

Steadfast Standards Drive Industry Change

ENR California's Legacy Award winner for Southern California, Craig L. Martin, challenges and changes construction's safety culture **BY DAVID M. BROWN**

CARETAKER
Martin has demonstrated an unrelenting dedication to safety throughout his career.



Craig L. Martin has been retired for almost five years, but his legacy lives on at work every day.

“My accomplishments revolve around leading growth, developing people, building teams and, if I had to pick one thing in particular, safety,” says Martin, an engineer by training who retired in December 2015 after nine years as president and CEO of Dallas-based Jacobs. For nearly a half century, he specialized in major infrastructure projects worldwide, includ-

ing energy, transportation, environmental, water and wastewater, power, utilities and telecommunications.

Martin's steadfast belief that construction and engineering services are best offered by companies dedicated to a zero-incidence safety goal has led to industry-wide changes in safety practices. In 2018, construction activities resulted in 1,008 fatalities and 199,100 recordable cases of private-industry nonfatal workplace injuries nationwide, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“He is doing everything in his power, both in the professional world and in the world of academia, to make ... an injury-free workplace a reality,” said former Jacobs associate Cora Carmody, introducing Martin at the ENR Best Projects ceremony in Los Angeles in October for the presentation of the Legacy Award.

And Martin's legacy as a safety pioneer is still growing. In 2019, Martin and his wife, Diane, founded the Craig and Diane Martin National Center for Construction Safety at the University of Kansas, his alma mater, with a \$3.5-million endowment and an objective to develop life-and-injury-saving ideas and technologies.

“Craig believes in keeping people safe at work and at home; we are very happy to find a way to put this passion into action,” Diane Martin says, noting that he even chats with their Pasadena, Calif., neighbors about safety.

“The idea of the center came as we began thinking about what was important to us,” says Martin, who serves as its senior adviser. “We want to be involved in creating and sustaining something that truly makes a difference.”

A native of Dodge City, Kan., Martin earned a bachelor's of science in civil engineering in 1971. Ten years later, he received his MBA through the Univer-

sity of Denver's executive program. In 1972, he joined Martin K. Eby Construction Co. in Wichita, where he managed construction-related projects over \$40 million.

During this time, the issue of safety transformed his thinking about changing company culture. "One of the people I worked for, who was very safety conscious at work, was killed while working at home," Martin recalls. "He accidentally let a ladder he was using touch a power line, and he was electrocuted. It helped me realize that safety isn't an 8-to-5 thing."

Martin was "religious" on safety and took a leadership role in the industry early in his career, says Warren Dean, a friend since graduate school with whom Martin worked from 1983 to 1989 at CRSS Constructors Inc. Martin eventually became CRSS president, where he helped develop one of the country's first privately owned and operated toll roads in California.

"Craig was always able to see the bigger picture. He is the most diverse and deep person I have ever known in the industry," says Dean, who said Martin's dedication to safety extended beyond technical aspects to the personal side. "You can do it by the book and still have accidents; Craig talked about personal responsibility to yourself and your work associates—pursuing safety pre-emptively rather than just reactively."

Leading Into the New Century

When Jacobs acquired CRSS's construction management and engineering divisions in 1994, Martin joined the company. In 2006, he became president and CEO and served on the board of directors.

During his tenure, the firm joined the Fortune 500 as revenue grew to over \$12 billion from \$1.16 billion with a workforce that tripled to 65,000 in 250 offices in 30 countries. By 2010, Jacobs ranked in ENR's list of the top 10 firms for design and construction.

Jacobs was performing well, but Martin was not satisfied. Jay Greenspan, founder of Austin-based consulting firm JMJ Associates, began working with Jacobs in 2003 to reduce and eliminate worker injury in heavy industrial settings. Martin "had his analysts run some numbers about their safety performance, and what they presented him was very unsettling: At the rate of their current improvement and growth, they said it would take more than 50 years for Jacobs to stop hurting people, and that simply was not acceptable to him," he says. "He tasked his EVPs with finding a way to significantly accelerate this rate of improvement, but after several weeks, they came up blank."

The company had looked for a systems solution to a human problem. "Craig saw this and took a powerful stand in front of all his VPs that they were



POWER COUPLE
Martin and his wife, Diane, continue to champion worker safety. Last year, they founded the Craig and Diane Martin National Center for Construction Safety at the University of Kansas, his alma mater.

going to change the culture of Jacobs from one of a compliance focus to one of real caring for people, starting with himself," Greenspan adds. "Jacobs was going to go beyond numbers."

As the company grew, Martin also grew the firm's awareness and safety improvement. The result: Jacobs' "Beyond Zero – A Culture of Caring." Begun in 2007, that initiative engaged the company to commit to safety through new attitudes extending beyond the office and project sites into employee's lifestyles and their communities.

"Regardless of the circumstances, Craig never faltered in his drive to eliminate incidents and injuries and move the company into having everyone associated with Jacobs not just go home uninjured but to become healthier as a result of working at Jacobs," Greenspan says.

The initiative was transformative. "The effort was about inspiring a courage to care," Martin says. "People talk about numbers, but any number is not okay, even if you're showing marked improvement. If it is not zero, people are still getting hurt."

After Jacobs established the initiative, an employee was driving home and saw a man driving a tractor mowing his yard. The man had no eye or hand protection, and his young daughter was on his lap. "Our employee got out of his car and approached the man and pointed out the danger of what he was doing," Martin says. "The man went in the house and came out with goggles and gloves and got back on the tractor, without his daughter."

In 2010, Susan Steele interviewed with Martin for the role of vice president of global maintenance services, and she was immediately inspired by his safety commitment. Then part of Jacobs' field services business unit, the division comprised 15,000 supervisors and craft workers performing plant maintenance, capital projects and turnarounds in industrial plant facilities.

"He described the challenges of the job and why he was seeking new leadership to create a safer work environment for the Jacobs team. Craig was committed to making it personal to change the hearts and minds of our

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—Craig Martin

SPEAKING FOR CHANGE Martin accepts the Legacy Award at ENR California's Best Projects event in Los Angeles.



employees,” says Steele, who accepted the job and stayed in the position until 2013 when she became senior vice president of Jacobs’ global supply chain.

“We aligned on a declared future where no one got hurt and we treated everyone like family,” says Steele, today a board member for Hill International, a Philadelphia-based program management company. “This role provided a platform for encouraging other companies to enroll in pushing the boundaries for human safety performance.”

Yet Martin was still not satisfied.

To further his safety efforts, he met with Tom F. Gilbane Jr., chairman and CEO of Providence-based Gilbane Inc., to discuss what it means to be a company leader committed to culture change and an incident- and injury-free company—goals that Gilbane shared.

They asked JMJ, best known for creating the Incident and Injury-Free™ (IIF™) safety practices for the world’s most hazardous industries, to convene a meeting of other similarly minded CEOs. In 2009, 15 CEOs met for the first CEO IIF Free Forum. (The 22nd meeting has just taken place.) Martin notes that he “religiously attended” until he retired and still attends when he can.

Safety Efforts

Coordinating with other members of the Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT) in McLean, Va., he helped establish a national “Construction Safety Week.” The first industry-wide event was held in 2014 with 27 other companies. This event has grown to include 70 construction firms worldwide as well as many other industry parties who support worksite safety.

“This is what happens when a visionary leader like Craig Martin takes a powerful stand for the transformation not only of his own company, Jacobs, but of the whole engineering and construction industry,” Greenspan says.

Martin’s career efforts culminate in Kansas Uni-

versity’s Center for Construction Safety, founded with the goals of fostering a culture of jobsite safety through constant awareness; designing for safety when projects begin; improving tools and equipment, including warning technology, virtual reality and augmented reality, building information modeling (BIM), robotics and automation; coordinating with industry and academic partners; and serving as a clearing house for ideas and innovations that improve safety.

Martin says that he and Diane stipulated two procedural elements for the center: a multidisciplinary

approach and a “reduction to practice” philosophy. The first incorporates perspectives from civil engineering, construction and psychological and social sciences—in particular, behavior modification.

“It is key to the success of the center that the approach, research and critical thinking be multidisciplinary in nature and not confined to traditional avenues for improving safety performance,” says David Darwin, the Deane E. Ackers distinguished professor and chair at Kansas University’s department of civil, environmental and architectural engineering.

The Martins’ second request was that research should maximize industry value and center on discoveries that directly translate to site or building safety attitudes. “The results of the center’s work should be of immediate use in the industry. We want to avoid theory for theory’s sake. Some outputs may apply directly to field implementation and some to the management and leadership of just keeping people safe at work and getting them home safely at night,” Martin says.

In retirement, Martin is a board member of CSRA, a Falls Church, Va.-based government services IT company. And for Hill International, he was non-executive chairman in September 2016 and chairman of the board until September 2018.

Steve Curts served with Martin on the Hill board from late 2015 through October 2018. “Craig’s expertise in the engineering industry was obvious from Day 1. His business judgment was superior and sound,” says Curts, a managing director of the New York City private equity firm Certares. “What also struck me was his integrity and concern for safety, which is paramount in the engineering industry today.”

“Martin will be known for growing Jacobs into a truly remarkable organization, nurturing and cultivating Jacobs’ culture of caring and leading the construction industry to improve safety,” Darwin says. ■

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