

editor's note



Every superhero has an origin story.

Superman has his birth on Krypton. Batman has the murder of his parents. And Captain America has his super-soldier formula. But to me, David Ratterman's story is the most interesting of all.

For those of you who don't know David, he retired this past December after serving as AISC's legal counsel for more than 30 years. He was an incredibly popular speaker at our conferences and other events, a widely respected author and an active participant in the development of the Code of Standard Practice. He is also a true gentleman, a font of wisdom and a great person with whom to grab a glass of bourbon. His story, though, began way before his affiliation with AISC.

His father was a journeyman plumber who ultimately opened his own business, a business that was beset with financial difficulty after two contractors defaulted on owed payments. David worked for his dad but they never had much money, and when he graduated high school, his plan was to move to Alaska and work on the pipeline. He was set on a new path, however, when the local plumbers association gifted him with a four-year scholarship to study engineering—a gift and an origin story that he never forgot.

Over the years, he often cited this story as the inspiration for the work he did with students, work that was so significant that when, a few years ago, AISC created a scholarship program for the children of full members to help get them started in college, we named it the David B. Ratterman Fast Start Scholarship and annually award \$60,000 in scholarships.

At his recent retirement dinner, after he was gifted with mementos and a new grill, he turned the tables. He announced that he and his amazing wife, Lois Louis, would be gifting the AISC Education Foundation with \$50,000 for undergraduate scholarships. Annually, AISC presents or administers more than \$100,000 in undergraduate and graduate scholarships, and this contribution will help add funding to a program that develops the future leaders of the design community and construction industry.

When David first told me about his intended gift, he mentioned that he hoped it would galvanize others to also contribute. And so far, it seems to be working. Immediately after David's announcement, Rick Cooper, president of W&W Steel, offered to match the gift. My hope is that others are also willing to step up. It doesn't matter whether you're contributing \$50 or \$50,000, all of the money goes towards scholarships and other educational activities; none of the money is used for overhead or administrative costs.

Please help create a new origin story for up-and-coming students. Send a check (it's a charitable deduction!) payable to the AISC Education Foundation at 130 E. Randolph Street, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60601, Attn: Janet Cummins.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Melnick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "S" and "M" being particularly large and stylized.

Scott Melnick
Editor

Modern Steel Construction

Editorial Offices

130 E Randolph St, Ste 2000
Chicago, IL 60601
312.670.2400

Editorial Contacts

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Scott Melnick

312.670.8314

melnick@aisc.org

SENIOR EDITOR

Geoff Weisenberger

312.670.8316

weisenberger@aisc.org

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS

Keith A. Grubb, SE, PE

312.670.8318

grubb@aisc.org

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Erika Salisbury

312.670.5427

salisbury@aisc.org

GRAPHIC DESIGN MANAGER

Kristin Hall

312.670.8313

hall@aisc.org

AISC Officers

CHAIR

David Zalesne

VICE CHAIR

Jack Klimp

SECRETARY/LEGAL COUNSEL

Edward Sedglas

PRESIDENT

Charles J. Carter, SE, PE, PhD

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Hardesty and Hanover

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