

Like water for concrete

Sarah Fister Gale



Stephen Seguirant has always been drawn to the ocean. Born and raised in Hawaii, he attended grammar school a block from the beach, where he spent more time digging in the sand than digging into his books. His nearly 40-year career has focused on building custom precast concrete ports, piers, and floating structures, never straying far from the sea.

Seguirant left Hawaii after high school to study civil engineering at Saint Martin's University in Washington State. During that time, he participated in a concrete canoe competition, where he used a 14,000 psi (97 MPa) concrete mixture to build a boat that would float.

"We didn't win, but we held our own," he says.

"We build anything made of precast concrete, but floating structures kept us afloat."

His interest in concrete grew at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he took a class for his master's degree on the use of concrete in structural engineering with Professor Alan Mattock. "Alan Mattock was at the forefront of the concrete industry at that time," Seguirant says. "He is the reason I got interested in concrete."

After that class, Seguirant focused his studies on structural engineering and concrete. Then in 1979, when he was nearly done with his master's degree, he set out to find work in the field.

Initially, he applied for a job at ABAM Engineers (now Berger/ABAM), but they had just filled the position.

Instead of giving up, Seguirant walked across the parking lot to Concrete Technology Corp. (CTC). CTC's founders, Art and Tom Anderson, had started ABAM to design prestressed concrete products that CTC would build at a time when local architects and engineers were unfamiliar with the material. It turned out that a project engineer at CTC, Dennis Merwood, had been his mentor for the concrete canoe contest. Seguirant interviewed with CTC's director of operations, who hired him on the spot. Seguirant has been working for CTC ever since.

Staying afloat

Over the years Seguirant oversaw a diverse range of projects at CTC, many of which ended up on—or in—the water. He participated in the construction of the Disney World monorail in Orlando, Fla., the floating bridge in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and piers and bridges throughout Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii.

"It is a good business model because we are not tied to a specific market," Seguirant says. He says that CTC's versatility, combined with strength in this niche market, helped it survive the tough economy. "We build anything made of precast concrete," he says, "but floating structures kept us afloat."

Committee man

In the middle of his career, Seguirant joined PCI and quickly became an active member of the Research and Development Committee.

He also joined the American Concrete Institute's (ACI's) Committee 318, Structural Concrete Building Code, and served as chair of Subcommittee G, Precast and Prestressed Concrete, for the 2014 code cycle. "My experience on ACI 318 taught me a lot," he says. "It showed me that the precast concrete industry does a great job on R&D. If a gap is identified in a code, we do the research, identify the problems, and attack them."

His hard work didn't go unnoticed. Seguirant was named a PCI Fellow in 2005, and he won the American Society of Civil Engineers' 2011 T. Y. Lin Award for a two-part paper published in the Summer and Fall 2009 issues of *PCI Journal*. Another paper, the cover story of the Fall 2012 issue, won the Charles C. Zollman Award.

He hopes that the next generation of PCI members will become equally involved in the institute. "We need people to participate in these committees, and it's worth the time," he says. Not only do participants learn a lot and make great business connections, they get an opportunity to shape the future of the industry. "It's the people who show up to the committees that get to write the code." ▮