Joe Baker’s peers, compatriots, and bench-men offer some inside looks at Joe’s life and career.

Tributes and Testimonials

“Joe, it’s hard to believe we’ve been putting up with each other for 30 years. I would bet that you and I might be the only originals that attended that convention in Pittsburgh in 1955. Best of luck to your success.”

Bill C. Carroll
Bill C. Carroll, Inc.
Albuquerque, NM

“My sincere congratulations to Joe on his 30th anniversary with AWCI-International. It’s no wonder that his association has grown: with his enthusiasm and hard work, any project Joe takes on will prosper. Joe, congratulations and we’ll see you at your next 30th!”

Manuel Lujan, Jr.
Member of Congress (R-NM)
Washington, DC

“Joe Baker has always been an outstanding pro among pros. His range of arenas of interest and service is wide, and varied and effectively top-level. As a leader of leaders he’s constantly out front showing the way to the free enterprise system in the interest of the small-business construction crafts.

“His limitless energy, coupled with a vision which sees beyond the horizons, flagellated by a dogged dedication to perfection shape him as a super-achiever. His commitment to principle and integrity, his grasp of organizational management skills, his enthusiasm and leadership talent, his poor-boy effectiveness in the political scene of action, his bank of knowledge concerning our industry, his contributions to the organizations and disciplines of association management, his forthright candor and honesty—these and many more personal virtues make Joe Baker an uncommon man. He’s a doer who brings unmanageable challenges together to successful solutions.

“He certainly has my respect and admiration.”

James J. Rose
Plastering Consultant
Sylmar, CA

“Congratulations on your 30 years of association with the wall and ceiling industry. I know you have seen this industry and our association go through numerous changes and growth and I wish you continued success.”

James E. Biddle
Mader Construction Company
Buffalo, NY

“Joe Baker has not only done an outstanding job with the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries-International, but he has been a distinguished leader of the overall association management profession. He has done outstanding work for this professional society, the American Society of Association Executives, including service on our
Tributes and Testimonials

Joe Baker and AWCI Board Member Jack Frost of Capetown, South Africa, meet with United States Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC). Frost is a member of the City Council of Capetown and in that capacity was welcomed to Washington by Senator Helms in September, 1985.

Board of Directors and as an Officer of this organization. In addition, he has had great influence on the Greater Washington Society of Association Executives. We are delighted that you are honoring Joe Baker in this way, an outstanding leader of our profession.”

R. William Taylor, CAE
President
American Society of Association Executives
Washington, DC

“Happy 30th, Joe. You have earned the tribute that Construction Dimensions is paying you in this issue and your entire membership should be proud of you. We haven’t always seen eye to eye on several issues but the differences have been above board and honest. We of the Operative Plasterers’ and Cement Masons’ International Association congratulate you and wish you and yours well.”

Melvin H. Roots
General President
Operative Plasterers’ and Cement Masons’ International Association
Washington, DC

“If ever there was a “natural-born” leader, that person is Joe M. Baker, Jr.! He has all the attributes, all the characteristics, all the skills of a leader of people in good causes. While I could provide pages of evidence of his accomplishments, I prefer to confine my remarks to a quality of leadership too often overlooked, but which marks Joe Baker indelibly. That quality is thoughtfulness and compassion!

“In all my years of experience in the association management profession, I have never known a man more thoughtful. Joe inevitably takes the extra step to empathize, to think of the other person’s welfare, to do the countless little things which we all appreciate and which so few of us remember to do for others.

“Joe Baker is my kind of guy! Bless him for all he is and does not only for AWCI, but for his fellow human beings.”

Bernard J. Imming, CAE
President
United Nutrition Education Foundation
Alexandria, VA

“I have known Joe for more than 25 years and have been involved with him in almost every function of our association through those years. The fact that this year I have the
privilege of serving as President of AWCI really confirms what I have thought to be a fact. Joe is and has been totally enthusiastic, dedicated and committed to our association and the end results are the finest association in the construction industry if not the finest association in any industry. Congratulations on your 30th anniversary, Joe. Here’s wishing you many more.”

Harry J. Vernetti
Mid-States Construction Systems, Inc.
Rockford, IL

“Joe Baker is talented, dedicated, committed and concerned. Those may seem like words, but they are a true testimony to the man Joe Baker. His creativity and imagination are boundless. His energy and enthusiasm are limitless. He will agree with you and stand by you as forcefully as he will fight you when he believes you’re wrong.

“But all of these adjectives and words don’t describe what I believe to be the strongest quality of Joe Baker—his commitment to friendship. The loyalty and support he shows his friends, through thick and thin, is one of the more wonderful traits of this man. When the chips are down, you can count on Joe Baker being by your side. That can’t be said about a lot of people in this day and age. He’s not a fair weather friend. Once he’s your friend, he stays a friend.”

Victor Kamber
President
The Kamber Group
Washington, DC

“I can’t believe that thirty years has passed since you started as executive secretary. In spite of all of our bad advice (which you never took anyway), you have created one of the foremost associations in Washington today. My family and myself applaud you for your outstanding devotion to this association.”

Vito Arsena
Acme-Arsena Company
Cleveland, OH

“I have known Joe Baker for 25 years and I am pleased to have had the opportunity to enjoy the friendship of this intelligent gentleman. He has had great success in building the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries-International into an effective force, and he has been a
Tributes and Testimonials

Joe at his desk in Washington’s Dodge House Hotel early in his career with the association.

I will tell you this: Joe was an exciting person to work for. His values and principles were beyond reproach.

There is so much more I want to say about Joe and feel that I could do the whole magazine on him by myself. After all, I have almost 13 years of “on the job” training to show for it. Let me say that I feel everyone should have a Joe Baker in their lives. I know I am glad I do. Thanks, Joe for everything.

Ruth Ward
Former Secretary for Joe Baker
Miami, FL

“In my years as a member of AWCI-International, I’ve had the pleasure of a close association with Joe Baker. During these years, I have found Joe to be one of the most positively persistent men I have known. This persistence creates enthusiasm for expanding the horizons of the association. His dedication to the establishment of educational programs and research, his political associations and his extensive work with the trade unions have all accrued to the benefit of the entire industry. We could not have had a better man carrying the ball for us for the past thirty years.”

P. Kenneth Hampshire
Hampshire Industries, Inc.
Baltimore, MD

“We at the U.S. Chamber know how much AWCI’s membership appreciates Joe and the job he has done in producing dramatic growth in membership and participation—because we too have benefited from his guidance. He has been a wise and forceful presence on our Labor and Association committees—and a U.S. Chamber member even longer than he has been the top staffer at AWCI.

“Even after the way the Chamber and AWCI have worked him all these years, we know Joe has some good years left—and we look forward to many years of taking advantage of his talent and leadership. Congratulations, Joe, and thanks for your service to the business community.”

Dr. Richard L. Lesher
President
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Washington, DC

“‘The Diligent Dozen is a group of association executives who voluntarily meet at regularly scheduled sessions to improve their own skills, knowledge and performance in serving their respective industries. Had it not been for Joe

Joe Baker, Jr. deserves so much more than a magazine issue dedicated to him, but since this magazine is being dedicated, I wanted to be sure and be a part of it. I worked with Joe during the days of CPIA & CPLIA for approximately 13 years. We worked extremely well together—a real team! All for the benefit of the Association.

Joe was an inspiration to everyone—me especially! He expended all his energies for the benefit of the members of the Association. He tried so hard to make sure that everything went smoothly at meetings around the country and the annual conventions. The way he worked! Long hours in all kinds of weather. The mail always got out. He worked diligently on the Hill for better and newer methods and conditions for the members around the country. He always had something new on the horizon. I think Joe was and still is “way ahead of his time.” He took “one giant step for mankind” a long time ago and I hope all the members of the Association recognize and appreciate his tireless efforts.

Marjorie S. Holt
Member of Congress (R-MD)
Washington, DC

I am very pleased that Construction Dimensions has chosen to honor Joe Baker on his 30th anniversary with the Association. I know he deserves this tribute.”

Joe at his desk in Washington’s Dodge House Hotel early in his career with the association.
Baker, the Diligent Dozen would never have been created nor would it have prospered over its ten years of existence.”

Robert Steel
President & CEO
Association Advisors, Ltd.
Potomac, Maryland

“I’ve known Joe a long time, and I’ve always been amazed at the number of things he is able to get done in a limited amount of time. The old adage—give a busy man a job if you want to get it done—certainly applies to Joe. In addition, Joe has an uncanny ability to bring and keep people working together. He is the glue which has kept the Diligent Dozen together these past ten years. This group certainly would have fallen apart after three years were it not for Joe’s efforts. He is definitely an organization man with every ounce and fiber of his being.”

Meredith R. Smith, Jr., CAE
Executive Vice President
National Business Forms Association
Alexandria, VA

“Joe knows almost every member personally. He prides himself on that in-depth involvement and those friendships. He knows the purpose of the association, the by-laws, every committee, every committee chairman—almost by heart—and he’s even actively involved in taking minutes in every committee he can find time to attend during Committee Week. He’s active in the planning and execution down to the last piece of perfection in our convention. He still has time to be involved with the Continuing Study Council think tank group and acts as a liaison to the Executive Committee. He has made every President we’ve ever had look like a King. And, he still finds time to do all of the association’s political representation and in-fighting with the national union groups and the Washington political scene, and with ALL of this, he still finds time to type his own letters!

“Joe’s total dedication and involvement has gone on for a lot of years and Joe has not gotten too big for the association and the association has not gotten too big for Joe. He’s the one guy I know to which God gave more than 24 hours in each day!”

Ronald P. Brady
Bradco International, Ltd.
La Mesa, CA

“I first met Joe Baker when I was in law school and he, practically single-handedly, got a bill through Congress making the Kingspoint Merchant Marine Academy (Joe’s alma mater) a national institution. I helped him write letters, and the total expenditures incurred in getting this bill signed by the President was $32.00—a lunch tab. Through-out the years, Joe has done a marvelous job for his association and its members and has also done much for our country. He is always willing to undertake difficult tasks in the public interest and is so successful at it, that he’s called on time and time again. Joe is a great American.”

Bob Steel, who is also a board member of the Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry, is shown presenting a plaque to Joe Baker in recognition of his role in the formation of the Diligent Dozen.

The Hon. Betty Southard Murphy
(Past Chairman, National Labor Relations Board)
Baker & Hostetler, Attorneys at Law
Washington, DC

“I’ve always been impressed with Joe’s diligence and commitment to get the job done. As evidence of this, I recall staying up with Joe all night working on the final details of CPLIA’s consolidation with GDCI. Joe ended up taking a nap on the couch in my office while I re-wrote the by-laws. He also taught me how to drink martinis without vermouth.”

David Bywaters
President
Lawrence-Leiter & Co.
Kansas City, MO

“One of the things that used to astound me when I first began working for Joe 18 years ago was that I could go into his office and find Joe there talking/listening on the telephone, while writing with the other hand . . . then he
would promptly turn the receiver away from his mouth and issue me some instruction while still writing and listening to his call. And he never missed a beat!

“Having watched him on numerous occasions juggle three fundraising receptions and a sit down dinner in a single evening and then hop on a late evening flight to ‘wherever’ . . . and be back in the office before noon the next day . . . I’m still astonished! (I’ll have to admit that the pace is beginning to get to him, though!)

“Still, Joe is known in Washington as a ‘doer’ and he has a mania about seeing that every minute is not wasted. So on those few weekends at home with nothing scheduled, Joe’s reaction is: ‘Cam, why don’t we invite Mr. and Mrs. So and So over for dinner . . . I can discuss the such and such business and get that taken care of.’”

“Joe truly lives his job. (And I get the gray hair . . . but I love him anyway!)”

Cam Lacy Baker
Membership Services Director
AWCI International
Washington, DC

“Congratulations, Joe, on your first thirty years with AWCI . . . and best wishes for the next thirty! You’re one of the best!”

Hugh McCahey
Association Manager
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Washington, DC

“I knew Joe Baker, Sr. before I knew Joe Baker, Jr.; I have found Jr. to be as energetic as Sr. F.L. Crane & Sons, Inc. was the first open shop contractor to become a member of the Contracting Plasterers’ and Lathers’ International Association. Even then, Joe Baker, Jr. showed no favoritism to any one of his members. I have never called on Joe for anything without being given his prompt attention. Joe’s leadership management skills, and lobbying ability as an association leader are far superior to anyone I have worked with. Joe is the Greatest!”

Jimmie U. Crane
F.L. Crane & Sons, Inc.
Fulton, MS

“Joe Baker is perhaps one of the finest fellows I’ve met since coming back to Washington. Although I haven’t had the privilege of knowing him for all the 30 years he’s been involved with the association, I have watched him carry on the duties as executive vice president with great skill and knowledge. The handling of his management duties, his ex-

pertise in the industry, his political involvement, all point to his leadership qualities. And, I might add, Joe does this—at least most of the time—with a smile. He’s a great leader, and in my estimation, he’s a great down-to-earth guy, too!”

Orrin G. Hatch
U.S. Senate (R-UT)
Washington, DC

“I remember meeting Joe at the 1959 convention in St. Louis. While one group wanted to fire him, I helped persuade the board to give him a raise to $7,500 a year. As I worked my way up “through the chairs”, Joe and I didn’t agree on everything, but we never had any hard feelings. As almost any member will agree, Joe has been a great asset to the association over the years.”

Jerry Bums
Jeremiah Bums, Inc.
Rockville Centre, NY

“Joe Baker is easily one of the most remarkable citizens I’ve met in Washington, and I’m delighted to extend my congratulations to him for the unique recognition he is receiving in Construction Dimensions.

“Joe and I have been friends for many years. He has been an invaluable source of information—an able spokesman for a fine industry.

“Joe has never hesitated about helping when needed to defend and protect the free enterprise system—to the contrary, he is generous with his time and support.

“Having myself been a trade association executive director, I am aware of the challenges, the conflicts, and the frustrations that can go with the job. Joe Baker is a real pro, and he well deserves the respect and admiration in which he is held among my colleagues in the Senate.

“Congratulations, Joe, and best wishes to you always.”

Jesse Helms
U.S. Senate (R-NC)
Washington, DC

“We have served as general counsel for AWCI for about the past fifteen years and the two things that have stood out in my mind about Joe Baker are his devotion to his membership and his incredible ability to get membership..."
involvement. Joe has from time to time been controversial within the industry and among the membership, but any person who gives leadership is going to be controversial. He has devoted his entire life to making this association one of the great construction associations. He is different from many other construction association executive directors in that he focuses on all of the members’ problems, and does not have the tunnel vision as other executive directors who seem to focus only on labor relations and represent their associations only in labor matters.

“We represent a number of national construction associations and Joe Baker gets twice to ten times the membership involvement of any other national association we represent. His committee week is better attended than many national association conventions.

“Joe has always wanted to try something different, including hiring a very young lawyer fifteen years ago to be AWCI’s general counsel.”

McNeil Stokes
Stokes, Shapiro, Fusell & Genberg
Atlanta, Georgia

“I would like to congratulate my good friend, Joe M. Baker, upon his 30th anniversary with the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries-International. I have known Joe since my being elected to Congress in November of 1974. His hard work and dedication on behalf of AWCI are to be commended, and his accomplishments are indeed impressive. I look forward to working with Joe for many more years to come.”

Carrol Hubbard
Member of Congress(D-KY)
Washington, DC

“One of the first off-shore conventions I covered as the new editor of Successful Meetings Magazine was AWCI’s meeting in Puerto Rico in the early 1970s. At the time, this was a new area for meeting planners. Joe and his staff did a phenomenal job. After a day of seminars, general sessions, committee meetings, managing a trade show, and a group banquet, I thought the day was finally over. I was shocked when I learned that the day was just beginning for Joe and his staff. In the AWCI office, there were meetings to critique, a convention newsletter to write and have printed, and the next day’s events to coordinate. It was one of the most successful events we’ve ever covered.

“Joe has always been one of the most cooperative executives in this industry. He is always willing to share his time and talents with other people, and has spoken at several of our seminars. It has been a great professional and personal pleasure to work with Joe over the years, and I wish him congratulations on his 30th anniversary with AWCI.”

Virginia M. Loftt
Associate Publisher
Successful Meetings Magazine
New York, NY

“Congratulations on achieving thirty years of fine service to the wall and ceiling industry. Your efforts have meant a lot to my predecessor, Don Little, and myself, and we look forward to working together with you for the betterment of the industry for many years to come.”

Peter L. Berry
Donalco, Inc.
Scarborough, Ontario

“Congratulations on your 30th Anniversary with the wall and ceiling industry. I never thought you’d live this long. I was sure one of our Past Presidents would have killed you by now! “Seriously, you must get a lot of satisfaction in knowing the enormous impact and influence you have had on a national industry.

“I’ve enjoyed working with you, Joe, and appreciate all your efforts on our behalf. Enjoy another thirty years before calling it quits.”

Thomas J. McGlone
T.J. McGlone & Co.
Edison, NJ

“Congratulations on your 30th Anniversary in the Wall and Ceiling Industry. We want to express our appreciation for the great job you have done for us over all these years.”

Robert, Terry & Steve Watkins
Atina Drywall Contractors, Inc.
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

“Congratulations and best wishes, Joe, on this, your 30th anniversary with the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries-International. It is a pleasure to join with the Association and your many friends in this salute which you so richly deserve.

“Through your tireless efforts, your remarkable manage-
ment skills and forthright approach to problems—within and without the industry—the AWCI-International has achieved a very enviable position in the world of construction.

“It is my hope that we can continue together to build not only better buildings, but better and more understanding bridges between all of society. God Bless!”

Sigurd Lucassen
First General Vice President
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America
Washington, DC

“Congratulations on the 30 years of exceptional service to our industry. It has to be gratifying to see the progress of the products, the sophistication of the contractor and manufacturer, the advent of the supplier market, and certainly the development of second-generation contractors. Surviving through 30 years of different contractor leadership had to be a great challenge.”

William C. Scott
W.C. Scott Interests, Inc.
Houston, Texas

“Congratulations on your 30th anniversary with CPIA and AWCI. I would also like to acknowledge your professionalism, cooperation and understanding you have maintained in dealing with me regarding labor-management matters.”

Robert C. Welch
Executive Assistant to the General President
International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades
Washington, DC

“Congratulations, Joe, on this very special occasion. I’ve been heavily involved in local, state, and national trade associations all my life, and I can honestly say that you are simply the best association executive I’ve ever worked with.”

William A. Marek
President
Marek Brothers, Inc.
Houston, Texas

“Over the 20 some years I have known Joe Baker, I have been one of his greatest admirers—principally because he is a man of solid integrity whose word is bond. Moreover, Joe delivers more services to his members than do many associations with far greater resources and many more dollars to spend. Joe Baker is truly one of the giants of the construction industry.”

Peter A. Cockshaw
Editor & Publisher
Cockshaw’s Construction Labor News & Opinion
Newtown Square, Pennsylvania

“For the full thirty years of Joe’s distinctive career with the association, I have had the privilege of working with him. In the beginning it was plaster set time, scratch and double back, and the ring of the trowel on the lime putty coat. Since I spent all my early years in lath and plaster rather than gypsum wallboard, Joe and I even shared the same strong bias. We were probably “saved” about the same time and have lived happily ever after mostly on what “dry-wall” has become. As one reborn plaster man to another—Congratulations, Joe, on thirty years of great work—and our very best wishes for the future!”

Robert J. Day
President & CEO
USG Corporation
Chicago, Illinois

“One of the rewarding experiences and most enjoyable aspects of working at the Reagan White-House was getting to know and collaborate with Joe Baker. Joe demonstrated real leadership in forming the Construction Industry Coalition for the New Beginning, which did yeoman work on reducing federal spending and passage of the President’s 1981 tax cut. Whether the call was on AWACS, MX, or on registering business men and women to vote in 1984, Joe always stepped forward when we needed him. In my work now I am organizing various legislative coalitions on these same policy issues and am happy to say Joe Baker is always there when we need him. It is a pleasure for me to salute a man of integrity, energy, conviction and courage.
“Congratulations, Joe, on your outstanding services, not only for AWCI and your industry, but also for your President and your country.”

Wayne H. Valis
Former Special Assistant to the President
Valis and Associates, Inc.
Washington, DC

“Over the thirty years that Joe has been engaged in association work, he has been involved, at high levels, with contractors, politicians, bureaucrats, and other people of status and prestige. Yet, one of the things I have noticed is that Joe has the time for the newest kid on the block. The newest local association director. The newest young person on staff. The new person entering into the-field. The caring enough to help these new people in industry is something that many executives lack. I have admired this trait in Joe since I first met him in 1975, and he demonstrated this capacity for caring and being interested in newcomers.”

Robert C. Knight
Executive Director
Rocky Mountain Association of Gypsum Drywall Contractors
Littleton, CO

“Congratulations on your 30 years of service. I am probably the only member left who was at the convention when you were hired for a “trial period of 90 days.” You must have done something right. Our years of friendship have meant a lot to Janie and me. Let’s hope that never changes.”

Robert L. Maidt
Maidt Plastering Company
Oklahoma City, OK

“Joe has great inner strength, a Solomon like understanding of human nature and an tenderness that has touched many. His talents and efforts have brought honor and respect to our industry and to those who form AWCI. ‘No man can be greater than when he gives of himself to others,’ and this is Joe Baker.”

Anne Daly
P.J. Daly Contracting Ltd.
East Hamilton, Ontario

“I don’t believe it’s been thirty years! It was only yesterday (1962) you were helping the National Chamber establish the first Association Public Affairs Conference. Your leadership in bringing associations more effectively into the government process has not diminished over the years.

“Your energy and knowledge has been a part of every major association management milestone since I entered the field in 1955. Let me remind you of just a few where your leadership was imprinted—chairman of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) first Political Action Committee . . . ASAE first International Commit-

tee . . . first Membership chairman . . . vice chairman of ASAE . . . annual meeting chairman, etc., etc.

“The most important thing I can say in this brief letter is I honestly don’t know (and I know them all) any association executive who has contributed more to his profession than you have. Isn’t it nice, you have done it with dignity, good humor, honesty and loyalty. God love you.”

James P. Low
Chairman of the Board
Dynamics, Inc.
Washington, DC

“Sometimes it’s hard to describe Joe Baker and his abilities—but this should shed some light on his qualifications:

“Betty and I arrived in New York City on a Sunday afternoon on a trip to South Africa with AWCI’s Continuing Study Council. Somehow we had no Visa and the plane to South Africa would depart within three or four hours. Joe did the impossible—he got us a Visa by opening up the South African embassy on a Sunday afternoon. Fantastic job.”

Robert S. Mitchell
Denver Drywall Company
Englewood, CO

“Joe Baker is a highly respected association executive, who is recognized as a pro’s pro. He is always willing to share his knowledge with others, and has helped me solve difficult problems more than once. I greatly value his counsel and his friendship.”

Ray Roper
Executive Vice President, Society of American Florists
Washington, DC

“As you pass the halfway point of your illustrious career, I’ve always thought of you as an ‘in’ person. By that I mean: informed . . . involved . . . interested . . . innovative . . . intuitive, and for those who know and care for you the most, at times infuriating! Your industry is lucky to have you serve them these past three decades, and I wish you and your members continued success.”

John Jay Daly
Daly & Associates, Inc.
Washington, DC

“As Senator Taft’s Director of Legislation, I learned the skill and political savvy that Joe Baker brought to a legislative issue. Since entering the practice of law, I have learned of his credibility and reputation as an outstanding association leader. He has become a trusted and respected friend.”

Randy Stayin
Partner, Taft, Stettinius and Hollister
Washington, DC