

NCMCA Golden Anniversary Celebration Series – February 2024

2024-02-23

We're starting off the North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association Golden 50th Anniversary Year by highlighting some monumental events that have taken place throughout the existence of NCMCA. Each month throughout 2024 we will have articles that will showcase the history and folks that helped NCMCA get to where it is today. Please enjoy this yearlong series with our second article, "A Tradition of Strong Leadership"

From the start, The North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association has benefited from strong, farsighted volunteer leadership; individuals who believe in masonry as a building material of choice, a great career opportunity, and as a rewarding lifestyle; people who have sacrificed time and often dipped into their own pockets to do the work of leading an association for which they obviously have a strong commitment and that they hold in high regard.

Lots of individuals, both contractor and associate members, have contributed to the success of NCMCA but there is a particular group who definitely stand out for their commitment to the Association and to the industry. They are the twenty-five masonry contractor company executives/owners who have stepped up to be president of NCMCA, sometimes more than once. (NCMCA bylaws require officers and board members to be masonry contractors.)

Now days, the term of NCMCA president is two years but the commitment is actually at least eight years. When on track for the presidency, an individual serves two years as secretary-treasurer, two years as president-elect/apprentice and training committee chairperson, two years as president, and then two years as Chairman of the Board. For most NCMCA presidents, they entered the eight-year cycle after terms as regional vice presidents and usually also having served as local chapter officers. Quite a commitment!

These individuals have served as NCMCA presidents. As was possible, they were invited to provide comments about their terms and a few of them did:

Glenn W. Sipe*

1974-1975 Glenn W. Sipe and Sons, Conover. Mr. Sipe was inducted into the Mason Contractors Association of America (MCAA) Masonry Hall of Fame in 2012. As NCMCA's first president, "The Glenn W. Sipe Presidential Service Award" for past presidents is named in his honor/memory.

Richard Robertson* 1975-1976 Robertson & Son Masonry, Burlington. President Red McAdams says of Mr. Robertson, whom he worked for as a young man, "*Richard was 'old school.' Wheelbarrows. No forklifts. He was a good man and good to work for.*"

Belton Koontz* 1976-1977 Koontz Masonry, Lexington.

Bob Merrill* 1977-1978 Merrill Masonry, Brevard. Mr. Merrill was posthumously inducted into the MCAA Masonry Hall of Fame in 2019. Upton Associates of Raleigh was retained to manage the Association during Mr. Merrill's term as president.

Ivey L. Griffin, Jr.* 1978-1979 Griffin Contractors, Morganton. His son Alan writes, "*My Dad was a Regional Vice President for the MCAA for a number of years, but couldn't move up the officers' ladder because he was a non-union contractor.*"
(Alan would change that.)

Red Brookshire* 1979-1981 Red Brookshire, Inc., Charlotte. One of two past presidents named "Red."

G. Alan Griffin 1981-1983 Griffin Contractors, Morganton. Son of President Ivey Griffin, Jr., Alan was the first president of MCAA from North Carolina (2004-2006) and the first MCAA president from a non-union company. He is also noted for having served as secretary/treasurer of the Western Carolina Chapter for more than thirty-one years. Mr. Griffin writes, "*I remember the first NCMCA state convention I attended was at the Grove Park Inn. Eleanor Upton had just recently been hired and organized the event. I only attended the Saturday night banquet. I was young and not interested. The next thing I recall was I was President! It was difficult to get members to serve as officers and I don't even recall serving as Vice-President. I was 28 years old, the youngest NCMCA President ever most likely! Of course that was 40+ years ago so much of it is a blur. I did my best to come across as professional. We were all business owners and I wanted to bring respect to our industry. As I*"

reflect over the years I appreciate most the long lasting friendships and business relationships that were developed and continue to this day.”

Dickey Robertson 1983-1985 Robertson & Sons Masonry, Burlington. Son of President Richard Robertson.

Charles “Ray” Holyfield*

1985-1987 Holyfield Masonry, Haw River. Mr. Holyfield, working for The Riverton Corporation, was awarded what is now called the Eleanor Upton Award in 1981, the first time the Outstanding Associate Member Award was presented.

Gary Joyner, CME 1987-1989 & 2012-2014 Joyner Masonry Works, Greenville. First president to serve twice. Mr. Joyner was inducted into the MCAA Masonry Hall of Fame in 2022, particularly noted for his dedication to the success of the MCAA Masonry Foundation.

Danny Batten* 1989-1991 Consolidated Masonry Systems, Garner. Mr. Batten, working as a representative for Lafarge Cement, was awarded the Eleanor Upton Award in 2001.

Ben Brookshire 1991-1993 Red Brookshire, Inc. Charlotte. Son of President Red Brookshire.

Calvin Brodie, CME 1993-1995 Brodie Contractors, Raleigh. Mr. Brodie was inducted into the MCAA Masonry Hall of Fame in 2023. Mr. Brodie writes, *“Prior and during my tenure I served as the Chairman of the association’s NC Masonry Contractors Apprenticeship Contest held annually at the North Carolina State Fair. With Harry Payne, Commissioner of Labor, the Association was given full management and operational control of the State Fair Apprenticeship Contest, and it continues today. The Association also began to foster a stronger relationship with OSHA.”*

Doug Burton, CME 1995-1998 Whitman Masonry, Raleigh. Brother of President Danks Burton. Chairman of the Masonry Certification Board of Governors since the program’s inception in 2006. Doug writes, *“Early in my term we decided we needed and were ready to hire a full time person to manage our association and easily selected Lynn Nash for the job in September 1997 and we were off and running to the top of the masonry associations in the country. David Sigmon with Master*

Masonry in Hickory was to be my successor but was diagnosed with cancer and was unable to serve his term. I served an additional year to facilitate the transition to Freddy Koontz. The Sigmon Family scholarship was started during this time for David, his brother Dwayne and his son Randy, which continues to this day, funding the masonry design scholarships we have conducted at North Carolina State University and Appalachian State University for the past 24 years. Past and future presidents during my term that were actively involved in advancing all the association business were Alan Griffin, Gary Joyner, Danny Batten, Calvin Brodie, Freddy Koontz, Danks Burton, Wayne Starr and Larry Kirby – it took us all and more to push us forward.”

Freddy Koontz, CME 1998-2000 Koontz Masonry, Lexington. Son of President Belton Koontz.

Hugh Townsend 2000-2002 Hugh Townsend Masonry, Granite Falls.

James “Red” McAdams 2002-2004 McAdams Masonry, Burlington. Mr. McAdams says, *“My time as president gave me the opportunity to get to know Sam McGee working with him in meetings and contests. That was really significant for me.”*

Danks Burton, CME 2004-2006
& 2020-2022 Pinnacle Masonry, Cary. Has served twice. Brother of President Doug Burton. The NCMCA Masonry Contractor Certification Program was developed and adopted during his first term. Danks writes, *“I became the president for the first time on our 30th anniversary at the Grove Park Inn in Spring 2004, taking the reins from Red McAdams. In January 2005 leaders in our industry met with Boney/ LS3P Architects in Charlotte to discuss the ‘lump sum masonry specification.’ This was the beginning of our journey towards a masonry certification program. The program was introduced at the 2006 convention and has been very successful, continuing to educate many masonry professionals 18 years later. I started my second term as president in 2020, taking over for Kent Huntley, without any official ceremony as our conventions in 2020 and 2021 were canceled because of COVID. During this term we started the process of selecting NCMCA’s next Executive Vice President with the pending retirement of Lynn Nash in May 2023. I’m very thankful for the opportunity to work with many influential people in the masonry industry both in NC and around the country. This includes masonry contractors, association*

executives, educators and suppliers to our industry. I probably wouldn't have had these opportunities had I not served as an officer for NCMCA. Thank you!"

Wayne Starr, CME*

2006-2008 Gates Construction Company, Mooresville. Shortly after Wayne became president, the first NCMCA Certification Program classes were presented.

Gary Manning 2008-2010 Manning Masonry, Williamston.

Larry Kirby, CME 2010-2012 Kirby Construction Services, Conover. Mr. Kirby writes, *"I think I am the last active masonry contractor from our original group, the Mason Contractors Association of Western Carolina. That tells you how old I am getting. During my term as president, I have many proud memories. I really remember going through the first certification classes with Mr. Sam McGee, Bob Gates, and many others and that has turned into lasting friendships. The eight-year commitment passes so quickly because of the great people around you that help in every way. May the NCMCA continue for many more years to come."*

Ashlee Koontz Moore, CMP 2014-2016 Koontz Masonry, Lexington. First "third generation" president. Granddaughter of Belton Koontz and daughter of Freddy Koontz.

Robert H. Gates, CME 2016-2018 Gates Construction Company, Mooresville. Acting on a need recognized many years earlier, the Gates administration defined and filled the position of NCMCA Workforce Development & Training Coordinator. Mr. Gates writes, *"During my tenure as President, I was proud of the fact that the association continued to grow from the economic downturn of several years earlier. We were able to increase contributions and more than exceed our budget during this time. We also introduced a new logo for NCMCA. After many previous years of discussions, we decided to hold our convention in Charleston, SC. That turned out to be a huge success. We also formed a committee to interview and hire our WDTC. At the end of my term, we hired Ryan Shaver. I was pleased that contributions flooded in to support this new position. I was both honored and humbled to serve as this association's president. I gained new friendships as well as strengthened old lasting friendships."*

Kent Huntley, CME 2018-2020 Huntley Brothers Company, Mint Hill. Mr. Huntley won what is now called the Samuel A. McGee Masonry Apprentice Skills

Contest in 1986, the only NCMCA president to ever do so. He will become MCAA Chairman in 2026. Kent says, *“One month before my term as president began, NCMCA hired Ryan Shaver as Work Force Development Coordinator. Our members quickly embraced Ryan and our WDTC program flourished from the start. During my tenure, it was fantastic to see this agenda being promoted and supported. NCMCA has continued to push the boundaries with this program and many other programs. In this infancy period of WFD, our members supported the program, both monetarily and with giving of their time to attend masonry contests, recruit talent from local high schools and continue to grow our Association! COVID entered my last year as President and for the next two years we were unable to hold our annual conventions. NCMCA continues to emerge from the two-year hiatus stronger than ever! I am proud to have been a small part to have helped lead NCMCA to the heights it has achieved!”*

James “Bo” Black, Jr., CME 2022-2024 Carolina Masonry Unlimited, Willow Spring. Current President. President Black writes, *“My most notable achievement in my service to the NCMCA has to be the friendships that have developed during my time serving. An eight- year commitment is hard to fathom and hard to plan for. Being able to serve and depend upon all the people that I have been blessed to serve with has made this task easier to handle. In the Raleigh Chapter as a small masonry contractor, I was made to feel welcome and accepted by Doug and Danks Burton and Calvin Brodie. Fellow masons who recognized and accepted me. Danny Batten played a special role as a mentor to me, and I am forever grateful for this. He saw and appreciated things in me that I still strive to achieve. I worked for Calvin Brodie as a subcontractor and to this day appreciate his mentorship. Larry Kirby and I developed a friendship that lasts till today. Without these relationships and the lasting changes, they have made in my life and business I would not be the man and business owner I am today. My friendship and brotherhood with Tim Manning have been an anchor to my business and personal life. The current NCMCA Board of Danks Burton, Cliff McGee and Tim Manning are men who I call upon regularly and consider friends. The NCMCA is far above and beyond any other organization in this respect. Being a part of the strong tradition of NCMCA leadership has formed me and will without a doubt be one of the most significant accomplishments of my life. Without a doubt, these relationships have been the most important thing I have gained from my time in the NCMCA.”*

** Known to be deceased*

Each of these individuals has left their positive mark on the North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association. At the same time, most all of them have at one time or another expressed the sentiment that, despite the sacrifices often required to do the job, being the president of NCMCA was a time of personal and professional growth, and, as President McAdams noted, an opportunity to work with and learn from some of the finest and most respected people in the masonry industry. All have suggested that the opportunity to be president of NCMCA is an opportunity that should not be missed.

NCMCA expresses great appreciation to our past presidents for making the Association's Fiftieth Anniversary a reality.

Article Written by Lynn Nash



Three Presidents Left to right, Ray Holyfield (1985-1987,) an unknown successful contest participant, Alan Griffin (1981-1983,) and in the right corner, Bob Gates (2016-2018.) Location and date unknown.

Photographer, unknown.



Three Past Presidents and a Future President From the April 2009 Annual Convention, left to right, Doug Burton (1995-1998,) Freddy Koontz (1998-2000,) Gary Joyner (1987-1989 & 2012 2014,) and future NCMCA president (?) John Burton.



Hall of Fame Induction NCMCA President Larry Kirby (2010-2012) introduces inductee Glenn W. Sipe (1974-1975) at the January 2011 MCAA Convention “Masonry Hall of Fame” banquet in Las Vegas.
