



ASCE Fellow's Generosity Paves Path for Future Civil Engineers

ASCE has been there to help Robert P. Wadell, P.E., F.ASCE. So it only seemed natural to him that he return the favor.

And then some.

Wadell recently made an extraordinary gift to the ASCE Foundation, placing him among the Foundation's [1852 Society](#) – a prestigious group of 16 of the most generous donors in ASCE's storied history.

“Every ASCE member can be proud when one of our own hard-working and successful members acknowledges the importance of our profession by giving back and investing in its future,” said Foundation President Jon Magnusson, P.E., S.E., F.SEI, Dist.M.ASCE. “Bob has truly provided leadership for current and future civil engineers.”

Wadell joined ASCE as a student at the University of California, Berkeley while earning his BSCE and MSCE degrees. He later served as president for the San Francisco Younger Member group, then known as the Associate Member Forum, and secretary of the San Francisco Section.

“At every turn of the road, I found ASCE was an important component – through the people you meet and the skills you develop,” Wadell said. “I think it's important to continue your education, to build professional relationships, and to practice professional conduct. Through my ASCE participation and observation, I have learned so much by meeting and serving on committees with peers, highly regarded specialists, and principals and founders of impressive civil engineering firms. ASCE has been an important part of that process since I was a young member.”

Wadell started his own company, Wadell Engineering Corporation, with a practice limited to airport planning and design in the San Francisco Bay Area while still in his 20s. The firm has served as prime consultant for 500 domestic and international airport projects, both large and small, for general aviation, military and commercial airports, and international airports in India and the Philippines. Favorite projects include developing new runways and hangars for the military, remote island airfields, as well as airstrips for private individuals, making for a varied and interesting career.

Perhaps what makes Wadell most proud in his 44 years as president and CEO of his firm, is the company's successful projects and the relationships with his clients. Some current public clients have worked with the company since the earliest years.

“We learned early on through ASCE,” Wadell said, “that if you practice in the areas in which you're competent; work in the interests of your clients, and pay close attention to your projects, then all of those things come together for an enjoyable and successful practice.”

Wadell received ASCE's Edmund Friedman Young Engineer Award for Professional Achievement in 1974 and, later, the Outstanding Engineer in California ASCE Activities Award. He served ASCE in a number of committee positions at the section and national levels including chairman of the Executive Committee of ASCE's Engineering Management Division.

In addition to his gift to ASCE, Wadell established the Robert P. Wadell, P.E., F.ASCE, Endowed Scholarship Fund at UC Berkeley to assist undergraduate civil engineering students who show financial need and "to provide for the creation of outstanding civil engineers through opportunity."

Most recently, Wadell established the Robert P. Wadell Endowed Fellowship for Civil Engineering Innovation, to support high-achieving doctoral students in Berkeley's CEE department and "to foster innovation in both research and the practice of civil engineering."

"Bob is an accomplished civil engineer who gives back to his profession with a sincere desire to make a positive difference in the world," said ASCE Executive Director Tom Smith, ENV SP, CAE, F.ASCE. "The ASCE Foundation is grateful for Bob's generosity and support of the Foundation's efforts to advance the profession and public welfare."

And though Wadell's career is still going strong, he enjoys looking forward to the profession's future engineers.

"As you look back at your accomplishments and consider how you got here, you start saying, 'Well, what can I do? How can I contribute?'" Wadell said. "So it becomes a time to give back. Remember, it is never too early to give back, but don't let it be too late!

"ASCE has been invaluable to my career. ASCE helped in developing my education, ethics, and confidence to start my own firm and run it successfully. I want to offer to Younger Members the opportunities and benefits I have received from my lifelong membership in ASCE."

If you want to demonstrate your philanthropic leadership within the civil engineering community by becoming a member of the 1852 Society, contact Jen Ilchishin, Manager of Major Gifts, at 703-295-6092 or at jilchishin@asce.org.