

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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In Memoriam

BERNARD BOILEN

On Wednesday, September 8, the component industry lost dedicated pioneer Bernard Boilen. Boilen, 83, passed away at his home in Tyler, TX.

Before entering the building components industry, Boilen enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps at the start of World War II. He flew B-17s as a waist gunner and earned a Purple Heart for his service.

Boilen's career in the building components industry began as a salesman for a few different connector plate manufacturers. He then started his own business, Forest Products Industries, with two partners, Max Diego and Shelter Systems. When Boilen and Diego went out on their own, they renamed their company Bemax, which won over component manufacturers by supplying generic connector plates, in-house engineering systems for trusses and wall panels, all at very competitive prices. Boilen's Bemax revolutionized the industry, allowing component manufacturers to produce engineering in-house, rather than connector plate suppliers producing the engineering. When Bemax was purchased by MiTek in April 1991, Boilen retired.

In 2001, Boilen was chosen by members of the Wood Truss Council of America as a Hall of Fame inductee and the association recognized him for his outstanding contribution to the industry.

WTCA Past President (1987) and fellow Hall of Famer (1989) Lenny Sylk had the pleasure of working with Bernie and remembered him for his early vision and innovations. "Bernie's contributions to the truss industry should never be forgotten. He was a pioneer in producing and supplying low cost connector plates, unbundled from engineering. He brought together what the parties needed to produce the low cost plates, develop and service the in-house engineering, and finance and manage the operation. He had a different vision of the direction that the wood truss industry should be headed in, and he pursued it to the benefit of the entire industry, changing the industry in the process," Sylk said.

Boilen is survived by wife Leatrice; brother Irving; son Kenneth; daughter Trina; stepsons Thomas and William Mitchell; stepdaughter Leatrice; and eleven grand and step-grandchildren.

Thanks to Lenny Sylk and Randy Stefanowicz for submitting information for this piece.

KEN PARKER

The Northeast Florida truss community recently experienced the loss of Ken Parker after a long

and courageous battle with cancer. Ken began his truss career with Wickes Lumber in 1976 and became the truss plant manager for Manning Building Supply in Jacksonville in 1987, a position he held until his death.

All of us who knew Ken marveled at his zest for living and his legacy of integrity and honesty in the business arena. He also was dedicated to his family, as much of his free time was spent with his wife Jennifer and their children in many activities.

Thanks to Tom Smith for submitting information for this piece.

Submissions to "In Memoriam" can be emailed to editor@sbcmag.info. Photos are encouraged and will run as space allows. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.

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