

Oral History Interview

with

RED WARD

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Pasadena, Cal.

By Michael R. Adamson

Adamson: All right. Let's jump right in here. So you've worked with Pankow since 1986. First of all, tell me about your background before that time.

Ward: I moved to California in 1985. Prior to that, I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, migrated to Minnesota my senior year in high school, and right after my senior year in high school, I enlisted in the United States Navy, so I spent four years in the Navy from 1966 to late 1969. I was a radio operator and I spent two tours in Vietnam.

Came out of the Navy and went to the University of Minnesota for a year, and then I moved to Colorado after that and was first introduced to construction after I had lived in Colorado for about a year and got interested in construction. I actually became a laborer first. A giant mill site was being constructed near where I lived, and they were hiring and they were paying very well, and that's usually what draws people to the industry. But I started as a laborer, and in that job I was a carpenter helper, and I became very interested in the carpenter that I was working with and what his duties were. Mine were very menial and very, I want to say, heavy work. Not that I shied away from heavy work, but I wasn't allowed to use my brain, and I thought, "Well, there's something that I would be interested in," and that would be carpentry.

On this same job, I had an opportunity to join the carpenters union and enter into the apprenticeship. I took that opportunity and then worked my way through the carpentry apprenticeship in the union, and this was in 1974. Prior to taking that job as a laborer, I had actually bought a piece of property and built a house with two other individuals, which was my first introduction into the carpentry, if you will, so I had a little bit of a background in that, very little.

Then I worked in the union for several years in Colorado, and later on in the later part of the seventies, work was very slow in the union, and, needing gainful employment, I formed my own construction company, feeling that that was a good plan.

Adamson: You're still in Colorado?

Ward: I was still in Colorado at this time, late seventies. I think I was very good at building and very good at understanding what needed to be done at that point in time, in terms of taking a project from the ground up, but I was not a very good businessman. So after about four years, I folded that company, my partner and I.

In the early eighties, about '83, work in Colorado was drying up pretty readily. There was a recession on, and by '85, where we lived—my daughter had been born in '83 and now we had a child to raise. We came to California in the early '85. At the time, I had still maintained my union card, and so I went to the hall when I was here when we came to visit my wife's sister in early '85. A new niece was born and we came to visit. I was amazed at how much work was available in California. I came from Colorado where there was no work, came to California. It was interesting, the guy at the union hall said,

“Well, if you’ve got your tools in your truck, I can give you a job right now.” I was rather amazed at that and found out the scale was considerably higher than I paid myself when I had my own company, and I thought, well, tired of the winters, tired of the snow in Colorado, I thought, maybe it’s time to make the move. So we did. We moved to California.

I worked for several companies in early ’85, and always had seen and heard about Charles Pankow Builders in the union hall; had some new friends I’d made in the union hall who worked. It had always been told to me that, boy, if you could ever get a job out of the hall on a Pankow job, you would want to do that. Never really understood why, but I always thought, “Well, if the opportunity ever arises for me, I’m going to take that.”

Interestingly enough, my father-in-law and I were sitting—I’d been laid off from a job. It was Christmastime of 1985, and we were sitting around. He was retired Air Force and was involved with the laborers union back in St. Louis. He and I were sitting having coffee on New Year’s Eve 1985, December 31, and he said, “You know, maybe you ought to run down to the hall, because I’ve always found that around the holidays and prior to holidays, there’s very few there to accept jobs, and if a job comes up, there’s a good chance you might get one.”

So I said, “That’s not a bad idea. I think I’ll do that.” Well, I went down to the hall on New Year’s Eve 1985. There were three of us that showed up in the hall that day. Normally there’s, you know, a hundred people. There were three, and three jobs came for a Charles Pankow Builders project. I said, “Well, there’s that company.” So I took that job and I’m still here. So, that’s how I came to work for Charles Pankow Building.

Adamson: What job was that?

Ward: That was South Coast Plaza parking structure in Costa Mesa, and it was constructed from late '85 till end of summer. It was about a nine- or ten-month job, year job, probably, sometime in the summer of '86. I actually was laid off from that job in the summer of '86, went to work for another company that I had previously worked for for about three or four months until the next Pankow project kicked off.

It was interesting to me that the group of people that I knew and had become friends with in my new home of California and in the carpenters union had all talked and discussed about when Pankow fires up a job, you want to drag up from where you're at and go back to work for them. It was a good company to work for.

So as this job in Long Beach, called Shoreline Square, was kicking off, people began to migrate back to it as the word got out that they were hiring. So I did leave that company, went back and was hired back on Shoreline Square in January of 1987. I was made a foreman eight days later on that job, and I ran the jumpform for the hotel when we built the Sheraton Hotel. Then it was a Sheraton. I believe today it's a Westin. But Sheraton Hotel and a twenty-two-story office tower, and I ran the jumpform that poured the concrete core for the building. Very difficult form, but a great experience. Great job. We had a good time on that job. Very fond memories of that time in Pankow history for me.

Adamson: So, working on those two jobs, did that answer your question about why people would want to work on Pankow jobs?

Ward: I think so. It was the people. It was the organization. We had worked for other companies; that always seemed to be a chaotic thing. So it was a little bit difficult to explain, but there was a good group of superintendents with Pankow and they always seemed to have good direction. You worked hard, you got rewarded for that by getting paid and keeping on the job.

In those days in the hall as a union carpenter, we used to refer to it as a good lick, meaning you went out on a job this time, how long did it last? Well, I was there for six months, or I was there for a year, or hopefully you would find a company that you could stay with, and in my case I think I got a pretty good lick with this one, meaning that I've been around quite a while.

Adamson: How does it happen that you would go from one Pankow job to another?

Ward: Well, as a foreman, and understand there's carpenter foreman, laborer foreman, cement finisher foreman and so on, they are the first step of managers in the Pankow self-performed work environment. As a foreman, you have certain responsibilities that are required of you in managing a crew of people. You will be given a body of work to accomplish, a schedule to accomplish it by, and you as that manager must perform the work and meet deadlines. If you perform and meet deadlines and get the work done and do good quality work, then why wouldn't they want to take you to the next job? And that's really how it works.

So there began to be in those days, and I think prior to my arrival in Pankow, there was a group of people that had been around for several jobs prior, certainly many jobs in the history of Pankow, but the group of people that I was working with, we began to form a nucleus of people that would travel from job to job as the work was available. Sometimes a job starts out, you don't need twenty guys, maybe you only need two, so two guys would go, and maybe others would move to another company for a short period of time until that job was able to support more individuals.

But one thing that this company has always exhibited to me is if you were willing to accept responsibility and wanted to put forth the effort and show that you chose me to be a leader, you chose me to be a manager of work, I'm going to show you that you made a good choice. As long as you were willing to do that and accept that responsibility, Pankow was more than willing to give you that responsibility and give you more as time went on. So that's how it came to be that people would always migrate back to a Pankow job. It's a good place to work, with good people. It's a family atmosphere, so to speak, nucleus of good superintendents. It was a while before you got to meet the hierarchy at Pankow, the higher-ups of the company.

Adamson: So even if those guys were walking around the project, you wouldn't necessarily run into them at that point?

Ward: In the early days when I worked with Pankow on the jobs that I just mentioned, they may come on the job, I probably would not have interfaced with them and did not see them. They might have heard that Dean Stephan, who at that time, I believe, was the

current president of the company, and Charlie Pankow was coming onto the job. You might hear about it, might be forewarned that tomorrow there's going to be a visit by the hierarchy of the company. Be on your toes. Look alive. We always used to joke. I said, "When are we not on our toes? I mean, we're working our butts off out here." But occasionally you'd run into them, but pretty rarely at that level, at my experience.

Adamson: So at what point are you a Pankow employee then?

Ward: I was a foreman on that job, Shoreline Square. After Shoreline Square there was another period of time in my career where slowdown in the construction industry in late 1988, I was one of the last two people left on Shoreline Square. We finished the job, and when I say "people," I mean hourly employee. Myself and one other foreman were kept around until the very last day when there was no work left on that project. We had built other projects which a group of the nucleus that I spoke about had gone to and had built, and now those projects were over. In late 1988, there was not a new project starting, so another period of time when you were going to be laid off and go to another job or take another job out of the hall.

Knowing that a group of people had migrated to another company—a prior superintendent had left the company and was working for this other company, so he was starting up another group, and that job was going. In those days, with a young child, put food on the table, I never longed for a day without finding gainful employment, so I went and took another job as a position of foreman with another company as soon as I was laid off on Shoreline Square.

I was gone for a year. I was gone for a year for a good solid reason, and that's, I think, a little bit about my character. I made a commitment to that company to build the job that I was given. It was a seven-story parking structure for McDonnell Douglas Aircraft.

I was called back from Pankow about halfway through that job. They said, "Well, we're starting up another job. We want you to come back," one of the superintendents I'd worked with.

I told him at the time, I said, "Well, I've made a commitment, and I need to honor that commitment."

Something about, "Well, if you don't come now, you might not have a job."

I said, "Well, I've made a commitment and that's me. That's my character," and I think that speaks highly for the type of people that Pankow hires, because I think that of all the people that are with this company and organization, they have very high morals and high character in regard to when they make a commitment they stand for it.

So I finished that job, and as soon as that job was over, they laid me off, and I called the superintendent and he said, "Oh, can you be here tomorrow?" So whatever warning he had given me lasted about thirty seconds when he heard I was available again.

So I came back to Pankow, and I've been here ever since, and that was in the summer of 1989, so I've been back with Pankow since the summer of 1989. On that job I went to Clarion Studios, did finish work, hung doors, frames, hardware, whatever I was asked to do, still being paid as a foreman. Went from that job to 10380 Wilshire. It's a condominium high-rise we built in Wilshire in 1989, and started that job and came up through the foundations.

Then we were building another parking structure at Brea, and they needed somebody who had some concrete experience that they could work in the pre-casting of that. They chose me, I went to that job, and I worked on that job until it was near completion and then was transferred to the Tyler Mall project in Riverside. I was one of the first foremen that went to that job under then-field superintendent Billy Hughes. You might have heard that name from other people. He had come up through the ranks in the company as well. He and I had worked together at Shoreline Square and at Clarion Studios, and I went back there to work for him as his general foreman.

During that job, there was a shift in management on that job. The then-project superintendent, Grant Burton, was retired on that project, Billy Hughes became project superintendent, and I became field superintendent, basically assuming his job on that job. A little bit of a difficult change of hierarchy on a job that was under way, I now was in command of all of my cronies, so to speak, all of my buddies, my other foremen that I was working with on that job, because it was well under way, and that was in October of 1990. So October 1, 1990, I became field superintendent.

In those days, not that it's any less of an honor in this company today, it's a little bit different, and I'll explain that maybe later, but in those days, there were very few people who were elevated to field superintendent. It was a "you were either chosen or you weren't" situation, and Billy Hughes was one who came out of the ranks and was chosen to be in that position, and there had not been another since him until me. I always felt that an honor.

The operations manager then, Alan Murk, was operations for Charles Pankow in those days, and he came to the job and he told me, he said, “What would you think of a position as field superintendent?”

Boy, my eyes lit up, and I thought, “Wow, this could be my opportunity.” I was rather shocked that he was even talking to me, and I was excited. I remember being elated. I said, “Wow, is that even a possibility?” I told him, as I had done when they asked me to be a foreman, I said, “You know, just give me the job, and I’ll be more than happy to do it, and watch me go.”

I shared that with Billy Hughes, and Billy said, “Well, that’s pretty rare, because that never happens. They don’t come and broadcast that they’re going to elevate you.” Well, it was probably one week later when the transference of power that I explained before happened, and that’s when he assumed the position of leadership on that job and I was his second-in-command as field superintendent on that job. Very successful job, built entirely at night.

[Begin File 2]

Adamson: No, actually, I really haven’t heard much about Billy Hughes, so do you want to tell me a little bit about him and what happened to him?

Ward: Yes. He worked for Pankow for twenty-plus years. He’s one of a group of people who left Pankow about six years ago, I believe, to form their own company in kind of a turbulent time. At the time, I don’t think he was highly revered for his decision

of leaving, because I think he was one of the leaders. He was my mentor in bringing me up into the ranks of superintendent; was a great, great leader as far as I was concerned, and he built a lot of great buildings and/or participated in a lot of buildings that I was involved with as well. I worked with him at Shoreline Square. He was the field superintendent that I worked under. I worked with him at Tyler Mall, I worked with him at Roosevelt Field Mall in Long Island, New York, and then I didn't work with him any longer. He went on and built other things. I moved on with other superintendents. But he has a great history with the company but [is] no longer with us.

Adamson: Do you know the name of the company?

Ward: WEST Builders is the name of the company, and I believe he's still building. I've kind of lost contact with him. He lives in northern California now. He used to live in southern California. But he was one of my mentors.

Another great mentor of mine who kind of brought me up and taught me my leadership management within this company was Bill Tornrose, who started as an engineer at the company. I believed he worked for us for about seventeen years and built two great projects. Well, many, probably, I don't recall them all, but as a superintendent, as project superintendent, I think the two that stand out the most, and you probably heard about some of them, were Gateway Center, which up until Montage was the largest single project the company had ever built, and I was field superintendent on the job under him. Joe Sanders was the project sponsor on that job, and both Bill and Joe became mentors of mine as well, and I think they helped mold me, rounded the edges, I guess, of a rough,

rough mold. But they helped me tremendously throughout my career as a field superintendent.

I held that position as field superintendent for about eight years, eight and a half years, something like that, and then was elevated to project superintendent right after the [Metropolitan Water District] MWD project in late 1998. Then I was sent to San Francisco area and built the first Pankow hybrid moment frame project in the State of California, which is not the forty-story building [The Paramount] everyone tells you about; it is the Stanford parking structure. It was actually the third application of the Pankow hybrid frame. First one was in Long Island, New York. The second one was in Eugene, Oregon. The third one was at Stanford. Then, of course, since then we've built Third and Mission, the forty-story building, Westside Media and others. But that was my first job as project superintendent and my own project, very exciting job, fast track, built that in ten months in 1999. Then from there I became project superintendent on the Pacific Plaza job, which was in Daly City, just south of San Francisco.

It was during that job, we were probably about six months into that job, when I got a call from Tom Verti, and he had stated that Charlie Pankow wanted to elevate me to the position of operations manager. I was floored. I was absolutely floored. First of all, my first reaction was why, why me over Billy Hughes? Because at the time I considered Billy a far superior superintendent to me. Billy was the superintendent on the Third and Mission job before he started building, and quite committed to that project. But I don't think that was the reason. I think the true reason came from Charlie himself when he told me that in the past history of the company the operations manager or the operations of the company really came from the superintendent corps, and the superintendent corps that

had a background in building carpentry. Some of the earlier operations managers in the company, you know, Alan Murk was a carpenter, for instance, and prior to him, I believe—sorry, right now the name escapes me, but he was also a carpenter. We had Red Metcalf was a superintendent in the company, and he came from a carpenter, was a great leader in the company. Also I worked for him.

So Charlie had indicated he wanted to get back to running the operation side of the company from a guy who both had his background in the field and also had good management skills, could be somewhat of a conduit between the field and the corporate side of the company. That was the explanation for me being in the position.

Like everything I've been asked to do in this company, I accepted the challenge, accepted the job, and said, "Thanks for having faith in me, and here I go." So I'm still operations manager, although that position has grown tremendously in the company. We're actually more of a department now than we are a single operations manager. But in 2000 there was one, and that was me.

Adamson: That brings to mind a couple of questions. I hope I'm not out of—it seems like I'm jumping around too much here. Your talking about mentoring also brings to mind, was your training up to the point, let's say, where you're operations manager strictly on-the-job mentoring, or was there more formalized preparation for someone who was at the level of superintendent?

Ward: To answer that question, the training that was given in the days that I came up through this company would be something I would more describe as training by fire. It's

interesting, I'm not suggesting that that's definitely the way it needs to be or should have been, but I think that in the early days in the history of this company—when I say “early days,” I'm rather young by comparison to the age of the company in terms of my tenure with the company. I've been with the company a little over twenty years, twenty-one years. When I came around, the company was still twenty-five years old. In fact, I remember my first annual meeting, and in those days carpenter foremen or foremen were invited to the annual meeting. It was the twenty-fifth anniversary, and so we'd been around for a while.

But to answer your question, I think the formal training—I mean, of course, I was trained in the use of the labor distribution report and understanding what cost management was done, and that training was given to me in a formal-type setting. But it was the responsibility of the superintendent, your direct supervisor, to provide you with that training. So my mentor, Billy Hughes, Bill Tornrose, Joe Sanders, they would school me in the crew sizing and understanding the estimate and what went into the preparation of the cost for management of our job. So that part of the training was given in more formal setting, but it was on the job. As far as learning the scope and breadth of my position, you had to learn it. You had to learn it and perform the job. I think those of us that are still around must have been successful at that because we are still here. Training by fire, I think, is about the best description I can give on the job.

Adamson: The level of project superintendent, it's my understanding that you can pretty much stay at that level the rest of your career. Is that something you more or less—

Ward: You can. I'm sorry, go ahead. I didn't let you finish the question.

Adamson: You mentioned that moving up, operations manager wasn't something you expected. I guess my broader question is getting at: After you were with the company, ten, fifteen years, where did you see yourself in the company in ten years hence?

Ward: It's a good question. When I came to work for Pankow, and when I even came to California, my personal goal was to get employed with a company and finish my career in construction with that company. That was an internal goal that I had, and I would do whatever necessary, learn whatever I had to learn, work as hard as I could work to achieve that. When I went to work for Pankow, the path seemed to be paved, if given the opportunity, I would seize the opportunity, and they would give me more opportunity and I would seize that. I always anticipated I wanted to be a superintendent with a large commercial builder, and then when, as I explained the somewhat mystery of becoming a field superintendent or even becoming a superintendent out of the ranks and when I became a superintendent in 1990, it was a rare privilege, and you didn't want to screw that up. "Boy, I've got to be on my toes now because I'm a Pankow superintendent."

There were people that I worked with, and still work with today, who, interestingly enough—I'm kind of jumping around, and I apologize. But interestingly enough, the jobs that I mentioned in the beginning where I first started working with Pankow, there are some guys that are still with this company today that I shared the first job with, that it was their first job as well. They're carpenters, carpenter foremen. Some of them are superintendents. You *can* stay as a superintendent for the rest of your career

with this company. I would have enjoyed to do that. In fact, I somewhat miss that part of the job. I've always liked being out in the action, if you will, and physically performing the building. I'm currently doing some of that right now. That is the bread and butter of our company, is the actual physical implementing of our contracts and building our projects. That's where the rubber meets the road, I guess, is the best description I can give.

Adamson: To become operations manager, what did that entail? Is that trial by fire, too, or is that a little more structured?

Ward: It was more structured, and then, as I explained, since I became operations manager in 2000, the company has gone through tremendous change, I would say, and all for the good, I think. From what I can see, it's been structured to be for growth, it's been structured for not rapid growth beyond control, but a controlled systematic approach to building, being better builders, and being better at what we do, and recognizing that change needed to happen within the company.

What I mean by that is if you take a look at operations, for instance, when I took over operations, I replaced a gentleman who had literally replaced me on Pacific Plaza, Kevin Smith, and he's been with the company thirty-five years. I consider him senior to me, another mentor, great guy, superintendent for the company. He took over my job, and basically we switched places. I took over his job.

Shortly after that, about six months later, there needed to be a little more structure to operations, and part of the reason was we had fourteen active projects in CPBL, the

base building group of our company, fourteen projects at that time. I don't think we've since then had that many projects at one given time, and that was in early 2000 on into '01 and '02. It was a tough time for us because we had a period of time where we didn't have a lot of work, and then all of a sudden we had a lot of work, and we had to hire, I would say, less-than-quality people to build those jobs. So it was a period of time of growth for the company. So we basically promoted a gentleman into the position of vice president of operations, who then worked side-by-side with me as operations manager. Since that time, there is a vice president of operations, there is an operations manager in all three of our regions, in northern California, southern California, and Hawaii. The operations department, if you will, now has a corporate scheduler, a concrete superintendent.

At one time, the safety director worked under operations. He's now moved into the risk management side of the company. But we had no safety department, so to speak of, and now I believe we have five safety managers in the company. So if you take the position of operations manager in the days when I assumed the role as one person and all of the facets of operating a company that I just described fell under one individual, you can see in a very short period of time the growth that the company has experienced, and all for the good. So, learning that position and participating in the training necessary to bring along all of those departments and all of that has been formalized training, so to speak. Did I answer the question?

Adamson: You're explaining the company responding to this volume of work, not necessarily beforehand, envisioning that it would grow to that size in that short period of time?

Ward: It was a time when in the late eighties there was a period of time where construction had gone through a downturn and was on its way back up. We're very client oriented in this company, and we had some good clients that had work, and maybe we'd been working in preconstruction for a long period of time on those projects. They all seemed to hit at the same time, so we had a growth spurt, if you will. It's not that we didn't plan it; it's just the clients' projects came to fruition at a time when it all seemed to be at relatively the same time. That's what I was describing.

Adamson: I don't want to jump to the end of the story, but I just want to button down the timing of this. The company, the changes you're describing, are happening before Charlie Pankow passes.

Ward: That's correct.

Adamson: My follow-up question kind of does jump to the end of the story. What has changed organizationally since that 2004 been more the same of what got started with this volume of work around 2000, or have there been different changes that have taken place since that time that have affected the organization?

Ward: You're talking about after Charlie's passing?

Adamson: Yes.

Ward: It's amazing to me—I don't know why it's amazing. I shouldn't have said that, I guess. Charlie Pankow was an incredibly intelligent individual and had just supreme vision for his company, and having known him and having had the opportunity to interface with him like I did was truly a great honor. His biggest fear, I believe, was that in his passing, when and if that would happen, his biggest fear was that his company would not survive. And I think the greatest thing about Charlie is that his legacy, his company, his vision, the construction company that we are, the builders that we are, and the people that are involved with the company today are a testament to his vision, I believe, and I think that he participated in it in such a way that we are today what he wanted us to be, and we've forever preserved his company. I don't think there's ever a time that Pankow Builders won't exist. I mean, certainly if I'm around it won't. We'll work toward that end. But at least from my perspective, that's what I truly believe.

The change that the company has gone through, we're managed by six general partners right now, and we don't have one individual that makes the decisions, and I think that's important. I think it's important not so because it's a—I don't want to say we're governed by the committee, but it just seems to be that the decision, the focus, the direction the company has gone since his passing has all been extremely positive, and it's a controlled growth. Our vision is to grow. Our vision is to increase our volume. Our vision is to increase our profits, of course. That's what we're in business for. And we're

achieving that. I think that's a testament to Charlie. I think that the people that are involved in this company, like myself and others, that work hard to that end are here to preserve that legacy, to preserve his company, and then build it for the people that are younger than us and who will be around long after us. I think we're set up to do that. I'm very pleased to be part of the organization at this point in time where I sit.

Adamson: Great. We'll come back to the end of the story again. I just wanted to follow up. Let's go back, since we were talking about Charlie, to some of these questions I have about Charlie and your interaction with him. When did you first meet Charlie? Do you recall?

Ward: The first time I physically met Charlie Pankow was at the annual meeting, the twenty-fifth anniversary annual meeting. It was held at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. I was a carpenter foreman. The year was 1988, and I was still working at the Shoreline Square project, and our wives were invited to the party. The annual meetings in those days were about a three-day affair. They were pretty big, big deal. They invited the foremen, and the foremen, as I mentioned before, were first-level managers in the company, so as managers you were included in the fold. By the way, beginning in those days, your tenure with the company in terms of how long you were recognized having worked for the company, and I already mentioned twenty-one years, starts when you become a foreman if you're coming from the ranks, because you are a manager. If you do the math, from October of '90, it's not quite twenty-one. But the truth is, I've been around since—as we discussed earlier.

But the point is I met Charlie Pankow at that event, and I never will forget it because my wife—it was a fairly new company I worked for, and I'd been telling her about the company and what I thought that this could be the company, if I managed to stay with them, that I could possibly ride to retirement with and finish my career. She said, "Well, that's great."

So we got invited, and in those days you got a room. So I took my wife, and we walk into this big ballroom and the food was just everywhere, and there was this giant ice sculpture of twenty-fifth anniversary. My wife looks at me, and she goes, "Who are these people? I've never been to anything like this." And neither had I.

Right at that point as we walked into the room, Charlie Pankow came up, and it was the first time I recognized that he knew my name. He introduced himself and he said, "Red Ward, it's good to see you. Welcome. It's your first annual meeting, and I hope you enjoy yourself." I was blown away. I didn't think he even knew me, but he knew my name and introduced himself. I talked to him. Didn't talk to him very long at that point in time. He was greeting others. But he and his wife Doris welcomed us to that meeting. So that was the first time, and that was in April of 1988.

Adamson: Then over the remaining fifteen years of his life, how often then did you interact with him professionally?

Ward: While in the field as a superintendent, I did interact with him. As a field superintendent, I saw him at the job sites, not frequently, but he always wanted to have a few words with the guys in the field that were building. He had a great affinity with the

superintendents. He always felt the superintendents were the guys who were out there making it happen, and so he always loved to talk with them. I would see him at the Christmas party, and I always remarked how he would single you out and sit you down and talk to you about things. He was just a real person. He just was a good guy. He'd ask you how the job was going. He'd also bring you to task. I always remember this, he would ask you, "What are your costs?" I was always taught that if anybody in management, if you were responsible for cost and someone in management asked you your costs, you better well know it, okay, or you won't be around long. I always made sure I understood what my costs were, what I was managing, because you can bet your dollar if he asked you the question, he already knew the answer, so you couldn't fabricate an answer. You were treading on thin ice if you went down that road. So you better give him the right answer. If you did, he would recognize that you knew what you were talking about and maybe ask you a few other questions. Weren't long conversations, just wanted to check on you, see that he knew who you were, knew that things were going along well, how we doing on schedule, that sort of thing. Various different job sites I would see him from time to time.

As a project superintendent, a little bit more responsibility, you're the guy who's responsible for the success of the whole project, he would take you to task even more. I often accused him of—not personally accused him, but that he would ask you a question until you didn't know the answer, and then he would ask you another one and another one and another one until he would trip you up. He knew what he was doing.

Then he had great suggestions. He had great vision. He could always come to a job site and see something. Just another pair of eyes. We always called it another pair of

eyes. It's always good to have that, and Charlie had great vision. He'd see something on the job site, he'd ask you a question about it, "What do you think about this?"

I remember in Daly City we were performing a rather unique foundation type. It was stone columns. It was basically a vibrating apparatus attached to a crane and leads and vibrates into the ground, displacing the earth, and then you fill that displaced earth with stone, rock, and then vibrate it solid. You do this on four-foot centers, and it takes months to do, and we were doing that. He asked me how the schedule was, and I said, "Well, the schedule is tight. We're working against the weather. It's rainy here all the time."

He kind of joked with me and said, "It's San Francisco. It's going to rain. So what are you doing about it?"

I said, "Well, we've talked to the subcontractor."

"Well, what about bringing another rig?" The subcontractor was resistant to that because of the amount of space it took for all of that, and Charlie pursued that, kept pursuing it with me. He said, "Well, what about if you did this? What about if you did that?" It was a great idea, and so we proposed it, and actually that's what we did, and we were able to pull a couple weeks out of the foundation schedule by forcing the subcontractor to bring in another rig, no matter how difficult it was. But it was something he saw and something that his vision helped me see, so I always appreciated his visits like that.

Adamson: Most of the projects you worked on are in southern California, but on the occasion when you were worked in northern California or elsewhere, Roosevelt Mall, did you relocate your family to do these jobs or did you just commute?

Ward: I had a rather unique story, if you will, but the answer to that is, no, I was never asked to do that, and there was a particular reason. When I was asked to go to Roosevelt Field, that was a new environment. Bill Hughes had gone to Roosevelt Field for Phase One to be the superintendent, right after Tyler Mall. We had just done a mall renovation in Riverside, California. Corporate Property Investors, a client of ours who owned a lot of retail centers here in California and across the country, for that matter, had brought us to the project in Long Island, asked us if we wanted to come to that, or would we go there. So Bill relocated, as did others, to build that job, and it was our typical hierarchy on a job, project superintendent, field superintendent, project engineer, field engineers and so on, the staff, the project sponsor.

For the reason that we were interfacing in a new union-controlled environment in Long Island, different than in California, still signatory to the same unions, carpenters, laborers, cement masons, but much stronger union governing, I guess is the best term I can say, and certainly fish out of water, if you will, for our experience, but in that environment we had to take on a general foreman, and a nonworking general foreman, who really filled the position of field superintendent but worked for the union. We paid him. So they never intended for a field superintendent to be on that job, and I stayed back here, finished some additional work at Tyler Mall. So for about a year, the first year of Roosevelt Field, they did not have a field superintendent.

At some point in time, Bill Hughes finally, as I now know the story, had made some demands. He says, “I want Red Ward here, and you need to get him here now. I can no longer deal with this. I need that guy on the team.”

I remember Tom Verti called me, and this was on a Friday afternoon. He said, “The company would like to ask you to do something that we really truly need done.”

I said, “Anything. Just ask.”

He said, “We need you to go to Long Island, New York. Now, it’s only for a short period of time, and we’re not going to relocate you because you’ll be coming back here. We’ve got a lot of work coming up in Los Angeles, and we want you back, so it’s a short-term thing.” The project had about nine months left to its completion date, and I was going out there to solve a safety problem with our ironworker for what was told to me would be a couple of months.

I arrived on the job, and Bill Hughes picked me up at the airport and said, “Hey, what did Tom tell you?”

I said, “Oh, he said I’d be here a couple of months.” He started laughing, and I said, “I’m going to be here till the end, aren’t I?”

He goes, “Oh, yeah.”

But the deal that the company had made was that they’d fly me back to see my family—I had a young daughter eight years old at the time—every several weeks for a weekend or whatever, but it was not a long-term thing.

So I went to Long Island, New York, built that first-phase job, finished it with the company and traveled, commuted, I guess would be the—San Francisco, when I went to do the job in Palo Alto, nine-month job, ten-month job. “We want you back in southern

California.” So did not relocate the family there, either. Then I was there about a year and a half and then came back, so made several trips back and forth and lived away from the family for those periods of time. So I never did relocate. [I’m] still in southern California.

Adamson: Then Hawaii.

Ward: Hawaii, same thing. Went over as operations manager. That was part of my territory. We had a superintendent walk off the job at a very critical time in the job; we were in foundations. We had some very difficult foundation problems with that job. They sent me over to analyze the situation and see how we could solve it, and the owner put it very bluntly. He said, “You’re in a world of hurt, Pankow. How are you going to solve this?” I ended up running that job for fifteen months, traveled back and forth on that one as well. But I’m back in southern California. So did that answer the question at all?

Adamson: Yes. The succession of Brea, Tyler, Roosevelt Malls, some of the people I’ve talked to about how they get on jobs, the conclusion I drew is that whatever comes up, people really didn’t specialize too much in a building type. But in this case, it seems as if the same people were on these mall projects. Was there a team that kind of went around for these jobs?

Ward: I think per se there is a little bit of that throughout the history. There's two things at play here, and in operations it's my job to place people on projects. Of course, you would like to get somebody a well-rounded career as they move through their career with Pankow. You'd like to have somebody have some real concrete experience, maybe build some parking structures, and maybe you'd like to have somebody get some experience in office buildings later on. Does that always work? That doesn't always work for everyone.

Was there a team? There was a group of people. Mall overbuilds at that period of time was the latest thing in building. There was a lot of it going on. We did quite a bit of it. We did Brea. We did Roosevelt. We did Westminster Mall. We did Tyler Mall. I think we did one up in Santa Rosa. I probably missed a couple of them. But we kind of made a name for ourselves in that arena, and we did a lot of that. It did seem to be a lot of people, but I'll tell you the other thing is timing. You try to put people who have had experience on a certain building type on the next building type of the same if you can, but that doesn't always work, especially if they're busy building one project that doesn't end before the next one starts. Now you have to put someone else there. So it's somewhat—I don't want to say luck of the draw, but I want to say that you do the best you can to put the right people in the right spot and sometimes you just are available. Of course, if you're available, you're going to be placed somewhere.

Adamson: Before we leave the mentoring and learning in the field, you mentioned people who mentored you. Alan Murk and others have said that project superintendents were the guys who mentored some of these newly minted engineers that come out of

Purdue or wherever, and Bob Law, for one, said that he really learned a lot from Alan Murk on the first couple jobs. Was that your experience of dealing with new hires in the field?

Ward: As a carpenter, you interface. In the way we perform work in the field, we staff a job with field engineers, and the field engineer's responsibility is to first become very familiar with the drawings. One of the things that's a little different about Pankow than others, other companies, you'll see people walking around with a roll of drawings under their arm in the field. But the drawings and the evolving part of the drawings as they change, we've always been leery about having a set of drawings in the field that somebody's building on, because it might not be the latest set. So an engineer's responsibility is making sure that we have all of the latest information, disseminating that information, coordinating it with mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, architectural, being given a focus of work and then performing what we call lift drawings or details, taking a section of work, detailing that work as it's today known with the latest information. Maybe not the set of drawings that we got a month ago. Maybe it's got new information, new changes, new deltas, new answers to questions, asking the questions in RFIs and disseminating all that information into this drawing, taking that drawing into the field, and working with carpenter foremen to build it.

So my experience as a carpenter foreman in the company was that I worked with a lot of guys who are now vice presidents in this organization who were green engineers, if you will, and some were very good and some are no longer around. Breaking them in, the carpenter foremen always used to joke about those youngsters coming out there.

We'd usually be able to help them understand how to build it, and they'd help us understand how it should be built. I think it was a collaboration, but I did interface.

I have one great story about a guy who's still in the company. He's been with the company now, gosh, I want to say probably close to sixteen, seventeen years and doing quite well. He came on and he's just full of fire, and he came aboard and he was a new engineer working under me at the Gateway Center Project. We had given him the CMU, the block construction on the job. He was just a ball of fire, and he put the detail together and he went and gave the information out. Rebar template. We put the rebar in. We poured the deck and the concrete. It came time to put the block in, and he calls me on the radio. Deck's poured and the rebar dowels are sticking up, and he'd already done all this previous work and given that information to a foreman and had poured the concrete. He calls me, "The block mason's here. He's got his block delivered, and he's ready to start going to work." So he calls me and he says, "Red, you need to come out here. I've got a little bit of a problem."

I said, "Okay, let me come and see you, Jim. I don't know. What's going on?" So I go out there and now we're looking at the layout now that it's all poured, and that row of dowels is just perfect. He laid it out perfectly and got it in the cells of the CMU. He had just missed it by eight inches. He had gone the opposite side of the—so I told him at the time, I said, "Well, that's a good job of getting them all laid out and figured out exactly where they go. Next time, let's try to get them in the wall." [laughs]

So he ate himself up at the time. He said, "Oh, my god, how could I have done this? Am I going to get fired?"

I said, “You’re not going to be fired, but learn from this, okay, and try to get it right next time.” The carpenter foreman should have caught it, too, but at any rate, those kind of things happen. Had some great engineers, though, and a lot of those engineers are running the company today.

Adamson: When it comes to the design/build approach, at what level in the field are you impacted by that approach, if that makes sense?

Ward: Well, I don’t think that the field is necessarily impacted by a design/build approach. In fact, I think the preference, my experience is the design/build approach to building is, I believe, far superior to plan and spec. If we could convince all owners and developers of that, I think that everything we would do would be design/build. The concept is that we manage the consultants and the architect and the engineer, and we try to help build the job on paper before it actually becomes the job, and we try to ask the questions, figure out the conflicts, make the necessary changes at the design phase of the project so that when we actually get to build it, we go out and we build it and can be assured that we’re getting the best product for the owner and that we’re getting it right.

In the plan and spec world, the owner or developer manages the consultant team, and if the consultant team doesn’t get it right, then you’re somewhat relegated to the speed of response, so to speak, and I think that greatly impacts the field. If it’s wrong, if there’s a conflict, we as a builder have to find that conflict, and we have to ask the question, a new design has to be developed, but now you’re at the point where you’re trying to construct the project. Now you’ve got labor out there, and labor is the biggest

expense you have. If your labor can't proceed, you either have to do one of two things. You'd have to get rid of the labor and bring them back later. Hopefully, you can get the good guys back until they solve the problem. So in the design/build approach, you manage the design, which affords you the opportunity to keep building at a pace that complements the project.

So I don't know if that answered the question explicitly, but I think that, I believe, is the better approach, and I've worked on design/build projects that have been very successful, and I've worked on the other projects that are also successful, and I believe that's a testament to Pankow Builders, because I like to say that we drag the consultants to the finish line with us and finish the project and basically show them how to design it as we build it. But they're not managed by us, so we don't always have control over that.

Adamson: As project superintendent, are you the linchpin for the implementation of keeping things on schedule in the field?

Ward: Project superintendent owns the schedule. Project superintendent is responsible for executing the schedule and driving the work to keep the schedule. Field superintendent is the actual field general, if you will, working under the project superintendent who manages the direct work for Pankow and the subcontractors, keeping them on schedule.

One of the great things about this company, and I don't know that all companies do it or not do it, but we pride ourselves on our three-week scheduling efforts, three-week look-ahead schedules. That's how I was taught coming up through the ranks, and I teach

that today to the youngsters. I teach how to three-week schedule, how to be aggressive with the schedule, how to find something that if, for instance, we cannot proceed on one area, can we proceed in another? Does that hurt us? You don't want to build something ahead of something else if it's not going to fit or if it's not going to work in the schedule.

But it's kind of an art, I think, and I think Pankow is very good at it. I was taught that way. We're teaching the guys that are building today that. We generate that three-week look ahead every week. We update it. Some projects go to a four-week look ahead, but that's even more vision. It comes from the master schedule, and when you detail it every single week like that in great detail, it affords you the opportunity to see where you are making the schedule, where you are not making the schedule, when to put pressure on the subcontractor to add more manpower, and that truly is a superintendent's responsibility. He has to drive that schedule to its completion and has that responsibility.

Adamson: Is there ever a case where management would come to the project superintendent and consult him about the owner wanting to make a change and the impact of that and getting involved in that process of altering a project, or is that something that's done between the—

[Begin File 3]

Ward: Yes, the project superintendent is greatly involved if there is a change to be made. Project superintendent works in close conjunction with project sponsor on our projects. Upper management can get involved, and does at times, if the owner wants to make a

change. Processing change to the owner, it's not something that we want to do, but owners make changes.

Let me give you an example. In design/build, if it was our responsibility to manage the architect and the engineer and there is an error, so to speak, for something, something doesn't fit, something doesn't work, then in the design/build arena, that would be our responsibility to fix that. If it causes a leak in the schedule, then it would be our responsibility to bring the schedule forward. It would be our responsibility to work, however we had to work to get back on track.

In the arena that the owner manages his own consultants, then that becomes a change. It's not something that we initiated. A conflict in the drawings or a conflict in the design that just doesn't work or can't be built falls on the owner to execute that change, and then with that change it has to be determined whether or not it affects schedule. Most of the time, it does.

Then how does that affect the superintendent? That has to be absorbed into the schedule or shown to the owner and the developer that they have impacted the schedule, and they need to grant us the time and the additional compensation to either stay on track or add time to the project.

In the design/build, we pride ourselves, as you've heard, on a no-change-order world. The example I gave, I think, is an example of that. In other words, if something doesn't work and we're responsible for the design, I'm not going to come to you and say, "Well, this doesn't work. Now you're going to have to pay me to fix it." That's not going to work. That's really the concept that I believe is what you were asking.

Adamson: I have this long quote from a column Dean Stephan wrote in the company newsletter, the gist of which is that innovation in a company essentially comes from the field through innovative construction techniques that keep projects on time and under budget or on budget, and then it's the responsibility of the company to promulgate, spread this innovation throughout the company so that people can apply it on different projects.<sup>1</sup> My question to you is, in your superintendent position, how did you see innovation as practiced by Pankow in the field and then being spread to other projects and other people?

Ward: As a superintendent and having worked in the field in this company, we were always challenged to think outside the box to find a better way, to achieve shorter schedules, build more with less, so to speak, if that explains the concept of what we were always challenged with. Are you always able to do that? I would say that you're always looking to do that in one way or another, and there always come to a situation on a project where it requires getting together with a group, meeting and discussing, "This doesn't work. This isn't going to make it this way. I know that's how it's designed. How can we shorten this duration? How can we effect a change?"

Some of the examples of innovation in this company, I've been involved with not necessarily creating them but implementing them. Tyler Mall is a prime example of innovation. We actually were awarded that project or gained that project because of an innovative construction method that we brought to the table, which really helped build that project. That's really the only way it could be built. Essentially, that was a mall overbuild that had to be constructed. The present foundation system for the existing mall

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Stephan, "Working with 'The Best,'" *CPI News* 2 (Spring 1984).

could not support the second floor and roof structure of that building, so essentially we built another building over the top of an existing building, which required driving pile through the building, erecting steel columns on foundation anchors, and then building the structure over the top.

But the difficulty was keeping the mall in operation during that construction and the eventual second floor of that structure, the elevation of that second floor, because it had to meet the second floor elevation of the three anchor stores in that building, was actually below the existing roof. So therein lies the puzzle. How do you build a mall over a mall or a building over the mall, keeping it in operation, without taking the roof off so you can build the second floor? The innovative concept that Pankow came up with was to erect a temporary platform under the T-bar ceiling of all of the tenant spaces in the mall, thereby protecting—excuse me. Just above the T-bar but just below the new existing second floor, thereby protecting the store, allowing it to stay in operation while you demolish the roof above it. So you actually had to erect a platform that would be temporary, and eventually come out underneath an existing roof and then demolish the roof. And then, this is after you have erected the building over the top.

To do that, the structural steel members were erected in a temporary location above the old roof, and then after the old roof was demolished, then the new location for the roof was brought down and erected, because they were already erecting in the building, and then the temporary platform was pulled out and a new structure was built. So that was a piece of innovation that Pankow brought to the table, which actually won us that job. That's how we built it. In order to do that, of course, we built that entire job at night. So we would start that job at midnight, and we'd leave at ten o'clock in the

morning when the mall opened. That's an example of how Pankow brings innovation to a project.

We've had other experiences in our own precasting where we've been innovative in utilizing some of the architectural precast to actually double as the form work for a cast-in-place member such as a moment frame beam or moment frame column where we would actually put the eventual outer skin of the building, which was part of an architectural precast member, but had another component to it that became either the soffit or part of the cast-in-place concrete. So you never had to put formwork up underneath to hold the form for the concrete. We actually had created it with what became the exterior skin. Duplicity of use of materials was another innovative concept that Pankow pioneered, if you will.

Adamson: These are not necessarily the result of any specific job but more of a research approach to solving a problem?

Ward: Yes. I think the one that I described there actually was something that was done early on in Pankow history and brought forward to some projects that I was involved with where we were greatly successful. One of the things we've always tried to preserve the history in the company and understand, pass that information along. Just because it was an innovative idea twenty years ago doesn't mean it couldn't today be an innovative idea. Some of those things have been brought forward, and I think that's an example. There's been new ideas that have come out of just finding a better way to do something quicker, and we can challenge people to do that.

[Begin File 4]

Adamson: Talk about how innovation has spread through the company. People have told me about how there used to be presentations at the annual meeting and now there's different ways of approaching that.

Ward: The presentations at the annual meetings were a way to share the information. There was always an annual event where you would get a letter in the mail that you had to give a presentation on maybe a type of formwork or a scheduling issue or cost management or some topic, so you would prepare a presentation based on your experience, based on other people's experience, and you would give this presentation. The annual meeting was a place for—we used these as training exercises.

Frankly, I think I learned a lot of some of the things that I used or at least was introduced to some of the concepts where I would say, "Oh, I heard that guy speak at the annual meeting. I think I'd better call him because I'm facing a similar situation." Then you could do some research and usually find the information you needed. As the annual meeting has progressed where we don't hold it as often anymore, we started holding annual engineers meeting, annual superintendents meetings, annual what we call off-site managers or project sponsors meetings, for the purpose of facilitating some of that training that was lost by not holding the annual meetings, and we have done that routinely for each year since. Same thing. People are brought in to give presentations, and it's usually people like myself who've built job after job after job, who can share that

information from past history, but also people from the same ranks, like a project engineer, will give a presentation to field engineer group, transfer his knowledge. It's a method kind of built around the old storytelling of old. Before people even wrote books, I think they told stories. So they pass on the information. I think that's really the concept.

People you hire today coming out of school, they want a formal training session. They want to know, "What is my curriculum?" That's the environment they just came from. So I think the company's moving to be able to provide that for all areas, to give more training, and I think the needs of today in this industry require that. The people that are the brightest people we're hiring out of school, they want to further their careers by adding more to their current degrees, if you will, in something that will help them do the job that we're asking them to do. No longer is it okay to train by fire, so to speak.

I'll tell you a funny story. I don't know if you'll want to use it.

Adamson: No, please.

Ward: The first superintendents meeting that I went to, I was a fresh, young field superintendent. This was in early 1991. I was at a superintendents meeting, and we used to have those routinely. Operations manager put those on. It was my first one, and I was excited about going as a superintendent. They went around the room and they asked each one of the superintendents, "What would you like to see in the company?" and so on. So they get to me and they said, "Well, Red, you're our newest field superintendent. We're glad to have you. What would you like to see if we were going to change anything?"

I stood up and said, “Well, I would like to see some formalized training to help me understand my job description better and give me a leg up as to what it is I’m about to do and help me do my job.”

Mike Liddiard, a just famous Pankow superintendent, slammed his fist on the table and said, “Training? We’ll throw you on the job and you’ll either do it or we’ll fire you. That’s your training.” [laughs] And that was it. They went to the next guy. Okay. So my question was answered.

Adamson: What year was that?

Ward: That was 1991. I never have forgotten that. I always thought, “Well, there you have it. I’ve got my training. I know where I’m headed.” So when I mentioned before training by fire, that’s really on-the-job training. That’s where you learned it. But the transference of knowledge did take place at the annual meeting. We write technical reports after our jobs and have a great library of technical reports from past jobs in history.

A lot of what we do, I don’t want to say it’s repetitious, but when you’re pouring concrete columns and beams and erecting precast, while each project is unique for some reason or another, they’re very similar to other projects, and so there’s no doubt that somewhere in the history of Pankow somebody faced a very similar situation, and you can use that knowledge.

The formal training that we’re embarking on today, I’m not 100 percent up on all the things that we’re attempting to do, led by our HR department, which years ago we

didn't have an HR department, but we do today, and I think that's all for the good. I think we're about to embark on an area that we're going to be able to provide formalized training for all facets for our field superintendents, our field engineers, our project engineers, which will only help them be better at what they do, which will in turn help us be better at what we do, and that's the concept.

So the old days of on-the-job training as a sole method, I think, are long gone. We participated in some early training exercises, if you will, aside from the engineers meeting, the superintendents meeting. We held sessions where we do a lot of training in safety. We make sure everybody on our jobs have their first-aid card, their CPR card, are trained in AEDs, and we give an OSHA-10 course and maybe forklift training and various things like that. We try to get as many people on our jobs exposed to those types of things, because at some point in time they're going to have to deal with one of those things. We train people in the use of fall protection. We train them in ladder safety. We train them in scaffold use. So that training is ongoing, and that's in the safety arena. Once again, in the years past we had to learn that as you were doing it.

In the carpenter trade, you were afforded the opportunity to learn those things as you come up through the apprenticeship, but an engineer coming out of school has to learn it on the job, so we're providing that type of training for these guys as they develop their careers for the company. But I think some of the more formalized training that we're embarking on is teaching them how to manage cost and how to schedule. Eventually some of these young engineers are going to become superintendents, and they need to become the guy that's driving the schedule. They better know how to schedule, so we're going to have to teach them that. Some of us are the teachers.

Adamson: In this context, is it still possible for someone to do what you did and start as a carpenter foreman and work up?

Ward: Absolutely. As a matter of fact, one of my jobs—I don't think we ever want to lose that in this company. Let me explain what I mean by that. I truly believe that Charlie Pankow, in his great wisdom in forming this company, always had a feeling—and this is how I was taught, what I was led to believe, and I still do today—that there were two sides to our business. One is the engineering side, and the other is the physical carpentry or building craftsmen side, and I think that both complement each other. I think Charlie recognized that when he formed this company. He surrounded himself with engineers and craftsmen, and together they became builders. Truly, that's what we're trying to teach the young guys coming aboard, and we tell them that. We say, "When you have a career with Pankow, we'll teach you how to be a builder," and that's truly what we are. I do think that we need that. We need that collaboration between the two entities. We can't all be engineers. We can't all be carpenters or craftsmen. We need both. I teach the guys coming out of the field like I was taught. They have a great enduring respect for engineering skills and structural engineering, civil engineering, and in turn, they have a great respect for how to put it together, and that's what we did as carpenters.

So in answer to your question, one of my jobs as operation manager is to find those guys and elevate them to the position of field superintendent, which is the step that I took. Actually, I've become pretty successful at that over the last five to six years. We

have some brilliant young carpenter foremen who have gone from carpenters, some of them have gone from apprentices to journeymen, to carpenter foremen, to now field superintendents in this company. We've elevated them into those positions of management, and they are forging their own careers through this company right now. There's a handful of them. I think this company was founded on that, and I think that this company has been successful and will be successful in the future, as long as we continue to do that and collaborate with the engineering side of our business.

Adamson: Shifting gears just a little bit before I continue on with your operations manager position, these two projects, Gateway Plaza and the Metropolitan Water District Headquarters, here the client was a public agency. Was your experience as superintendent any different on these projects than other projects?

Ward: It was different, both of those projects, back to back. I spent close to six years of my life on both of those projects. They're very near and dear to my heart. I'm truly proud of what Pankow Builders and all of us accomplished on both those projects. The duties of field superintendent, while remain being the same, but as a public project, we had a responsibility to collaborate a percentage of the project to minority business enterprises, women-owned business enterprises, hire locally within the Greater Los Angeles region, so we had to institute in several programs on both of those projects which I was greatly involved in, helped develop them. One of them was a pre-apprenticeship program, taking people right out of high school and getting them involved and bringing them along into the crafts, carpenters in particular, and getting them started

in construction. We created a sign-up list at each one of these projects where if you walked in off the street and said, “I’m interested in working. I live nearby. How do I get started?” So we would assist that effort by keeping this list, as we needed people, trying to bring people into the fold, if you will, sponsor them into the union, and then work them on the project, thereby both meeting the requirements that were being given to us on the project, but also helping someone else get into the business. So we did that.

The minority business enterprise, we had a responsibility to a certain percentage on both those projects of meeting that requirement, so we held workshops with subcontractors and invited them to come and participate in potentially becoming a subcontractor on the job, giving people a leg up or an opportunity that may not exist as a result of a large project in Los Angeles, being able to meet the bonding requirements and so on. So both of those were successful in those efforts, and I did participate on both of those projects in that arena, so that was different.

Adamson: Does that mean there was a city agency person on the project?

Ward: There was an agency on both of those projects, Community Redevelopment Agency, I believe is what it was. I think there was a private agency that was involved with the Gateway Center project—I honestly can’t remember the name of that particular one—that monitored prevailing wage requirements, minority business enterprise percentage requirements. We also wrote that into our subcontracts, and by that what I mean is that say we had an excavator that did all of the excavating of a particular project, and let’s just say that that particular guy was not a minority contractor. We wrote into the

contract that he had and shared the same requirement that we did. A certain percentage of his contract had to utilize either local business or a minority business. So maybe all his trucking would be done by or performed by a minority business instead of maybe another trucker that he would normally use. So that would afford, say, a smaller trucking company to get involved in that major development. So ensuring that that happened and meeting with certain individuals and facilitating that process throughout both those projects I was involved in. I think that's different than normal projects.

Adamson: I have this question about our favorite Pankow project, one on which you worked. Is one of those two projects your—

Ward: I think my favorite Pankow project as a field superintendent, and I think I have favorites from all perspectives, but as field superintendent, was Metropolitan Water District Headquarters project. That was my last job as a field superintendent. Maybe that's because by that time I had pretty much figured out how to be a field superintendent after eight years or whatever, I don't know. We had a good team. It was the second job, the same nucleus of team built back to back, Bill Tornrose, Joe Sanders, Red Ward, Dave Eichten and others. I mean, we didn't build it by ourselves, that's for sure. It was a particularly challenging project, a very challenging client. We learned from that client. We were forced to do things on that job that we had not done in the past. At their suggestion, we had to write and create what they called construction process documents before they would allow us to construct, and I think some of the things that we do today

in our quality effort on jobs came out of that project and taught us that maybe that's not a bad thing to know what you're going to do ahead of time, so to speak.

We had to actually develop what we call CPDs at the time, construction process documents. So if I was going to construct a concrete column, as an example, I had to write all of the steps necessary, what material I was going to use, how I was going to perform it, what went first, what went second, how I was going to construct it, how I was going to strip it, how I was going to preserve it, all the way down to if I painted it, I painted it. Or if I put drywall around it, I put drywall. So all of that would have a process spelled out, and we submitted that process to the owner. He reviewed it and then approved it. If he approved it, then later on when it came time to construct a concrete column, we had to follow that process. So it taught us a couple of things. One, it was very difficult client, recognizing that they were very serious about their building. They wanted to make sure that we knew what the heck we were doing and that if we told them that's how we were going to do it, then that's what we were going to do.

If we needed to change that, there was a process to change that. "So you told us before this is how you're going to construct it. Now you want to construct it this way. Why?" So we had to develop another construction document that said, "Well, here's why. This particular application doesn't exactly work," as an example.

That process we've carried forward in our quality approach in the company, which I think has made us today—fast forward, here we are. We finished that project in '98, so here we are ten years later, and I think we're better at what we do as a result of some of the things that came out of that project. So that's, I think, my favorite Pankow project.

As a carpenter foreman, I think Shoreline Square was one of my favorites.

Adamson: Because?

Ward: It was my first opportunity to be a Pankow foreman. I was younger, in the field, and running crews and managing work on a very fast-paced schedule, and just that particular era was a different part of my career with Pankow, but it was a very exciting job and very fond in my memory.

Adamson: So is your favorite Pankow building, just looking around and looking at it, what would that be, one of the ones you worked on, or did you have one that you just like looking at that you've done?

Ward: I'm very proud of the buildings, of course, that I have participated in and physically been involved with, but I'm also very proud of what Pankow builds. One of the greatest things about our annual meetings that we all do miss and somehow we've got to find a way to do that, is one of the things that always happened at an annual meeting was the pictorial review of the past work in the year that we just finished or ongoing projects. So it was kind of a walkthrough of all of Pankow. Because in southern California, for instance, we've got great projects being built in northern California I may never get to see them. I mean, someday I may, but, you know what I mean, I'm not involved, I don't know the detail, I don't see it. So one of the things we always did was a review of the projects in pictures, and so it was a big slideshow, and it went on for an

hour, and everybody got to see all the things we did. There's different facets of the building that we do that are very unique, and each project has something that's unique about it, and we shared that in that venue at the annual meeting. I'm very proud to say that that's a Pankow project, and I tell people. It drives my wife crazy. We drive through a town and say, "Oh, we built that. Look at that. Isn't that fabulous?"

Do I have a favorite? I'm very fond of the twin forty-story tower called Landmark in Waikiki. I had nothing to do with that project. I think it's just a very unique-looking building, and I've liked that building, liked the construction of it. There's a bunch of great stories with building it.

I'm very fond of the MWD project as well. I think it has a tremendous bit of precast concrete work on that project. It's white in color. It was particularly difficult to construct, and we built all the precast a mile from the job. We set up a yard. I'm just very proud of that one. I think that's one of my favorite buildings.

Adamson: I think we've, in pieces, covered much of what you do now as operations manager, so I hope I'm not being redundant by asking you to say again what do you do as operations manager.

Ward: As operations manager, if I was to describe my job, I'm responsible for the placement of personnel, meaning field engineers, project engineers, field superintendents, and project superintendents on their respective jobs, making sure that we put together the right team and assigning them to that position. I'm responsible for reviewing their progress throughout the process of building the projects. I'm responsible for input to

advancement opportunities. Who's the makers and shakers and who's the slackers?

Then I'm also responsible for weeding out the people that don't measure up. I'm responsible for morale. I'm responsible for schedule. I'm responsible for overseeing the projects under my wing.

When I started in that position, it was every project in the company in base building, CPBL. That's not the case today. It's all southern California. However, of late, I spent a year on Montage project, a very difficult project, had to lend my expertise to the team that was there, so it kind of pulled me away from overseeing other projects, and that's a difficult position to be in.

Currently I'm on a project right now that's an extremely difficult owner. I've been asked to finish up the last piece of this project, and it's already a tight schedule and it's difficult. It's an intensive care unit, existing operating hospital, and a lot of logistics. I'm very good at logistics, and so now once again for the next six months I'm going to be actively involved day to day on that project, so operations, somewhat taking a sidestep from that position. That's not the intent, but that's, unfortunately, where we're at.

That's the description of the job. And I participate in training. I participate in teaching people the skills of three-week scheduling and scheduling our projects and managing subcontractors. I'm especially good at that, and if I can impart that knowledge to others and teach them how to do that, I think that helps.

Adamson: If you read the description of the job as it was when Alan Murk was operations manager, would it on paper essentially encompass most of that?

Ward: I think so. I was the last superintendent Alan Murk hired or promoted before he retired, and I've always had the deepest respect for that man. He was a good builder, great builder. I think the position has grown into more of what I described. I think that there was a time when Alan was running the operations that he was responsible for the projects just as I described, responsible for the teams that were placed on that project, responsible for certainly making sure—I'm not the first operations manager that's had to go sit on a project and help bring it to the end. Ralph Tice was a famous—I never knew Ralph Tice, but I've heard so many stories about him that I think I know the guy. But he also was a carpenter background and was operations. I recall some stories I'd heard where a project was in trouble and the operations manager, I don't think the word is they got blamed for where it's at, but it's their responsibility, so go fix it, and that's essentially what—I know I heard stories where he had to go sit on a project or two, make things happen.

In this position, you are responsible for executing the contract, getting it done, and if that means that the team needs your assistance on a day-to-day basis, then that's what you have to do. So I think Alan Murk filled that position. I think he was very good at it.

Adamson: Did you say you do or do not have anything to do with the Special Projects side of the business?

Ward: I do not. I do interface with Special Projects. I consult with them. I'm also—I don't know if the word "expert" is correct, but I consider myself somewhat of a union liaison, so to speak, for the company. I'm very familiar with the union contract

negotiations. I'm very familiar with all of the agreements and the contract agreements that we're signatory to, and managing those. I've defended us in grievance hearings very successfully. We don't have a lot of them, but the ones that I've been involved with have been successful.

When we end up with an issue that involves the union, I get called into it, whether it be in northern California, Hawaii, or here, and I'm just very comfortable in that arena. I know what I'm talking about. The people in unions know who I am. I've developed some great relationships with our union hierarchy. A lot of people running the unions today were out in the field with me back when I was out in the field, so I've kind of grown with them as well. So when there's a union issue or union question, I'm usually consulted on that. I don't know if that answered the question or not.

Adamson: Getting into just some broader questions as we work our way down the list, and I think you've talked about this generally, but what has changed most about the company since you've hired on?

Ward: I think what's changed the most is in the most recent years I think we now have experienced a controlled growth. We've experienced some of the best years in the history of this company in terms of volume and in terms of success. I attribute that to the people that work for this company. We're all hard workers, and if you're not a hard worker, you don't last long at this company, and that's true of any department in this company. You'll find the accounting department burning the midnight oil at crunch time at the fiscal year. You'll find them at the end of the year trying to get—and then there's a

group of people over there I've worked with for twenty years here and know them very well.

You take it out to the field, the people in the field, we work long hours. It's not a requirement. It's not written. You don't come aboard and say, "Oh, by the way, you're going to be working seventy hours a week. That's your package." We do what is necessary to get the job done. We call ourselves Pankow warriors. It's kind of a near and dear term to a lot of us in this company. We bleed blue, Pankow blue, if you will. I'm very proud to say that, and I think if you talk to anybody that's been around and wants to develop a long-lasting career with this company, they would tell you the same thing. We're hard workers, and I think that we're very proud of that fact. I think we're very successful as a result of that.

I think the biggest change I can say is that with that growth, when I say "planned growth," we've adapted. We've developed a vision. We've got an HR department that's helping us with people and benefits, training programs, award programs. I think that's the biggest change. It's not just a bunch of good old boys out there building anymore; it's a true construction firm. But I think the most important thing that I can tell you about this company is that we are truly master builders, and that we're very proud of.

Adamson: So it goes without saying that you'll retire with Pankow?

Ward: If they'll have me, I will be around until they kick me to the curb.

Adamson: So you can see how your career as operations manager?

Ward: Let me just say this. If I finish my career with Pankow as operations manager, I'll be quite content at that. If given the opportunity to be project superintendent on a great project with this company, I would accept that as well. I would like to do that. If somebody was to ask me, "What would you really want to do to finish your career?" I think I'd have to honestly say, "Yes, I would like to go back in the field and run work as a project superintendent." Is that ultimately where the company needs me? I can't answer that. Currently I think the company needs me where I'm at, and that's where they want me. However, the right project may arrive and I may be asked to do it, and I would accept it and jump right into it just like I've done everything else.

Adamson: I'm sure you've seen this video, framing video that Dick Walterhouse showed me. It's the only time I've seen Charlie Pankow talk on—

Ward: Is it the culture CD, the culture video?

Adamson: Yes.

Ward: Yes. I actually participated in that. I think I was interviewed and videotaped for part of that.

Adamson: There are a couple of quotes that Charlie Pankow had in that video, and I just want to throw them out to you. We've been talking about innovation, and one of the

things he said in there was that “Innovation is our main theme.” Is there anything else about what he meant by innovation that we haven’t talked about so far, that he meant by that?

Ward: I think we discussed it, but I think what Charlie meant by innovation, at least what I understand, was to find a better way to build, a better way to construct, maybe a cheaper way to do it, maybe a quicker way to do it, but a better way, a better way that would bring value to the client and value to the project and ultimately value to us. But foremost in Charlie’s mind was client was first. Client relationship was job one, if you will. We can always build for anyone, but if we walk away from the project and the client never wants to see or talk to us again, in Charlie’s mind that was an unsuccessful project, which, by the way, I don’t recall that ever happening. But if we did not preserve client relationship, that was part of our job, part of what he represented, his company represented, part of what he wanted his legacy and his company to represent, was to preserve client relationship. Because if you do that, you get return business, word of mouth. You get a client who’s satisfied with the job you’ve done. He’s in the business to develop, and when he develops again, you’re going to be called on to possibly participate again, and that is return business, and that’s how this company was founded, was preserving that relationship. We were taught that.

Adamson: In that same video, Tom Verti talked about a culture of respect within the firm and between its people and its clients, and I think you are getting at that with what you just said. But what does that “culture of respect” phrase mean to you?

Ward: We've worked with many engineers throughout our history. I personally have had an experience with some very good engineering firms, structural engineering firms. We've worked with some really good architects. I think that when you hear the professional world in this business, such as another firm, structural engineering firm, an architectural firm, speak of Pankow Builders as being not just a run-of-the-mill contractor, we're not really a contractor, but a true builder, the kind of company you want to collaborate with if you want to build a project, we also are somewhat known for attacking the most difficult of projects. I've heard us compared to, in conversations, when trying to go after a project where somebody will say, "Well, this project is logistically a nightmare, logistically difficult to build. Sounds like a Pankow project. That's the company you want to get. These guys will figure it out for you. They'll help you solve that problem."

I think back. I mentioned Tyler Mall, that whole sequential concept of building temporary structure underneath existing structure in order to take out that existing structure and finish the building while keeping it all in operation, very innovative but also something that Pankow brought to the table. And we've done that with many projects. We've found a way to get into the ground quicker while the design is being developed, by using innovation to find a different way to attack the job, maybe unconventional by somebody's viewpoint, but maybe it shortened the project duration maybe and brought value engineering to the project.

We're involved always in our preconstruction efforts, and we're looking at projects right now where owners have a great vision and a great project and a great piece

of property, but the budget that everybody has given them is over their budget. So they always want to find a way to cut money out of the project but still preserve the intent of the design, and that's something that we're very good at, and I think we bring that value to a lot of our preconstruction efforts and help an owner develop his concept and his idea.

Some projects we work on for years before we ever build them. The Gateway Center Project, I believe that we worked on that for seven years before we finally broke ground on that project, and then we built it, took two and a half years to build it.

Adamson: Working with the developer or the agency?

Ward: Yes, the developer in preconstruction efforts and different concepts and value-engineering this. The project evolved into different facets. But that's a lot of what we do. We don't bid work per se. We negotiate work. We try to get in on the front end and help the owner develop, so we find better ways to build. Charlie brought us in and taught us that.

Adamson: Dean Stephan remarked to me and then I bounced it off of Dean Browning, was that Pankow often ends up with these distinctive signature buildings, statement buildings, and I guess what I'll throw out to you is what has your experience been on Pankow as a role of this facilitator and this master builder in getting the owner and the architect to push the limits but within the budget, creating a building that time and again seems to—the buildings I've seen that Pankow has built are striking.

Ward: I think it's more. I think it's along the same lines that I was discussing. I think that while trying to preserve the concept of the design, we'll find a way to build the foundation system, let's say, differently than maybe it was intended to be built. An example, we're looking at a project right now where we've come to the table with an entirely different scheme for building the foundation system in the underground parking structure that the original concept was designed on. Now, that project is probably two years from being started, but the owner loves that idea, and it brought a tremendous value to the project. It cheapened—not cheapened. That's the wrong choice of word. It cut cost out of the budget while preserving the intent of the design structurally sound. We brought and worked with a structural engineer to develop this concept. It's not a new concept. It's something that we do, but it's new to that particular developer. So that's an example of what I'm talking about.

While we're not awarded those projects, we actually help develop those projects, I think is really the concept. And that's really what truly Charlie loved to do, is he wanted to design/build. He started that concept, that just helping the developer manage by allowing the contractor to use his expertise, his ideas, bring his engineering skills, his physical hands-on ability to the table and be heard. Too often in this business the architect and the engineer go over in a vacuum and they create this thing, and then, "Here, contractor, go build it." "Well, what about this? What about this? Did you think about this? Did you think about that?" "Oh, no, well, that doesn't work." And all of a sudden you have a design that's not buildable and costs a lot of money.

So I think that's what we bring to the table, and we're not always successful in promoting that, but I think that's the concept that Charlie Pankow built with this organization.

Adamson: We'll conclude with a few questions about Charlie Pankow. I think you've spoken to some of these, so I hope they're not redundant. How does the firm reflect his personality?

Ward: I think I described it already in the fact that he was a very hard-working individual. One of the things that always impressed me about him was he wouldn't take no for an answer. "It can't be done" was music to his ears, and of course it can be done, it just needs to be figured out, and he was the kind of guy that would figure it out. He had an extreme knack, from my perspective, of doing that. He could see something in an instant, and I attribute that to his great experience in his field, calling upon his experiences and his engineering skills where he could see something that maybe was just puzzling the heck out of me, and it would be clear as day to him, and he would impart that to me rather immediately.

I think his personality *is* the company today, from my perspective. I think the people in this company are preserving his personality by some of the concepts that I just described. The individuals in this company, as I mentioned, we call ourselves Pankow warriors. The people that endear to that term in this organization today and are proud of what he represented, I think, preserves his personality, and I think that is his personality. I think this company embodies Charlie Pankow's personality. That's my belief.

Adamson: Just brings to mind a question. In the recruiting process, then, is it almost intuitive that you'll get a sense that the right fit of a person is not just their engineering abilities and that, but you get a sense of how they fit in, in that respect?

Ward: Well, in the recruiting process, and I have participated greatly in the last several years in recruiting, and I'd like to believe that we have become very successful at recruiting the best and the brightest and bringing them into our employ, I think that a lot of us who participate in that are looking for, I don't know what you'd describe it, the fire, the enthusiasm, the willingness to accept great responsibility and work hard to achieve it. It's tough to see that in an interview in every person. I've been surprised by some individuals that we've taken a shot at and they turned out to be just fabulous people. We've been surprised at people we thought had the fire and just absolutely flopped. But those are both rarities of both end of the spectrum. I think we're very good at determining who fits that mold.

We've had some situations in the company where we've hired from outside the company for certain positions, and these are positions of people of experience. In other words, we've hired someone who maybe already has worked for five or six or seven years somewhere else. We've had difficulty with that, because the culture of this company *is* different than others, and it's hard to explain from sitting within, to someone who is not within the organization. When I say it's hard to explain, it's not just mysterious; it's just a feeling. It's a culture. It's who Pankow is. We've had difficulty in that because it's hard for people to change the way that they were or are and do the work

which may be similar to what they did before but do it the way that we did it. It's really difficult to explain. You would think it would not be that difficult. But we've had a tough time with that.

An example would be the superintendent that we hired to build the Waikiki project that I ended up going and building. The problem there was the guy. Did he have experience? Yes, I think he had great experience and he came highly recommended. He had a bunch of years, and he was a superintendent that had a résumé as long as your leg. But I think he said it best when he walked out the door. He said, "It's become very clear to me that I do not fit the Pankow mold," and he left.

Now, that caused us great problem at the time, but it was a clear eye-opener, as far as I'm concerned, in that it's not that we can't hire people from outside the company, because we have had some success stories in the company that have come from other places and have gone on and just tremendous asset to the company. But we've also struggled in some areas with that. So our best opportunities are to get the young guys, bring them into the fold, and bring them along with the culture and keep them employed. We tell young guys, I said, "I know you're coming out of school. You're probably not thinking career. We're looking for guys that want to build a career. That's really what we're offering. Maybe you're looking at it as employment for a couple years as you look for something else." I tell people, "If that's what you're looking for, I don't think this is going to work for you. But if you want to work hard, you want to accept responsibility, we'll give it to you. We'll help you build a career and we'll teach you to become a builder." I think that's what Pankow has to offer people.

Adamson: Is there anything else that you haven't mentioned that the firm is doing to sustain the kind of company that Charlie Pankow created after all of you who worked for him and knew him personally are gone? When all these young guys who never knew him are running the company? Is there anything else you're doing?

Ward: There's several generations, if you will, running the company right now, and I think that's a testament to what we're talking about. I think that the old guard is going to walk out the door some day, but we're preparing for that future right now. The younger guys that are just attaining vice presidents and are moving up in management in the company right now, they are the result of the older guard passing on that information, and they are in the position right now where that legacy is being passed on to the younger guys. I think it's a perpetual movement for the company.

I don't think there will be a loss of anyone who walks out the door. I think, and we've all been told, that our job before we leave is to find our replacement. So that's really what we need to do, and I think we are achieving it. I think that transference of knowledge—I see young guys. I mean, I don't know who all you've met. There's Dave Eichten. He's a district manager for southern California. He's been with the company twenty years and started as a young green engineer. I worked with him on many, many projects. J. J. Mollenkopf, these are guys that still have twenty, twenty-five years ahead of them before they retire. We've got young guys that have been with us two, three years that are moving up in the organization, learning as they go, that want to stay with this company and move into a greater position. We're offering ownership in the company as advancement. We have a senior associates program, which is a compensation program, if

you will, that allows you to advance, achieve that level of compensation and reward you for your hard work and longevity with the company.

We have limited partnership in this company. There are thirty-four limited partners. I am one of them. Does that mean that those limited partners will all leave the company and that won't exist? No. I think the limited partnership was designed to be an entity that manages the capital of the company, and I think as the old guard exits the limited partnership, it affords opportunities for younger guys to move into that position. So those are some of the structures and the vision, the goals. I think that all of these things that are being put in place right now are preparing us for the transference of that knowledge, that legacy in carrying on the Charlie Pankow company.

There's no question in my mind that if I live to be ninety or a hundred or whatever, twenty, thirty years from now, and come back and visit this company, it will still exist and I'll see some of the young guys now. They'll be old guys, and they'll be carrying on the same things, telling the old same stories, and they'll be out there building buildings, and doing exactly what we do. I don't see it ending.

Adamson: Very good. Last question. What is the best way of understanding Charlie Pankow's and, by extension, his firm's contributions to the building industry? What is Pankow best known for to others in the industry?

Ward: I think, from my perspective, Pankow is best known for its ability to think outside the box, to bring to the table alternative methods for solving the same problem, and I think that that's something that we've always strived to do, Charlie always was able to

do, finding a better way to build. You probably heard that said. But I think that that, if you talk to other people—I mentioned other firms, structural engineering firms and architectural firms, and I've heard them speak of him and some of that. You mentioned the culture video that was produced. Some of those people spoke in that video. Those are the types of things that they remember Charlie Pankow for and this company for, the collaborative efforts of finding a better way to do it that both preserves the architectural and structural intent of the project, thereby bringing value to the client and working within the budget. I think that that is what Pankow represents. I think that the buildings that we build, that will be around for a long time, and I think that that's testament you yourself mentioned, some of the great projects you've seen that are fairly unique, and I think that that's a testament to Charlie.

Adamson: I thank you for your time.

Ward: Thank you, Michael. I hope that you can use some of that.

Adamson: I certainly will.

[End of interview]