The 75th Diamond Anniversary Convention of the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries - International was held March 21-26, 1992, at the Sheraton Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. The convention, deemed a success in all respects by those who attended in spite of the continuing recession plaguing the industry, used as its theme “Reflections of the Past - Plans for the Future.” From the tribute to AWCI Executive Vice President Joe M. Baker, Jr., on Saturday night in honor of his 37 years of service to the industry to the final gala “Diamond Jubilee Glitter Ball,” the convention focused on AWCI’s past triumphs and helped members prepare for a brighter future.

AWCI’s Convention Committee and its Chairman, Joseph A. Feldner, were praised for such innovations as a tribute to all the Past Presidents of AWCI in the Exhibit Hall Hospitality Center. “We tried to take care of the details,” Mr. Feldner said.

“I’d like to recognize the enormous contribution of the industry’s suppliers, especially the exhibitors and sponsors at this convention,” he added. The sponsors and exhibitors enable AWCI to provide many functions for convention attendees which would not be possible without their participation.

Excellent entertainment, moving tributes to the Desert Storm warriors and Americans held hostage, enlightening speakers discussing the national economy and what wall and ceiling contractors can do about it, a host of worthwhile educational seminars, and the world’s largest wall and ceiling exhibition all made the five days of the convention a memorable experience for those in attendance.

**Day One: Saturday, March 21**

Saturday’s daytime program was reserved for committee meetings. AWCI’s Technical Subcommittees, which provide tremendous services for members, reached some important conclusions which will produce benefits for years to come. For example, a brochure similar to “Levels of Gypsum Finish,” which has become the standard for the industry, is being developed to address methods of applying gypsum board. Technical Subcommittee 7 met jointly with the Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association Technical Committee in an effort to work together now and in the future.

On Saturday afternoon, as part of the spouses’ program Robin Weir, who gained fame as Mrs. Reagan’s hairdresser, gave a spirited talk on some of the inside gossip he has learned over the years.

Saturday night featured the gala Joe Baker Retirement Dinner and Roast. Some 400 of Joe’s friends and business acquaintances came to pay tribute to him and honor his 37 years of service to AWCI and the wall and ceiling industry. Perhaps the highlight of the evening came when Joe was presented with the Pinnacle Award, AWCI’s highest honor, in a surprise ceremony.
Day Two: Sunday, March 22

Sunday began with the Regional Conference Caucus. Representatives from AWCI’s regional conferences met to elect officers and develop reports from their regions. The Regional conference General Session immediately followed this, with one of the highlights of the convention: “Striving in the ’90s,” a presentation by Monroe P. Porter, vice president of PROOF Management Consultants, Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Porter discussed new and emerging opportunities in areas such as remodeling and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

Following additional committee meetings and the Council of Association Executives luncheon, the convention’s Opening General Session was kicked off Sunday afternoon with a stirring presentation of the U.S. and Canadian flags by a military honor guard and the singing of the national anthems of the two countries. Richard L. Lesher, President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, presented the keynote address on the economy, and attorney Steven A. Hilger then spoke on how contractors could protect themselves in construction company bankruptcies.
Robin Weir, “hairdresser to the stars,” presented a program for spouses.

P. Jack O’Bryan talked during AWCI’s Awards Luncheon.

The Hospitality Center featured pictures of all AWCI Past Presidents.

AWCI Second Vice President James Mark Cassidy in the seat of his ’65 Thunderbird with Foundation Auction organizer Gilley Hickman.

The evening concluded with the President’s Welcome Reception, as always one of the most popular events of the convention.

Day Three: Monday, March 23

On Monday morning, following a welcome continental breakfast, the Royal Fyfe and Drum Ensemble led the ribbon cutting opening the exhibit hall to the world’s largest wall and ceiling exhibition. Prize awards, a chance to grab
dollars in AWCI's “money machine.” and passport stamps for the chance at a free air ticket added to the excitement.

Mr. Ciccipio recounts his experiences as a hostage during the Awards Luncheon.

AWCI’s booth in the Exhibit Hall.

The first two groups of educational sessions were held Monday afternoon. From vapor and air barriers to how sub-

contractors and contractors can be friends, these educational sessions offered something for everyone.
Award winners shown with President Michael R. Boyd included (top left) Honorary Lifetime Members Gordon C. Scott, Frank J. Craft, and Edward A. Thompson; (top right) Outstanding Association Executive Michael J. Crimi; (second row left) Supplier Member of the Year Edwin J. Jakacki; (second row right) Distinguished Chapter Award winner Florida Wall & Ceiling Contractors’ Association, accepted by Peggy McCollum; (third row left) Outstanding Committee Chairmen Francis R. Wojehowski and Richard Eaton; (third row right) Winning Spirit Award winner Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association, accepted by Vincent Tamburrini; and (left) Young Member Achievement Award winner Mikel R. Poellinger.
On Monday afternoon as well, John Jay Daly presented a spouses’ program on “the wacky but wonderful world of Washington, D.C.”

The New Member/Non Member/First Timer Reception was held Monday evening in President Boyd’s suite.

Day Four: Tuesday, March 24

Exhibits were open again on Tuesday morning, and educational sessions were held Tuesday afternoon. A special “For Winners Only” AWCI Awards Meeting.

President Boyd hands the gavel to President-Elect Bell at the Membership Meeting.

Frank Wall of United States Gypsum presents portrait to President-Elect Bell.

AWCI Past President Bill Carroll presents the President’s Medallion to Mike Boyd.

Frank Wall presents a portrait to Executive Vice President Joe M. Baker, Jr.

Guests at the Foundation Auction bid on donated items.

Luncheon on Tuesday provided an emotional highlight of the convention: following presentation of the Brady Companies’ special video on welcoming the troops home from Desert Storm, Joseph Cicciopio, the last American hostage to be released, gave a touching talk on his experiences as a hostage. In spite of undergoing beatings, death threats, con-
stant moves, and many other uncomfortable ordeals, Mr. Ciccipio kept his spirit intact. He received a long standing ovation. The special awards presentations after his talk featured videos by the award recipients, and Joe Baker was inducted into AWCI's Circle of Leadership.

Tuesday night was the special “Celebrate a Diamond Jubilee” Auction to benefit the Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry. Among those whose purchases will go to help the Foundation serve the industry, AWCI Second Vice President James Mark Cassidy purchased a classic 1965 Ford Thunderbird convertible.

Day Five: Wednesday, March 25

The final day of open hours for the exhibit hall saw continued awarding of prizes and the chance to grab money in AWCI’s “money machine.” The hall closed at noon.

The annual Membership Meeting provided the opportunity for AWCI President Michael R. Boyd to summarize his year in office to date and symbolically pass the gavel to President-Elect William A. Dell, who outlined his plans for the coming year. The Board of Directors meeting followed this.

Wednesday night was the concluding function, the “Diamond Jubilee Glitter Ball.” It capped a truly successful convention.

James L. Houser received the Unsung Hero Award and was presented with an Honorary Lifetime Membership by President Boyd.