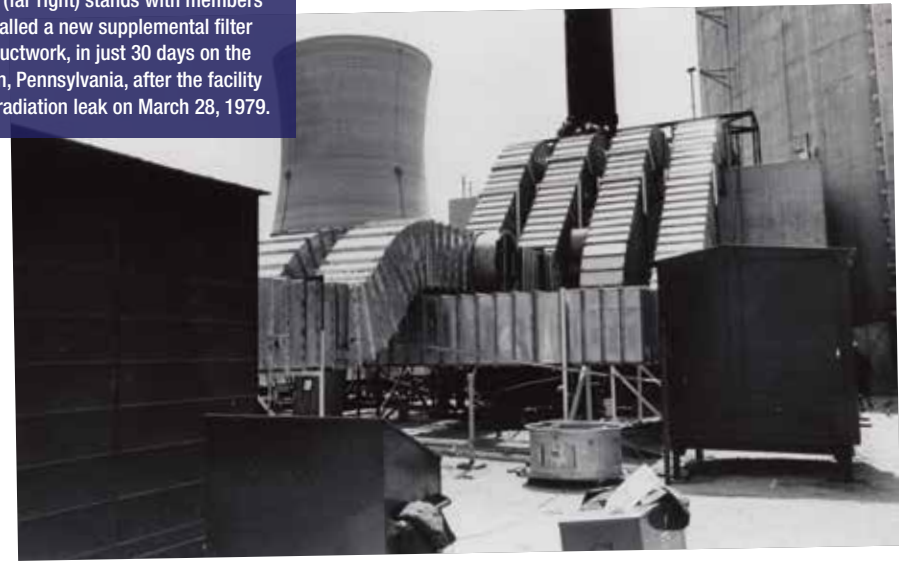
RSMCA member and future president Fred Hersman (far right) stands with members of Sheet Metal Workers Local No. 19 after they installed a new supplemental filter system, which involved 250,000 pounds of metal ductwork, in just 30 days on the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant in Middletown, Pennsylvania, after the facility suffered a partial reactor meltdown and subsequent radiation leak on March 28, 1979.

The balance of the decade was positive for the RSMCA and its contractors. In fact, in the first 10 months of 1978, Association members recorded 250,000 more manhours than they did for the same period in 1977 in the roofing division, and they recorded 130,000 more hours worked in the sheet metal division for 1978 over 1977 during the same periods.

THE 1980s

MEETING CHALLENGES TO GAIN WORK

Despite an increasingly contentious relationship between RSMCA contractors and the unions they employed, the Association's members enjoyed fairly strong business during the first half of the 1980s. This was due in large part to the two power plants that were built during the decade within the Philadelphia region – **Limerick Generating Station** in Limerick Township, Pennsylvania, and **Hope Creek Nuclear**



Generating Station in Lower Alloways Creek Township, New Jersey – providing a major source of steady employment.

However, RSMCA **Combined Industry Affairs Committee** expressed concerns during the Association's November 17, 1981, meeting about increasing non-union competition in the local construction market (an ominous foreshadowing). What's more, the committee also held a special meeting the following day to discuss union versus non-union construction costs, including cost penalties and manpower supply and utilization.



RSMCA members (left to right) Ernest R. Menold, Joseph Shaw and David Shaw enjoy the Association's holiday reception in December 1987.

Ever-increasing healthcare costs were also straining contractors at the time, and in 1984, the RSMCA announced its Health & Welfare Fund anticipated a deficit. The Association subsequently held "constructive discussions" to develop a conservative plan to reduce the premium paid for health care, after which its Board of Directors strongly supported cost-reduction and alternative procedures for maintaining a healthcare benefit.

As the 1980s progressed, job recovery to create employment opportunities became an even greater focus of RSMCA and Local No. 19. As such, a committee from the Association held an Architectural Meeting with the union in December 1986 during which the local's leadership stated that the union would "do anything to legally make (RSMCA) contractors competitive in metal decking." The two sides would meet again in that setting in the new year to explore that and further possibilities.

A Local No. 19 Task Force meeting that month also focused on job search and recovery, with committees from both sides even

discussing and considering hiring a part-time employee who would seek out and search all work let in Philadelphia and vicinity, with specific emphasis on projects let to non-union contractors.

In the increasingly more-volatile employment environment of the mid-1980s, RSMCA roofing contractors provided a "concessionary" contract to Roofers Local 30 in 1986, which provided a \$1.20-per-hour total wage-and-benefits increase over a three-year period.

Then when the real estate bust hit Philadelphia and the nation in 1987 and 1988, conditions became extremely difficult on the sheet metal and roofing industries. As a result, while RSMCA contractors struggled, non-union contractors began to take substantial projects that should have been done by union contractors.

Regardless, RSMCA and Local No. 30 did sign a new, four-year contract on May 1, 1989, that would increase wages and benefits for the local's 2,000 members by a total of \$6.50 per hour over the life of the pact – a markedly improved settlement over the previous contract.



RSMCA members (seated, left to right) Jack Hughes and Jim Foley and (standing) Samuel Levitt, Bill Hamock, Frank Vernonski Sr. and Ernest R. Menold attend the Association's Dinner Dance in 1987.

TRAINING A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

As early as 1920, SMCA had an Apprenticeship Committee that oversaw the training of its contractors' apprentices who were working to become journeyman sheet metal workers. However, no formal sheet-metal curriculum was in place at that time, and apprentices learned solely on the job while working side-by-side with journeymen – and no structured, classroom-augmented apprentice training program existed within the Philadelphia sheet metal industry for the next nearly two decades.

Sheet Metal Workers Local Union No. 19 began its first off-site training program in 1937, with which the unionized sheet metal industry initially formalized standards for instruction and educational objectives of apprentices. The local appointed its first Apprenticeship Committee in 1946 after the National Apprenticeship and Training Standards for the Sheet Metal Industry were established; subsequently, RSMCA and Local No. 19 established their [Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee \(J.A.T.C.\)](#), which would oversee and jointly fund the training programs of the unionized sheet metal industry within Philadelphia and vicinity. (*The Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association – SMACNA – and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association – SMWIA – formally approved the National Joint Apprentice & Training Committee in 1958.*)

Meanwhile, after SMCA merged with the roofing contractors in 1940, RSMCA also created a Roofing Apprenticeship Committee to administer the training of roofing apprentices alongside the local unions of the United Slate, Tile and Composition Roofers, Damp and Waterproof Workers Association. In November 1955, after reviewing the union's National Roofers Apprenticeship Standards, the committee recommended to the RSMCA that it work with Roofers locals No. 30 and No. 113 to set up an apprenticeship program "as soon as possible."

In April 1956, the RSMCA released the [Roofing Apprentice Standards](#) that were prepared by the apprenticeship committees of the Association and the roofers union locals to set criteria "covering the employment and training of apprentices in the roofing industry. A key to that mission was establishment of a Composition Roofers Joint Apprenticeship Committee with equal representation from RSMCA roofing contractors and Local No. 30, and a Slate and Tile Roofers Joint Apprenticeship Committee with equal representation from RSMCA roofing contractors and Local No. 113.

The Association and its partner roofing local unions would cooperatively operate and fund the roofing training program until the roofing contractors of RSMCA departed the Association in 1990.

Beginning in 1973, the joint union sheet metal workers training program was housed in the RSMCA headquarters building on Kelly Drive in Philadelphia, which the Association had purchased that year. The apprenticeship and training school moved from that location to a new training center on Delaware Avenue on January 1, 1985. While there, among many other accomplishments, in 1999 the J.A.T.C. established a welder's testing facility that was accredited as an American Welding Society test facility.

Since then, the Joint Apprenticeship Program for the Unionized Sheet Metal Industry of Greater Philadelphia has developed into the state-of-the-art [Sheet Metal Workers Local 19 Training Center](#) on South Christopher Columbus Boulevard in Philadelphia. The J.A.T.C., consisting of SMCA employers' and Local No. 19 union representatives, administers and funds a four-and-a-half year, comprehensive training program at the center that develops new employees from entry-level apprentices to journeyman mechanics. The J.A.T.C. also provides many upgrade programs to the local's journeyman-level sheet metal workers so they can improve their skills along with the latest technologies and techniques.



Philadelphia Sheet Metal Joint Apprentice Training and Training Committee apprentice school with instructors Joseph Coates and Matt Roman teaching Sheet Metal Workers Local No. 19 apprentices, circa 1970.



RSMCA members attending the Association's Annual Golf Outing in 1988.



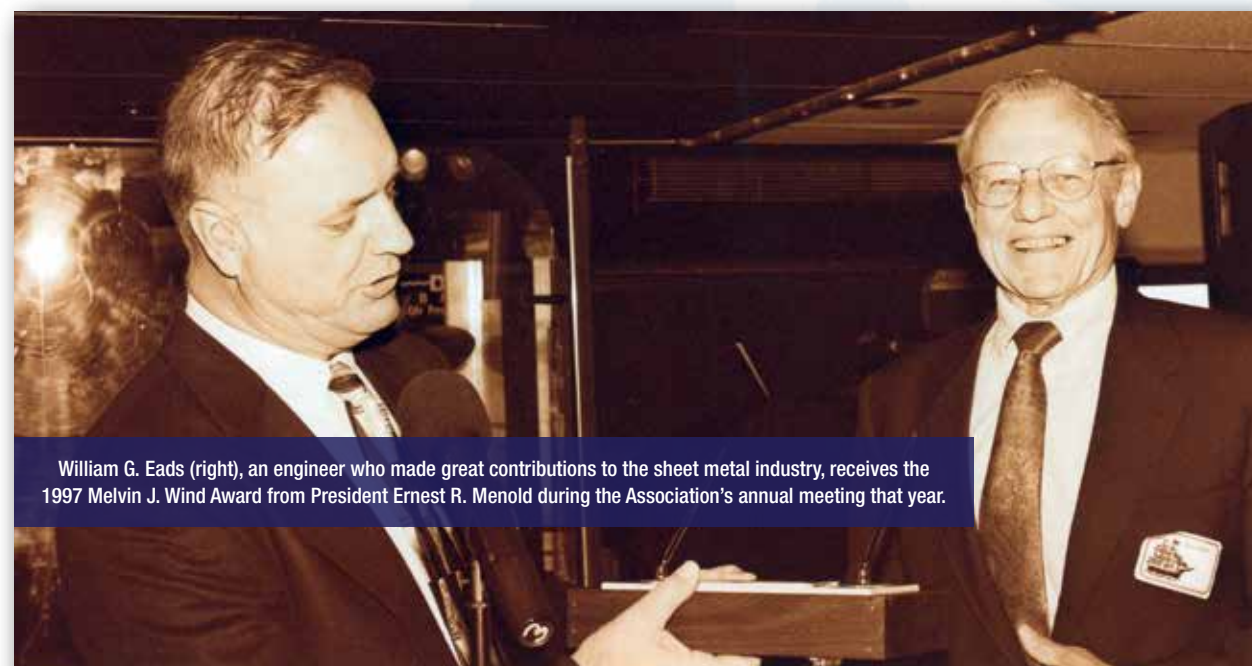
THE 1990s

FOCUS SHIFTS BACK TO SHEET METAL

After the RSMCA Board of Directors endorsed a resolution on September 19, 1989, to authorize a law firm to "proceed with the preparation of appropriate documents needed to effectuate the re-organization of RSMCA into two new associations," after nearly 50 years as a single entity, **the roofing contractors and the sheet metal contractors of RSMCA split in 1990**. On April 17, 1990, the Board of the new sheet metal contractors' organization passed a motion that its name would be **Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Philadelphia and Vicinity (SMCA)**.

Also during that meeting, in addition to adopting an official logo and moving to write new by-laws, the Board agreed to concur with the Executive Committee's recommendation that the sheet metal contractors' contribution into the group's industry fund should be raised by 10 cents per hour worked by their union employees.

As the regional affiliate of the **SMACNA**, SMCA would go on to serve as the management bargaining unit for the Philadelphia-area sheet metal industry and act as custodian of the Sheet Metal Industry Advancement Fund. It would also utilize the industry's funds to promote and strengthen the sheet metal industry through



William G. Eads (right), an engineer who made great contributions to the sheet metal industry, receives the 1997 Melvin J. Wind Award from President Ernest R. Menold during the Association's annual meeting that year.



(Left to right) SMCA representatives Michael McGee and Patricia Kryszczak and Sheet Metal Workers Local No. 19 President Tom Kelly stand with Mayor Ed Rendell during a City of Philadelphia reception at City Hall in 1998.

programs of advertising, contractor education, legislative action, safety awareness programs and technical assistance for member contractors.

In addition, SMCA would maintain important industry relations with a variety of other construction-industry-related trade associations. It would serve as a means of networking for its members with other industry professionals as well.

SMCA would also go on to perform several vital industry functions along with Sheet Metal Workers Local No. 19, including contract negotiations and administration, Joint Adjustment Board, co-trustees of the local's pension and welfare funds and co-participation



SMCA President Ernest R. Menold (left) presents former Philadelphia Eagles football player Vai Sihakema with a gift in appreciation of his addressing the Association's 1998 Supplier Liaison Dinner.

in the sheet metal Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee. What's more, the Association would monitor almost every construction project in the Delaware Valley in order to highlight projects for members to bid – thereby also creating jobs for the union.

One such job in which SMCA member contractors were involved at that time was construction of the new, \$220-million **Philadelphia Convention Center**, which would be completed in 1993.



One of the variety of advertisements used in an SMCA promotional campaign during the 1990s.

After the “new” SMCA got its feet back under itself, in 1991, the Association took important steps toward promoting its professional image and those of its member contractors. First, the Association hired an advertising agency, McAdams, Richman & Ong, to publicize members' experience and dedication to quality. The agency also strengthened the SMCA campaign to market the skills and technical training of its contractors' workers, the members of Local No. 19.



The association also expanded its educational programs that year to offer eight seminars to members – a new high at the time for SMCA. Those programs included a seminar on productivity and “Pre-Planning for Profit” featuring an internationally known speaker. Recognizing the importance of indoor air quality, SMCA arranged an indoor air quality seminar in 1991 and followed that up with a trade show featuring 15 firms displaying their products and services designed to improve indoor air quality.

SMCA then launched a **Supplier Liaison Program** to attract into the organization suppliers and fabricators who perform work related to the sheet metal industry. To inform firms of their eligibility to be participants who would take part in all SMCA activities not specific to labor relations and union contract bargaining, the Association sent a mailing to firms that were doing business with member contractors.

Then in 1991, the Association adopted a new committee structure to ensure strong committees that would have a broad perspective on industry issues. As such, each committee



Future SMCA presidents Robert and Patricia Kryszczak (who is the only female to serve as the Association's president as it celebrates its 100th charter anniversary in 2019) enjoy the Association's holiday reception in 1999.

would be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors and include an SMCA member who is not on the Board, a member of the Advisory Committee, an Industry Fund contributor and, where appropriate, a non-SMCA member.

Unfortunately, a national recession and the resulting slowdown in construction took an accelerated toll on the Philadelphia-area sheet metal industry at the end of 1991 and into 1992. The last six months of 1991, Local No. 19 members worked nearly 14 percent fewer hours than they did during that period



SMCA representatives (left to right) Ernest R. Menold, Helen Menold and Edmund Bransfield attend the 1999 SMACNA Convention.



SMCA member Bobby Roaten (left) receives the Melvin J. Wind Award from President Ernest R. Menold in 1999.

After enduring a few long years of a continuously depressed construction market, in 1994, SMCA contractors fared better than they had at any time during the decade. Throughout the year, hours worked for the contractors exceeded budget estimates every month.

SMCA and Local No. 19 entered into a practical new contract agreement in May 1995 that would bode well for the future of the area's unionized sheet metal industry. The agreement provided a modest economic adjustment totaling 80 cents per hour each of the three years of the contract. "The adjustment to the wage package was the responsible thing to do," SMCA **Executive Director William Reardon** stated in the Association's June 1995 newsletter. "Frequently, when a new labor contract is reached, one party or the other claims victory. But with this agreement, the chief winner is the sheet metal industry, and when the industry wins, we all win."

in 1990, and for all of 1991, there was a decrease in manhours of 11 percent over the previous year.

Despite the continued economic slump, 1992 was, in many ways, a productive year for SMCA. During the year, the Association signed a new labor agreement; launched a highly successful safety program that included a uniform safety manual; and signed up six new members and three Supplier Liaison Council participants. The three-year pact with Local No. 19, perhaps the most significant achievement, called for a modest pay increase; withdrawal of the Philadelphia sheet metal industry from the troubled Stabilization Agreement for the Sheet Metal Industry (SASMI) program; and establishment of a local, supplemental unemployment benefit fund.

At the same time, SMCA continued its educational programs, offering several seminars, and its marketing campaign continued development of five new ads that appeared in trade and professional journals in the Philadelphia area.



SMCA President Michael J. McGee takes a swing while out on the course during the Association's Annual Golf Outing in 1999.



(Left to right) John Burke, Jane Burke, Bill Burke and Jack Stutz of SMCA member company Total Comfort Solutions (formerly TCS).

But first, on the morning of May 1, 1995, SMCA and Local No. 19, fulfilling their collective responsibility to avert a work stoppage and further the sheet metal industry at the same time, created a new and improved labor-management partnership, the **Sheet Metal Industry Advancement Committee (S.M.I.A.C.)**. An extensive, professional market review performed by the committee and completed by May 1997 outlined the plan for the partnership, after which two informational videos were produced and circulated – one to all Local No. 19 members and SMCA contractors, and the second to customers of the unionized sheet metal industry and the general public.

That year, a survey of the unionized sheet metal industry in the Delaware Valley area, conducted for the S.M.I.A.C. by Dr. William Maloney of the University of Kentucky and Dr. Paul Rappoport of Temple

University, made many recommendations. Two of the key suggestions were for the Committee to offer more safety training and to develop a training program in continuous improvement tools and applications for contractors and craftsmen.

Two years later in 1999, the S.M.I.A.C. launched an unprecedented television campaign to promote awareness of the



SMCA President Robert Kryszczak (right) receives the SMACNA First Place National Safety Award on behalf of the Philadelphia chapter during the National Association's convention held in Hawaii in 2000.



SMCA member Michael J. McGee (left) receives the Melvin J. Wind Award from President Robert Kryszczak during the Association's annual meeting in 2001.

unionized sheet metal industry and the role it plays in maintaining high standards of quality construction. The campaign was produced in coordination with KYW-3 television, which produced a 30-second video to be shown on the station about 100 times during the last quarter of the year beginning Labor Day.

Indeed, by that year, the S.M.I.A.C., led by longtime member-contractor **Ernest R. Menold**, had become the heart and soul of relations between SMCA and Local No. 19 while setting the overall direction of the Association's relationship with the union.

As the partnership continued to prove its worth and help the unionized sheet metal industry make strides, Peter Cockshaw of *Cockshaw's Labor News & Opinion* praised the joint effort during SMCA's Industry Fund dinner on January 19, 1999, admitting he was impressed with the fact that even in that current period of high work activity, the union and contractors remained committed to and actively pursued the goals upon which they had agreed through the S.M.I.A.C. He would go on to say, "When I heard that the Philadelphia sheet metal industry planned to work together, I didn't believe it. You have proven me wrong."



David Shaw of SMCA member company United Sheet Metal (right) receives a SMACNA Committee Service Award from past SMCA President Michael J. McGee in 2002.



SMCA members (left to right) Michael J. McGee of Wegmann Corporation, Richard Borradaile of Thermodesign Corporation, Robert Johnston of AerDux Incorporated and Robert Kryszczak of Keystone Contractors attend the Association's 2002 annual meeting.

What's more, in a message to SMCA in 2001, Local No. 19 **President and Business Manager Thomas J. Kelly** stated, "Through the Industry Advancement Committee we have been able to improve the level of trust between contractors and the union. This is the most important thing that we have accomplished. ... This is truly a win/win situation for all of us."

THE 21ST CENTURY ADVANCING WITH EYE ON THE FUTURE

With the new decade, century and "Y2K" millennium, SMCA continued its wide-ranging efforts to transform the sheet metal construction industry. To that collective end, on December 6, 2000, SMCA and Local No. 19 sponsored a joint meeting between contractors and union stewards, which more than 150 people attended—a true testimony to the S.M.I.A.C. efforts to build true labor-management cooperation. "Only a few years ago," SMCA Executive Director Reardon said at the time, "this particular combination would set the faint of heart to trembling."

SMCA also continued to host and promote its long-successful programs and

efforts. These included its joint meetings with the **Philadelphia Chapter of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)**; its Engineers' Nights (which in October 2004 even evolved into a joint meeting with the ASHRAE); its Annual Safety Dinner; and its decades-old **Annual Golf Outing**. (In 2009, the annual joint meeting between SMCA, the Penn-Del-Jersey Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association and the Mechanical Contractors Association of Eastern Pennsylvania, held on December 16, even



SMCA Philadelphia representatives to the SMACNA of Pennsylvania Board of Directors (standing, left to right) Tom DeMuis of Wm. J. Donovan Co., Michael McGee of Wegmann Corporation and Rich Borradaile of Thermodesign Corporation and (seated, left to right) Ernest J. Menold of Ernest D. Menold, Inc., with SMACNA of Pennsylvania Executive Director John Wanner and President Dick Mertz.

When SMCA received first place in the SMACNA Safety Statistics Evaluation and Awards Program for "Outstanding Chapter Participation" in 2005, it was the thirteenth time in 14 years that the Philadelphia chapter earned the award for having the highest percentage of contractor members participating in the program. Since that time, SMCA has been presented with multiple additional safety honors from the National Association.

featured Philadelphia Phillies World Series champion pitcher Ryan Madson as its speaker.)

Undeniably, into and throughout the 2000s and 2010s, SMCA's dedication to maintaining a working relationship between its contractor members and their union employees has remained the basis of the Association, which has been – and still is in 2019 – fostered by the S.M.I.A.C. Importantly, as they still do, the Association's various social and business functions continued to give contractors an opportunity to interact on a personal level and enjoy the camaraderie of their peers while providing a setting for the exchange of valuable business ideas.

As work for its member contractors remained strong throughout the early and mid-2000s, the local construction industry received another boost in early 2005 when the City of Philadelphia received the first \$50 million in state funds that would allow the start of construction on the long-delayed expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Just a month earlier, the governor had earmarked \$43 million toward construction of the proposed **Comcast Center** in downtown Philadelphia, which would be the tallest building in the city and provide the construction trades with abundant new jobs.

Even as the so-called Great Recession stifled the economy and construction during the late 2000s, SMCA remained committed to

SMCA began to offer a dedicated scholarship, since named the **Ernest R. Menold Memorial Scholarship**, through the SMACNA College of Fellows specifically for children of the Philadelphia chapter's member contractors and their employees and SMCA staff in 2006. The initial award was for \$2,000.



Three generations of the Ernest D. Menold, Inc., family during an SMCA golf outing in 2006 (left to right): son Ernest J. Menold, company president since 2003; son Michael Menold; grandson Ernest P. Menold, development manager since 2018; and father Ernest R. Menold, PhD, P.E., who served as president from 1973 through 2003 and then as chairman of its Board until his death in August 2019.

fostering labor-management cooperation as a primary means of remaining "customer friendly." As such, its labor-management committee responded to industry-wide needs for a drug-and alcohol-free workplace statute; invested countless hours developing a common understanding of shift and overtime rules; and focused on improving safety within the construction industry.

Meanwhile, new SMCA programs provided to members during the second half of the 2000s and into the following decade included educational sessions on helping contractors become more familiar with financial statements; Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordkeeping; and "10 Critical Business Insurance Mistakes to Avoid."

Into the 2010s, as the nation recovered from the recession, the construction of healthcare facilities made up a significant portion of the work found in

and around Philadelphia. Therefore, SMCA contractors and other trade associations and their labor partners became involved in meetings with the **West Philadelphia Institutional Construction Coalition**, which included institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. Through those discussions, SMCA and its sister trade

Gordon Parker (center), longtime SMCA newsletter writer, stands with Michael J. McGee (left) and President Richard Borradaile during a retirement party for Gordon at the Buck Hotel in March 2005



SMCA President Ernest J. Menold (right) accepts the 2006 SMACNA Safety Award for SMCA from SMACNA President Keith Wilson.



SMCA representatives (left to right) Rich Borradaile; Patricia, Bob and Kristy Kryszczak; and Ernie J. Menold attend the 2006 SMCA annual meeting held on the Moshulu tall-ship restaurant on the Delaware River.

associations worked to ensure the union construction industry would be positioned to meet the demands of the construction climate of the time.

Back at the bargaining table, in June 2011, SMCA and Local No. 19 ratified a new two-year agreement that included a rollover of the current wage and benefit package in the first year and an increase of \$1.90 per hour in the final year of the agreement.

The following year, SMCA staged town hall meetings in an effort to improve communications among contractors and answer their questions. During a town hall in May 2012, for example, one of the major topics of conversation was the issue of Multiemployer Pensions and support for potential legislative issues regarding those pensions. The issue

had been an important topic for both SMACNA as well as SMCA, which would continue to monitor related legislation on behalf of the sheet metal industry.

Recognizing the need to provide financial support to the long-term unemployed members of Local No. 19, SMCA and the local agreed in late 2012 to make a modification to the distribution of the current Local No. 19 wage and fringe-benefit package, which went into effect on January 1, 2013. The modified distribution would provide additional funding for the **Unemployment Exhaustion**

Benefit provided to members of the local who lost their eligibility for state unemployment benefits. This modification was a matter of collective bargaining and would not have been possible without the agreement of both SMCA and Local No. 19.

However, relations between the Association and the union broke down in April 2013 during



SMCA President Ernest J. Menold (left) displays his 2007 SMACNA Committee Service Award with SMCA Executive Director Bill Reardon.



SMCA representatives (left to right) K. Borradaile, D. O'Brien, Congressman J. Runyan, J. Connolly, B. Reardon and D. Schmidt attend the 2011 National Issues Conference.

contract negotiations. In the end, SMCA leadership yielded many of its proposals for a new agreement in order to continue to work on projects that were underway. “Unless SMCA leaders made the difficult choice,” Association **President Matthew Sano** declared in its May 2013 newsletter, “relationships with customers would be damaged, trusted employees would be without work and strained relationships would become irreparably broken.”

The resultant three-year contract increased the local’s wage and fringe package by \$2 per hour in the first year, \$2.25 per hour in the second year and \$2.50 per hour in the final year of the agreement.



SMCA member Robert Buccini displays the Service Award he received for his 22 years as a trustee for the Sheet Metal Workers’ Trust Joint Apprenticeship and Training Fund while standing with President Matthew Sano during the Association’s holiday reception in December 2013.

SAFETY IS FOCUS OF FIRST-EVER AWARDS

SMCA presented its **First Annual SMCA of Philadelphia Safety Awards** during its Annual Safety Dinner held at a Philadelphia Flyers hockey game in January 2017.

During the ceremony, SMCA contractor members who had no recordable injuries in 2016 were each recognized by SMCA President Robert Johnston. The first awards went to Accu-Flow Balancing Co., LLC; Air Concepts, Inc.; Baltronix, Inc.; Cromedy Construction Corporation; Dynamic Balancing Co.; Hunter Mechanical, Inc.; Independent Balancing Co., Inc.; Keystone TAB Consulting, LLC; Luthe Sheet Metal, Inc.; Optimum Performance Balancing, LLC; Prime Sheet Metal, Inc.; TAB Systems, Inc.; and W. F. Smith, Inc.



SMCA President Robert Johnston (left) presents the first-ever SMCA of Philadelphia John Connolly Safety Award to John Connolly, SMCA’s longtime Safety Professional, before a Philadelphia Flyers hockey game against the Toronto Maple Leafs in 2017.

Two SMCA member firms were also recognized as having the lowest Experience Modification Rates (EMR). Optimum Performance Balancing, LLC; was recognized in the up-to-50,000-hour category, and Ernest D. Menold, Inc., was recognized in the over-50,001-hour category. (EMR is a figure used by insurance companies to gauge both past costs of injuries and future chances of injury and accident risk.)

In 2018, SMCA resurrected its **Advisory Committee**, a relatively informal group of “young” talent identified by their own employing company executives or the Association leadership with the hope that those individuals will take on key executive roles in their respective employing company and in the sheet metal industry. SMCA’s objective for the committee is to expose the group to its leadership and involve members in planning and delivering SMCA services and programs while also serving as the Association’s Marketing Committee.



SMCA President Matthew Sano (left) presents member and longtime officer Ernest J. Menold with a SMACNA Committee Service Award in November 2013.

In 2018, SMCA assisted in creating a resolution to bring awareness to the growing usage of opioids among construction workers by declaring the last full week of July as “**Construction Opioid Awareness Week**.” The Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously supported the resolution, which suggests that construction companies promote awareness of the problem and potential solutions.

SMCA worked with SMACNA of Pennsylvania, construction associations and labor organizations across the Commonwealth to launch the initiative.

With much of its attention focused on its future, the following June, SMCA held a strategic planning meeting over the course of two days at the ACE Conference Center in Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania, after which the Board of Directors approved a **Strategic Plan** based on the meeting. The process culminated when the Directors and Industry Fund Trustees agreed to fund a budget to implement the Strategic Plan.

As part of the plan, the SMCA Board of Directors initiated the **John Connolly Safety Award** with the aim of achieving an industry-wide goal of no reportable workplace accidents.

SMCA and the union were also made to contend with renewed attacks on the state’s Prevailing Wage Law, which had been in place since the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act was passed in 1961 and which the Association and SMACNA of Pennsylvania both supported. In 2014, for instance, a Republican state representative put out two memos to State House members in early December looking to gather support for legislation to alter the Act, a situation that SMCA monitored very closely.

A revived local construction market in 2016 boosted the outlook for SMCA, whose members were presented with a glut of projects on which to bid in and around Philadelphia. The contractors in May of that year also approved a new, three-



SMACNA Legislative Committee Chairperson Karen Fox presents SMCA’s John Connolly with the National Association’s Special Legislative Award at its National Legislative Conference in May 2014.



SMCA 2015 Board of Directors (left to right): Ernie J. Menold, Dominic Bonitatis, Ken Wurst, Gary Luthe, Matthew Sano, Bob Johnston and Tom DeMusis.

year contract with Local No. 19 that increased the total hourly wage-and-benefits package by \$2.75 (or 3.5 percent) on May 1; 50 cents (1/2-percent) on November 1, 2016; \$3.25 (3.9 percent) in the second year; and \$3.25 (3.6 percent) in the final year of the agreement.

SMCA took another step into its promising future in February 2018 when it officially moved into its new office at **955 Louis Drive** in Warminster, Pennsylvania. Importantly, the new office featured a state-of-the-art classroom that would allow SMCA to conduct education and safety programs on the premises.

Then that April of 2018, the Association announced a bold new approach undertaken with Local No. 19 after the contractors and union were able to work out a creative **Residential/Light Commercial agreement**.



SMCA President Bob Johnston presents a check on behalf of SMCA to Area Director Caroline Hutchinson for the American Lung Association of the Mid-Atlantic in 2016.



SMCA President Bob Johnston of AerDux, Dominic Bonitatis of Prime Sheet Metal, 8th Congressional District Candidate Brian Fitzpatrick and John Hoffmann of Bonland Industries meet to discuss some of the issues in the construction industry in 2016.

The new classification, which featured a customized wage scale, would allow SMCA contractors to acquire new work and reclaim work that had traditionally been the work of the unionized sheet metal industry and was lost to lower-priced competition..

Meanwhile, as SMCA approached the 100th anniversary of its charter in November 2019, member contractors have been engaged in a multitude of noteworthy construction projects during the year. Those jobs included **Pennsylvania Hospital**;



Trish Casey has served on the SMCA staff for 27 years.

restoration of Philadelphia's historic **Bourse Building**; the new **Ronson Health and Applied Sciences Center** on the Thomas Jefferson University campus; a **Chemours** research facility, the second-largest research lab currently being built in the country, in Newark, Delaware; and renovation of the **Ringe Squash Center** at the University of Pennsylvania.

Throughout a century, the Association has grown beyond bargaining to include a wealth of education, training and business-management resources. Importantly, the Association's companies are more committed than ever before to construction safety and effective labor relations, all of which are fostered by the top-level services that SMCA continues to provide, as it has for a century.

"The Association rode the highs and lows of the national economy and world politics," Executive Director Reardon stated in 2019 while looking back over the Association's first 100 years.

With 33 member companies in 2019, SMCA is one of SMACNA's most active chapters, covering a relatively small region in which a large amount of highly sophisticated construction is required. "They battle each other," Executive Director Reardon said of SMCA member contractors. "So, it's only natural for them to work together through the Association and accomplish common goals." ■



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 Air Systems, Inc.
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 Cromedy Construction Corporation
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 Optimum Performance Balancing, LLC
 Precision Air Designs, Inc.
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 Restaurant Ventilation Design, Inc.
 SSM Industries, Inc.
 Tab Systems, Inc.
 Thermodesign Corporation
 Thomas Company, Inc.
 Total Comfort Solutions
 W. F. Smith, Inc.
 Wm. J. Donovan Co., Inc.



SMCA representatives Mike Brown (top, far left), Bill Schatzman (top row, second from left), Dennis O'Brien (top, far right) and Bill Reardon (front row, second from left) meet with Delaware Senator Thomas Carper (front row, far right) to discuss concerns in the construction industry the Construction Employers of America Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., in 2017.

(Left to right) Aaron Hanlon, Michael Peet, Fred Scafidi and Brian Smith of Modern Controls accept the John Connolly Safety Award for lowest EMR (Experience Modification Rate) in the under-100,000-manhour category at SMCA's Safety Awards dinner before a Philadelphia Flyers hockey game at the Wells Fargo Center in 2018.



(Left to right) Michael Brown of SMCA member contractor Environmental Construction Services, U.S. Representative for Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District Dwight Evans, Dominic Bonitatis of SMCA member contractor Prime Sheet Metal and Philadelphia City Councilman Derek Green attend a birthday celebration held by Representative Evans in early May at the Hilton Hotel City Avenue.



Former SMCA presidents Gary Luthé (left) and Matthew Sano (right) meet with U.S. Representative for New Jersey's 1st Congressional District Donald W. Norcross during a Legislative function hosted by SMCA in 2019.



(Left to right) Mike Brown of SMCA member firm Environmental Construction Services, U.S. Representative for New Jersey's 1st Congressional District Donald Norcross, U.S. Representatives for Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District Brian Fitzpatrick and Dominic Bonitatis of SMCA member firm Prime Sheet Metal meet during the Construction Employers of America National Issues Conference in Washington, D.C., in May 2019.



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MEMBERS OF THE SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
PHILADELPHIA & VICINITY

MINUTES OF PRELIMINARY MEETING OF THE SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA AND VICINITY
SUNDAY EVENING - JUNE 10, 1919 - 7 P.M.

ROLL CALL

- Mr. Finney
- Mr. Linck
- Mr. A. Scheu
- Mr. Childrey of Camden
- Mr. Donovan
- Mr. Bragg of Wm. English Co.,
- Mr. John Long of S. Faith Co.,
- Mr. John A. Call
- Mr. Theo Gassner

Unanimous opinion that organization be formed.

Mr. Theo. Gassner by assent elected temporary Chairman.
Mr. John A. Call, by assent elected Secretary.

Moved and seconded that the name of the association be "THE SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA AND VICINITY"



It moved and seconded that the association be officially notified by mail of the meeting of the sheet metal contractors in Philadelphia and vicinity presented to the sheet metal contractors by which before any individual discusses same.

- CAMDEN
- Metallic Mfg. Co.
 - Dexter Mfg. Co.
 - Strawick & Scott
 - Sheet Metal Construction Co.

Motion that Chairman appoint a committee of three members to draft a Constitution, By-Laws, and Code of Practice to be presented for the approval of the association by following meeting.

- Committee appointed.
- Mr. Call
 - Mr. Linck
 - Mr. Childrey

Moved and seconded that committee report with constitution, etc., by date, June 16th, 1919, Wednesday.

Signed,
John A. Call, Secretary.