



# Ethics Seminar

## Ethics In The Construction Industry



Conversation and concern about trust and ethical behavior have reached critical mass as

people have lost faith in nearly every institution. From churches to corporate America and beyond, news of fraud and dishonesty prevail.

To enhance a dialogue on the immense importance of ethics, the Eastern Michigan University (EMU), College of Technology, Construction Management Program, in cooperation with the Greater Michigan Plumbing & Mechanical Contractors Association (PMC) and Michigan Chapter of National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) sponsored an



Ethics Seminar, open to all of the construction industry.

Dr. James Gill, Contractor Educational Trust Fund, Endowed Chair and Endowed Professor for Applied

Professional Ethics, Louisiana State University, College of Engineering, Department of Construction was the featured speaker and moderator for the days' activities. Dr. Gill is a public presenter on professional ethics, and a member of the Bar in Louisiana and Washington, D. C., with experience in banking, lobbying, and business consulting. He is a founding member of the World Association of Lawyers, and on the Board of Directors of the American Council on Construction Education, with over 30 years in Construction Education.

"We will, within the confines of this program help all learn to take the necessary steps to improve the operation and perception of the construction industry," stated Dr. Jimmy Gill.

Dr. Gill presented an indepth review of the recent *FMI Survey on Ethics*, reviewing not only the results, but discussing how the construction industry needs to change to become more aware of the need to change.

### Key Ethical Conclusions Reflected in the Survey:

- Based on this survey, our industry is faced with a serious ethics issue that can only be overcome by a concerted effort by all to install confidence by both our clients and our workforce
- Only 30% had ethics programs that were "formal and well-known to everyone in the firm and enforced by top management"
- Eleven percent had no ethics program at all

Michigan Chapter



### Key Ethical Concerns Reflected in the Survey:

- A breakdown in trust and integrity is bad for business
- Loss of reputation for industry and individual company if practices aren't more ethical
- The need for codes and standards for ethics
- Create a fair and ethical bid process

### Finding Solutions for Construction Industry Ethical Issues:

- Stiffer penalties for those caught in unethical or illegal acts
- An industry-wide code of ethics
- More emphasis placed on social responsibility in awarding criteria
- More training



In an effort to explore all facets of the question of ethics and ethical behavior and how it applies in the construction industry, an excellent panel of industry leaders was compiled to discuss their personal commitments to ethics, and how the topic is handled in their companies and through the procurement process. Attendees were encouraged, and participated in the thought provoking discussions.

Members of the **“Eastern Constructors”**, the EMU Student Chapter were also in attendance and added an interesting dimension to the panel discussion.



A great deal of consideration was put into the development of the panel, which paid off significantly with excellent observations and the joining of the audience in the discussion. Unfortunately, due to a scheduling problem, the design member was unable to attend.

With Dr. Gill moderating, individuals from various parts of the industry participated on the panel.

David Lee Foster, P.E., with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Construction Branch, Area Engineer, Grand Haven Area Office, a career Federal employee with the Corps represented the public owner/user community. During his career he has been assigned to military and civil works.

James A. Legault, Consumers Power Company, Asset Manager for Business Service participated as the private owner/user. He has been a consulting engineer for over thirty years, with Consumers Energy Company for the past 16 years.

Charles A. Gatecliff, CAG Consulting, Ltd. represented the specialty contractors. He has over 40 years of construction experience. Beginning as a Pipefitter apprentice he has served as a journeyman, foreman, general superintendent, estimator/project manager, up to owner of a successful mechanical contracting firm in Troy, Michigan.

Dennis H. Tuttle, ITT Bell & Gossett, Manager of Technical Services, Engineered Products, represented the manufacturing community. Mr. Tuttle has been involved in the construction industry for over thirty years. Mr. Tuttle is widely published in industry publications and technical manuals.

Vincent P. Deleonardis, Vice President/Project Director with the George W. Auch Company, participated in the panel for the general contractor/construction manager division of the industry. Vincent Deleonardis has an extensive background in project management in the industry.

**L. to R. – Moderator, Jimmy Gill, Vince Deleonardis, George W. Auch Company, Charles Gatecliff, CAG Consulting, Dennis Tuttle, ITT Bell & Gossett, David Lee Foster, US Army Corps of Engineers, James Legault, Consumers Power Company**



Three panels were presented in the afternoon on Procurement/Execution, Change Orders and Claim Avoidance and Design Effect on Productivity. These sessions gave all in attendance the opportunity to discuss the issues in a more detailed and specific manner.



After breakout discussions, the former panel participants reconvened for a final discussion session which included members of the Eastern Constructors.

**Students on the panel - R. to L. - Professor William Moylan, Chim Lim, Christopher Dezi, Darrell Rounds, and Chris Patselasi - Below – Moderator Dr. Jimmy Gill**

After the final panel, Dr. Gill reviewed the days activities and emphasized the importance of the topic and the need to continue all forms of discussions on improving ethics in the construction industry. In closing he added ideas on how we could proceed from this point.

The Seminar has received extraordinarily great reviews, and there has been a discussion on repeating a similar program for individual owner/user organizations.



After the

**Additional sponsors of the seminar included: Michigan Mechanical Contractors Association, Detroit Chapter Associated General Contractors, Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors of Detroit and West Michigan Mechanical Contractors Association.**

### *Candid photos at the Seminar*



**L. to R. – David Foster, James Legault, Chuck Gatecliff reviewing presentations, Jeanne and Ernest Merlanti EMU Donors who sponsor the Ethics Program in EMU's School of Business, EMU College of Technology Dean John Dugger, Jeanne Merlanti, and Milt Jackson, EMU College of Technology conferring on the agenda**



**Above L. to R. – PMC Consultant Aggie Cole and Michigan MCA’s Cindy Maher concentrating on speakers, Enjoying Colonel Mullane presentation, Dr. Bob Lahidji, ready for the program to begin, David Tuttle, Bill Moylan preparing to speak**

**Below – L. to R. – EMU Professors Bill Moylan and Jim Stein speaking with student Justin Allen in center, Mike Brunette, John E. Green Company and PMC Consultant Bill Smart, EMU Students preparing to be impressed by the program**



## EMU Program’s Speaker Educates the Construction Industry then Shares the Opportunity with Local Schools



Luncheon speaker for the event was Colonel Mike Mullane, retired Air Force and NASA Astronaut.

Selected as a Mission Specialist Astronaut in 1978 in the first group of Space Shuttle Astronauts, he completed three space missions and logged 356 hours in space. He has written and published numerous books.



Colonel Mullane spoke first on his time as a Space Shuttle Astronaut, and all the events that transpired during his training and time in space. He then tied those experiences into leadership and teamwork and their relationship to ethics and ethical pursuits.

While in Michigan for the Seminar Colonel

Mullane enthralled two groups of students with discussion of his space exploration, at the request of Eastern Michigan University, and PMC and NECA. Colonel Mullane arrived a day early and spoke to the 130 students at Pinckney’s Pathfinder Middle School (right). The day of the event, students, and members of the NASA Club from Scarlett Middle School (left) came to the EMU/Eagle Crest Center to listen to his space exploits. Along with his time in space he spoke extensively on goal setting, doing your best, and taking care of your body (particularly staying away from drugs and alcohol) to enable them to obtain their dreams.

