

# 9300 CONTRACTOR

**Tile Contractors' Association of America**  
THE VOICE OF SIGNATORY TILE/STONE CONTRACTORS



■ FEATURED INSIDE ■

***E. G. Sackett Company - Project Spotlight  
YMCA of Greater Rochester  
Schottland Family Branch "Next Generation Facility"***

SPRING 2020

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## 9300 Contractor

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Lucinda Noel, Executive Director/Secretary

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# A Message from the President

John Trendell, Trendell Consulting LLC  
TCAA President

## IS IT BETTER? The Second Time Around

First and foremost, I would like to thank Brad Trostrud for his leadership and passion for our Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA) organization. His work and concern for continuing education in our industry has been long overdue. Continuing education is absolutely critical to the economic survival of our contractors and for the installation union professionals that we hire through the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (IUBAC). I look to continue that work through TCAA's national, regional, and local connections with our contractor members and local union representatives.

In 2010 when I first became president of TCAA we lived in a time of unparalleled economic uncertainty. The construction industry, and specifically our ceramic tile industry, had hardly even begun to come out of the worst economic recession in 75 years. It definitely was not a time where our contractors were thinking about continuing education. We were all in basic company survival mode. But Jerry Leva of E. G. Sackett Co. who was a mentor and a previous president of TCAA said, "John, I've seen good times and bad times and we always get through it." Well, he was right of course.

During my first tenure we started working on qualified contractor language for use in the Tile Council of North America (TCNA) installation handbook. Those efforts evolved into not only insertion of this language into the handbook, but also the use of qualified installer language to address the craft workers whom we hire to perform the work. TCAA's Trowel of Excellence certification program was the first of its kind in the nation for ceramic tile contractors. IUBAC's 4-year Department of Labor recognized tile setter apprenticeship program is a clear indication of the importance we, as signatory contractors, have given to hiring the best trained installers in the business. And we didn't stop there!

The ceramic tile industry has changed dramatically in the 10 years between my first time as president and now. New products, new setting and grouting materials, and new installation methods have been developed and have revolutionized our

industry. That is why, through collaboration of all stakeholders in the industry, we have developed the Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT) program. This program is now included in the TCNA Handbook and recognizes the skills and expertise of installers in seven key methods of installation.

Wow! So, what does TCAA do for an encore? Well, with the great success our industry is presently enjoying, the search for new and skilled labor is critical. Just as critical is the continuing education of our existing workforce to gain the skills needed to properly install new products with new methods. I look to work with our contractors at the regional level to make sure their concerns are heard at the national level.

I also recognize that with the retirement of the baby boomers (me included) TCAA needs to address the transition of leadership both within our individual companies and in TCAA. I look to make sure TCAA thrives into the future. Our board of directors now includes two members under the age of 40. Our transition from one great Executive Director, Carole Damon, to our new Executive Director, Lucinda Noel, is now complete. Lucinda is a former contractor of 25 years and a member of TCAA. She brings experience and a solid understanding of our industry to our organization. We are currently setting up meetings with regional ceramic tile associations to educate them on the importance of the work TCAA does for the good of the whole industry.

So, is it better being president of TCAA now than before? Well, each endeavor any of us take on will always be different than the time before. But as exciting as the ceramic tile industry has become I am certainly glad to be a part of it! ♦



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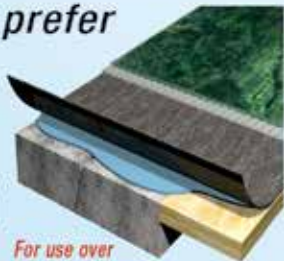
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## **E. G. Sackett Company - Project Spotlight**

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### *YMCA of Greater Rochester Schottland Family Branch "Next Generation Facility"*

The Eugene G. Sackett Company, Inc. is a premier tile, stone and terrazzo contractor in the Upstate New York area who was selected as the ceramic tile subcontractor for the new YMCA of Greater Rochester. The YMCA stated that this 140,000 square foot state-of-the-art next generation facility, in Pittsford, NY, is a nationally recognized collaborative model that will achieve the YMCA mission. It was stated that one of the greatest misconceptions about the YMCA is that the Y is just a building with a gym and a pool. The reality is that the YMCA is a powerful agent of change, focused on strengthening communities by offering expanded services to meet the needs of more individuals, families, children, and seniors.

Gro Design and Development was the architect, and The Pike Company, of Rochester, NY was the general contractor that contracted with E. G. Sackett for the ceramic tile finishes on the project. This project included approximately 37,000 SF of ceramic tile involving both the thinnest and thickset/mud bed installation methods. The leisure pool, lap pool, and large hot tub required a thickset/mud bed throughout. There was also a custom ceramic mosaic mural installed at the splash pad, which required a mud bed installation and intricate cutting to fit within custom curbing.

The myriad of tiles that adorn this facility include 6"x36" Olympia Crown Wood series porcelain plank tile flooring in corridors, 1"x2" Daltile Keystone Mosaics at the pool deck and locker room floors, 1"x1" Daltile Keystone Mosaics at the pool tank floors & walls, 1"x6" Daltile Colorwave glass tiles at locker room walls, 6"x12" Daltile Natural Hues & 6"x16" Daltile Annapolis on the walls along the pool deck, and Daltile 6"x36" Yorkwood Manor, 3"x6" Daltile Rittenhouse Bevel & 12"x24" American Olean Rapport on bathroom walls. Then there is the stunning Artaic custom ceramic mosaic tile mural at the pool splash pad.

- Pool tanks were floated with a 2" thickset mud bed on both floors and walls.
- Locker rooms and pool deck also required a thickset/mud bed to achieve proper pitch to various drain types.
- Corridors/common areas were installed by the thinnest method, utilizing a clip leveling system, over crack isolation membrane.
- The materials used for substrate prep, installation and grouting were from Laticrete International and included Hydroban crack isolation, 3701 Fortified Mortar Bed, 254 Platinum, 253 Gold, Titanium, 255 Multimax, Permacolor Grout and Spectralock Epoxy Grout.

As the project ensued, the E.G. Sackett Co. met challenges that had to be conquered. The schedule was accelerated by two months mid-project, forcing Sackett to increase manpower to over 20 installers. In order to complete the tile work on time the leisure pool, full size lap pool, and a 20-person hot tub had to be worked on simultaneously. All curbs in the leisure pool lazy river had to be meticulously mudded and wrapped with mosaic tile, which was a laborious task. The custom mural at the splash pad fabrication was delayed, limiting installation time to less than one week. In that condensed span of time, the mural had to be installed in a thickset mud bed and cut to fit within custom curbing, which are both arduous tasks, however, E.G. Sackett rose to meet the challenge. The project manager, John "JR" Levis, and their crew delivered an on-time quality installation.

#### **About the E. G. Sackett Company**

E.G. Sackett was founded in 1914 and purchased by the current Leva family owners in the early 1980s. The present Leva management team is comprised of Chris, Patrick and Brian Leva. Expanding the business over the past few decades has established E.G.







Sackett as the leading provider of tile installation in Western NY. Clients such as U of R, RIT, Strong Hospital, and Wegmans Supermarkets have expanded Sackett's operations to several states. Sackett has offices in Rochester and Buffalo.

The E.G. Sackett Company is a BAC-signatory contractor that employs skilled union craftworkers. They take great pride in the fact that their installers have been honored with industry craftsmanship awards on many occasions throughout the years. Sackett has also received the Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA) Technical Merit Award and TCAA Project of the Year Award.

The Leva boys strive to uphold the reputation and work ethic put in place by their father, Jerry Leva Sr. Their motto is *"Working hard every day and always keeping our clients' goals and interests at the core of our business decisions."* Practicing this simple motto, offering fair prices, prompt service, and quality workmanship has allowed E. G. Sackett to grow into one of the most respected contractors in New York State.

E.G. Sackett is a member of the Tile Contractor's Association of America (TCAA), the National Terrazzo and Mosaic Association (NTMA) and the Natural Stone Institute. In addition, they are certified by the Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA) as a Trowel of Excellence Contractor. [www.tcaainc.org/trowel](http://www.tcaainc.org/trowel)

### **E. G. Sackett's Mission**

- *To provide our clients with quality workmanship at a fair price.*
- *To be ever mindful of our clients' goals: budget, schedule and aesthetic visions.*
- *To educate and innovate — no status quo.*
- *To keep our trade viable and at the forefront of the ever-changing construction industry.*

For additional information about the E.G. Sackett Company you may contact Brian Leva @ (585) 647-3250 or [bleva@egsackett.com](mailto:bleva@egsackett.com) ♦

# TCAA Labor Report

John Trendell, TCAA Labor Committee Chair  
Trendell Consulting LLC

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## ACT, Still the Best of the Best

The **Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers** (ACT) steering committee met at the 2020 International Surfaces show in Las Vegas recently. The steering committee included representatives of the governing organizations of the program. The groups include the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF), the International Masonry Institute (IMI), the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (IUBAC), the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA), and the Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA). The purpose of the meeting was to review the certifications and to tweak and/or revise any of the processes used to award the certifications.

The program now includes testing and certification in seven key areas. They include Grouts, Large Format Tile & Subsurface Prep, Membranes, Mortar Floors, Mortar Walls, Shower Receptors, and Gauged Porcelain Tile Panels. Interestingly, if you notice, these tests include only two that require the installation of tile and one of those is actually tile panels. This just proves how complex ceramic tile installations have become and the importance of the whole process when certifying qualified tile installers.

It was determined that the process, as a whole, has worked out quite well. Some modifications were made to record keeping of certifications, evaluators, and testing modules. Minor changes were made to the Large Format Tile and Membrane tests. A change in Showers certification will be the addition of two new certifications to include Tile Council of North America (TCNA) B421 and B421C installations.

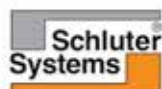
Probably the biggest change was a requirement that all ACT certified installers will be required to take a written test every 5 years to retain their certifications. The committee felt that changes in our industry can occur so quickly that a review and an understanding of the latest standards should be a requirement of each installer for each area of certification that he or she might hold.

ACT certified installers represent the pinnacle of performance for ceramic tile installations and the ACT program continues to set the bar at a level where only the best of the best can be certified. ♦





# TOTALLY ONTREND



## New TRENDLINE grates and shelves

The latest trends in tile have met their match! The array of textured, color-coated TRENDLINE finishes for Schluter-KERDI-DRAIN and Schluter-SHELF allows you to craft cohesive designs with your tile and shower fixtures, and available matching profiles give any bathroom décor that perfect finish.

Go ahead: be bold or blend in. Either way, you're Totally on TREND.



*Matte white*



*Cream*



*Greige*



*Stone grey*



*Bronze*



*Matte black*

# Critical Points of Design and Installation: Mortar Bed (Mud) Floors and Walls

Author: Scott Conwell, FAIA, FCSI, International Masonry Institute

This article is adapted from my original paper on Critical Points of Tile Design and Installation presented at the Qualicer World Congress for Ceramic Tile Quality in February 2020. The comprehensive paper provides detailed discussion of the seven key skill areas important for tile setters and the critical points that make up each of the skill areas. The short list of key skill areas originally compiled by representatives from TCAA, IMI, IUBAC, TCNA, NTCA, and CTEF in 2012 make up the backbone of the Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT). Those skill areas are as follows:

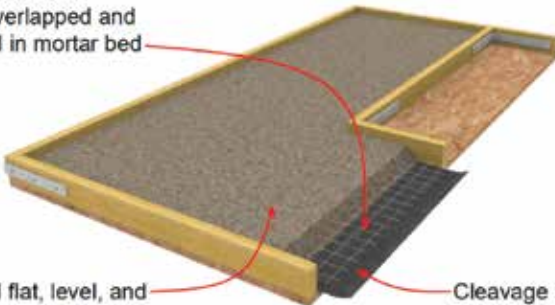
- Large format tile
- Gauged Porcelain Tile (GPT) and GPT Slabs/Panels
- Membranes
- Mortar bed (mud) floors and walls
- Shower receptors
- Grouts

This article will examine the key skill area of mud floors and walls and the critical points of mastery that define a qualified tile setter within this skill area.

## Mortar Bed (Mud) Floors and Walls

The age-old method of laying tile floors and walls in setting beds built up of sand, cement, and sometimes wire or lath reinforcement over the floor or wall structure is a work technique that has declined in recent years as thinset mortars and thinset installation methods have been improved and become more prevalent. However, mortar bed techniques for installing tile will never disappear completely as they remain appropriate for certain types of applications such as heavy duty areas of use, cases

Wire reinforcement  
properly overlapped and  
suspended in mortar bed



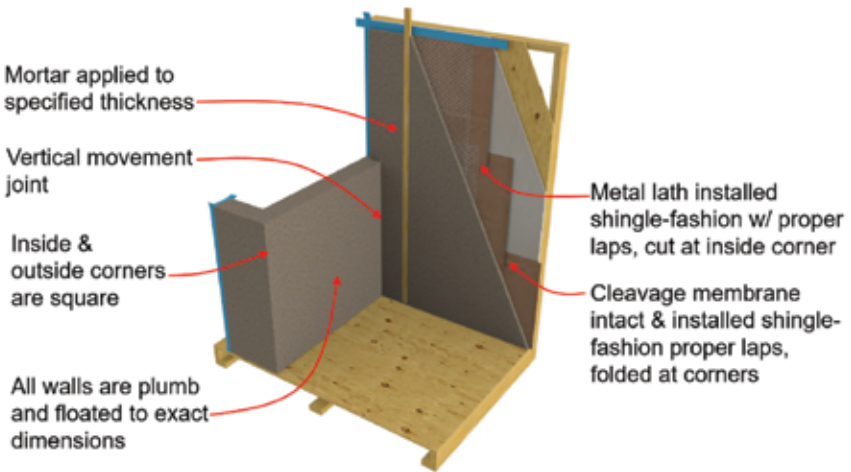
Mortar bed flat, level, and  
thickness as specified

Cleavage membrane intact  
and properly overlapped

where the variable thickness of the mortar (mud) bed is appropriately used to correct an irregular substrate, and other instances where the design professional or building owner has a preference for this classic method of installation. Today's qualified tile installer must be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills to properly install all elements of mud floors and walls. There are two distinct ACT certifications: one for Mud Floors and one for Mud Walls, and the critical points for each will be discussed in this section.

### Correctly install cleavage membrane

A cleavage membrane is often specified to provide a bond break in mud set floor and wall assemblies if differential movement is expected between the tile assembly and the substrate. Cleavage membrane materials vary, but they are often paper-based, delicate, and easily damaged. A qualified tile installer will take care not to tear, puncture, or otherwise damage the cleavage membrane during the installation process, and if damage does occur, the installer will replace and reinstall the material. Floors and walls both require minimum overlaps in the cleavage membrane, generally 4 in. (100 mm) for floors and 2 in. (50 mm) for walls; and the laps at walls must be applied shingle-fashion. Failure to install the cleavage membrane to these criteria may result in ineffective bond break or moisture intrusion into the wall or floor structure.



### Correctly install wire reinforcement and lath

Except for very small mud installations like single shower receptors, reinforcement is generally required within mortar bed floors and walls to impart flexural strength, to control shrinkage of the mortar and prevent cracking, and in the case of walls, to support the vertical mortar bed.

## **Reinforcement and lath in tile installer's work scope**

Proper installation of galvanized wire mesh reinforcement in mud floors is a critical skill that is always within the work scope of tile installers. Installation of metal lath on a wall's structural backing often falls outside the scope of a tile installer's work, but it is a related skill that tile installers must at least have knowledge of since it affects the performance of the tile assembly, and in some cases the lath installation does fall in the tile work scope.

## **Continuity of reinforcement and lath**

In order to function properly, the reinforcement and lath must be continuous (except at inside corners of walls) and properly lapped by 2 in. (50 mm) minimum. In the case of walls, the lath must be installed shingle-fashion. At inside corners of any mud wall, the lath must terminate at the corner, allowing a small gap in reinforcement to allow for independent movement of each wall and directing cracks to the vertical perimeter expansion joint of the tile assembly.

## **Positioning and fastening of reinforcement and lath**

The positioning of the reinforcement in mud floors is critical to the performance of the floor. If the reinforcement is too high or too low from the center of the mortar bed, its ability to add flexural strength and adequately reinforce the system may be compromised. ACT candidates for Mud Floors certification are evaluated on their ability to maintain the vertical position of the reinforcement in the center 1/3 of the mortar bed. Similarly, the fastening pattern of the metal lath on walls must be installed and spaced as specified.

## **Floating mud floors and walls**

While installation of the cleavage membrane, reinforcement, and lath is important, the primary task faced by installers of mud floors and walls is to properly float the mortar beds flat, level, plumb, and to the specified thickness. The ability to float floors and walls accurately is a true skill that takes years to master, and it is the hallmark of a skilled tile installer.

ACT candidates for Mud Floors and Mud Walls certifications are tested on their ability to float the mortar to the proper thickness at key benchmarks, and to vary the thickness as necessary to correct substrates that are out of flat or out of plumb. At walls, installers must float inside and outside corners that are plumb, as well as maintain plumbness within tolerance in the field of the wall. Dimensions of wall mud must be accurate per the construction documents in order to maintain accurate finish dimensions. Mud floors must be flat and level upon completion, and ready to receive a tile finish. Each of these skills is critical for mortar bed installations.

## **Conclusion**

Installation of tile in a mortar bed may be considered a specialty skill today, but the ability to work with mud is a skill still taught at the preapprentice level by IMI. Proficiency in mud work is a hallmark of a BAC tile setter as well as a TCAA contractor, and it is one of the many elements that distinguishes our membership from the competition. ♦

# RevoTile™

REAL BEAUTY. REAL PORCELAIN. REAL FAST.

BY  daltile

## Daltile Launches **NEW** RevoTile

*Innovative tile installs 2X faster than traditional tile*

### Revolutionizing The Tile Industry

Daltile's NEW RevoTile is a spectacular game-changer for the tile industry. RevoTile is a revolutionary, patented, porcelain tile floating floor system that installs 2X faster than traditional tile. RevoTile installs in just three easy steps 1) Place Underlayment 2) Click Tiles Together 3) Grout Immediately. RevoTile is genuine Daltile porcelain tile offered in twenty-six gorgeous marble, wood, stone, and concrete looks from the leader in tile design and innovation. RevoTile — Real Beauty. Real Porcelain. Real Fast.

### Installation Is Easy As “1, 2, 3”

“This innovative product is unique; there is nothing like it on the market,” said Dan Butterfield, vice president of builder/multi-family sales for Dal-Tile Corporation. “With RevoTile, the most beautiful, durable, and waterproof floor – porcelain tile – is now fast and easy to install like any floating floor on the market.”

RevoTile installs 2X faster than traditional tile in just 3 easy steps:

- |        |              |   |
|--------|--------------|---|
| Step 1 | <b>Place</b> | Place Underlayment (No Mortar Required) |
| Step 2 | <b>Click</b> | Click Tiles Together                    |
| Step 3 | <b>Grout</b> | Grout Immediately (No Wait Time)        |





RevoTile is genuine Daltile porcelain tile enhanced with a proprietary RevoCore featuring patented ClicFit Technology designed by the experts in locking systems in the industry. ClicFit also fosters consistent alignment and no lippage.

RevoTile installs right over many existing floors, avoiding the need for demolition and removal. With RevoTile's proprietary installation system, there is no mortar drying time, no messy two-part grout, and no return visits. A professional tile installer can install a tile floor 2X faster than with traditional tile and with less mess.

Also, because mortar is not used, a RevoTile floor is easy to remove, when the homeowner's style preferences change over time or when refreshing a retail or light commercial space.

RevoTile is the best tile floor option for second-story or higher floor applications for several reasons, the most important of which is minimal transmission of sound to the room below. When installed over plywood or backer board, the RevoTile joints will not telegraph through and no uncoupling mat is required. No crack isolation is required with RevoTile.

A RevoTile porcelain tile floor achieves breaking strength that meets or exceeds 475 lbs and provides increased impact resistance.



### **Increase Revenue & Profits**

RevoTile's substantially faster installation empowers professional installers to complete more jobs in a work week, increasing revenue. Profits can increase too, because tile installation jobs are paid by the square foot, not by the number of hours it takes to complete the job.

### **Win Back Business Previously Lost To LVF**

Because RevoTile makes installing real porcelain tile just as fast and easy to install as any floating floor on the market, professional tile installers can now win business that previously would have been lost to luxury vinyl flooring (LVF).

### **Gain New Commercial Business**

In the past, when refreshing their retail spaces, many companies did not even consider using tile in a store redesign, because the drying time and return visits required for installation did not fit into the very aggressive, quick-turn redesign timeframes of the retail world. RevoTile now removes this roadblock for professional installers, allowing them to gain new commercial business.

### **Suitable For Residential, Multi-Family & Various Light Commercial**

RevoTile is suitable for residential, multi-family, and a variety of light commercial applications. Light commercial is defined as spaces with the same general traffic as: commercial bathrooms, meeting rooms, small and medium office complexes, salons, apartments, hotel guest rooms, boutique retail spaces, common areas, etc.





### **Gorgeous Designs**

RevoTile's porcelain tile is offered in twenty-six gorgeous marble, wood, stone, and concrete looks from the leader in tile design and innovation. This curated assortment of design-driven styles, reflects today's most popular colors, textures, finishes, and sizes. RevoTile is offered in three popular floor tile sizes: 12x24, 6x24 and 6x36.

RevoTile features Daltile's state-of-the-art printing technology, Reveal Imaging. This proprietary innovation produces realistic color, detail, and veining that are unique on every single tile, for a look that's virtually indistinguishable from the material being emulated.

### **Warranty**

When installed using the full system with RapidPrep and RapidGrout, RevoTile is backed by a Limited Lifetime Residential Warranty or a 1-Year Light Commercial Warranty, depending on the application.

### **RapidPrep Underlayment**

RapidPrep is fast, simple, fanfold underlayment that is easy to cover the floor with and easy to cut. It serves as a moisture barrier for the floor and is an effective shock-absorbing structure to maximize the performance of RevoTile's patented, ClicFit Technology locking system.

### **RapidGrout**

RapidGrout is a premium, pre-mixed water-based grout especially designed for tile that features ClicFit Technology. This quick-setting formulation installs up to 50% faster than traditional grouts and never needs to be sealed.

### **ClicFit Install Kit**

The ClicFit Install Kit conveniently provides all of the tools needed for seamless installation: spacers (20), tapping block, pull bar. A rubber mallet is also offered separately.

### **Made In The U.S.A.**

RevoTile is Made In The U.S.A. using imported materials. (Tile is Made In The U.S.A.; click system is imported; finished product is assembled in the U.S.A.)

### **Available Nationwide**

Daltile's RevoTile is available through Daltile's 250+ company-owned sales service centers, providing the ultimate level of product availability and service. ♦

Installation videos available at [www.daltile.com/revotile](http://www.daltile.com/revotile)



## Earl Trostrud, Jr. – Trostrud Mosaic and Tile Co., Inc.

HONORED FOR DECADES OF SERVICE  
TO THE CERAMIC TILE INDUSTRY



***Full time in the industry as a contractor for over 60 years, with service to the Chicago Tile Institute for more than 50 years, and he is not retiring yet!***

Trostrud Mosaic and Tile Co., Inc. was founded in 1929 by Earl J. Trostrud, Sr. At the end of 1939, with the outbreak of war in Europe, the company closed temporarily. After the war was over, Earl Trostrud, Sr. reopened in 1946. Then in the spring of 1958, after just graduating from St. Olaf College in Minnesota, Earl Trostrud, Jr. joined Trostrud Mosaic and Tile Co. The father and son team worked hard crafting a reputation of quality workmanship, integrity and honesty, while treating everyone the way they would want to be treated – whether you were a contractor, owner, distributor, office personnel, tile setter or tile finisher you were respected.

In the summer of 1975, Earl Trostrud, Sr. retired and ten years later, Earl Trostrud, Jr.'s son, Brad, joined his father in the family business. Working together for over 30 years has been extremely rewarding for both Earl, Jr. and Brad. Earl, now in his early 80's, is still working every day and holds the title of President, with Brad as Vice president.

Through Earl's active involvement and in a variety of leadership positions, with what is today the Ceramic Tile Contractors Association of Chicago (CTCAC), he continually sought out ways to bring the benefits of ceramic tile to the attention of architects, specification writers and interior designers to generate a larger market for CTCAC's members. Earl was instrumental in starting the Chicago Tile Institute promotion fund,

which was established to promote the value of union-installed ceramic tile and stone. His efforts bore fruit and, today, CTCAC is one of the most successful local organizations in the country serving BAC-signatory ceramic tile contractors. Both Earl and his son have served CTCAC as Trustee, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President and President. Earl also became the Chairman for the IUBAC Pension and Welfare Fund in 1990 and after stepping down as Chairman a few years ago, he continues to serve on that Board. In addition, Earl served the Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA) as a Zone Director from 1972-1976 and was awarded TCAA's prestigious Carl V. Cesery Award in 2013, which recognizes distinguished service to the tile industry.

Trostrud Mosaic and Tile Co. has received various awards over the years, most notably the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craft Workers (IUBAC) Craft Award for the best tile project in 2008, TCAA's 1<sup>st</sup> Place Commercial Project of the Year award in 2012, and the IUBAC Craft Award for the best mosaic in 2015. Trostrud Tile also achieved certification as a TCAA Trowel of Excellence contractor in 2012 and continues to meet the criteria for same.

Brad Trostrud said of Trostrud Mosaic and Tile Co., *"We employ the best union trade installers in the business. Our top priority is to provide the best tile installations possible. We are not interested in being the largest or the least expensive tile contractor – we will not compromise on quality – we just want to be known as the best."*

During both CTI and CTCAC events this past December, Brian Castro, President of DTI of Illinois, presented an award to Earl inscribed with the words *"For His More Than Five Decades Of Dedication And Commitment Serving The Chicago Tile Institute And Tile Industry,"* honoring him for his outstanding service and dedication in Chicagoland. Mr. Castro said *"Earl has always had a very dry sense of humor and a very scary, and debilitating hand-shake. While most of us thought he was finally retiring, he shocked most everyone when a fellow trustee asked him what he was planning to do in retirement, which he calmly answered, "keep working!" Luckily for all of us, and especially for me since he's been my mentor for the last 20 years as his handpicked fellow trustee, Earl is not retiring just yet. After all, he is only in his early 80s! He's a true ICON in the tile world and he's been like a second dad to me. Thank you, Sir!"*

## Messages from industry colleagues submitted in honor of Earl Trostrud, Jr.

*We all need to thank Earl for so many years of dedication and commitment to the tile Industry and the Chicago Tile & Terrazzo Benefit Funds. Everyone in this industry has benefited in some way as a result of his efforts. It has been a pleasure and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Earl.*

**Ann Wydra**, Chicago Tile Institute



“  
Working with Earl Trostrud over the years, 40+ that is, was very consistent. A true professional tile contracting company! Earl has a firm handshake, maybe firmer today, his word is gospel, he's very fair and passionate about the industry. Earl runs the company like a fine watch. On time meetings, on time communication and on time payments. Earl, it has been a pleasure doing business with you and Mid America Tile looks forward to continuing as long as you would like to.

All the best to you and your family,  
**Thomas J. Kotel**, President -  
Mid America Tile, Elk Grove Village, IL

Earl J. Trostrud is truly a one of a kind AMAZING person, his dedication, enthusiasm, compassion and insight are inspiring. His continued dedication and committed service to the tile industry is truly valuable and sets a strong foundation of our success.

Earl, thank you for going above and beyond serving the Chicago Tile Institute, Ceramic Tile Contractors' Association of Chicago, Inc. and the Chicagoland Tile Industry.

Sincerely,  
**Desirée G. Martyniuk**, DTI of Illinois, Inc.  
Office Manager, CTCAC  
Executive Director - [www.ctcac.org](http://www.ctcac.org)

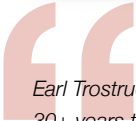


60 years of service to the Ceramic Tile Industry is a monumental accomplishment. Earl is an inspiration to all the other contractors, general contractors, clients, suppliers, union officials and the many members of our union that have worked for him over the years. I have known Earl for many years as a Trustee on the funds and I can honestly say that he has always been an asset to the industry and the members of this union. Earl is a true gentleman. Even if we have

disagreed in the past we could always count on a firm handshake on the way in and out of every meeting. He has always been a wealth of knowledge and experience as a fund trustee. I believe that Earl has as much pride in serving on the board and as an association contractor member as he has for his own family name. Mr. Trostrud made that name into a name with our members and contractors that deserves respect. His company has made many good tile setters and finishers even better. There has always been a pride amongst our membership to say that they work for Trostrud Tile. It is no mistake that some of our best employees at our local were Trostrud employees at one time. This is truly what makes us partners in this industry. Thank you Earl for your many years of continued service.

**Jim McHale**

Business Representative - Ceramic Tile, Marble and Terrazzo  
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers  
Administrative District Council 1 of Illinois



Earl Trostrud was a mentor to me for the 30+ years that I worked at Trostrud Tile & Mosaic Company. He guided me on the path of, above all, do quality work and never cut corners. I've always admired Earl's work ethic, professionalism, and fairness. Thanks for being such a positive role model, mentor and for the dedication that you have shown to our industry. Congratulations on your 60 years of service.

**Gavin Collier**

Apprentice Coordinator/Tile  
International Union of  
Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers  
Administrative District  
Council Training Center - Illinois

I've had a chance to work next to Earl Trostrud over the past 10 years to find out that he is sincerely a 1<sup>st</sup> class gentlemen. He has been a role model to many and has set the bar very high with his dedication to the Tile Industry. Thank you Earl for your 60 years, I am truly grateful to call you a friend and a mentor.

**Mike Roberson**

President, Regency Tile, Inc.  
President, Ceramic Tile Contractors' Association of Chicago (CTCAC)

This year marks Earl Trostrud Jr's 62<sup>nd</sup> year as a tile contractor and my 35<sup>th</sup> year working with my father. Prior to 1985, I knew him only as my dad, who worked very hard and provided well for his family. Working with him added 9 to 10 hours per day, five days a week, plus some Saturdays. I saw firsthand that I couldn't be any prouder that he is my father. In business he is honest, fair, kind, trustworthy, generous and demanding. In addition to those traits, he consistently demonstrates love, faithfulness and support to his family and friends. In my day to day life, when big life questions come up, all I need to do is ask myself, what would my dad do? He taught me many things, but the real education was simply watching how he chose to live his God given life. I thank God that I have been blessed to have him in my life. I love you Dad!

**Your son, Brad**

I have known Earl for over 30 years and worked for Trostrud Tile a good portion of those years. Earl has been a pleasure to work for because he always demands QUALITY workmanship over Quantity.

Earl is a true gentleman. Thank you Earl for all the years of service and dedication you have given to the Ceramic Tile industry.

**Bill Breheny**

Director of Ceramic Tile & Terrazzo  
International Union of  
Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers  
Administrative District Council 1 of Illinois



*Quality, loyalty, committed, dependable, partnership, friendship and humor. These are just a few words that come to mind when I think of Earl Trostrud. For the past 40 years, these are just a couple of Earl's unique qualities that I've been lucky to be around him enough, to get to know.*

*He may not know it but in many ways he and the whole Trostrud family have been role models that I, and many others in and around the ceramic tile*

*industry in the greater Chicagoland area, have looked up to and emulated. They have set the bar very high and have elevated all of us in doing so.*

*From MAPEI Corp, and myself personally, it's an honor to be associated with Earl and Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co. as business partners and more importantly as friends. Thank You Earl for your legacy of quality, of character, and attention to values and Leadership.*

**Steve Cameron**, Director of Sales - MAPEI Corp ♦

*Earl Trostrud – a GREAT & SPECIAL Friend for many years. Earl is an exceptional individual, he develops & instills meaningful relationships based on trust, has a strong code of ethics / incredible integrity and is very dedicated and committed to the business. Earl's caring for others is contagious and his passion for family, friends and his customers has been unparalleled.*

*Thank you Earl for contributing so much to the Industry and investing & being a mentor throughout my career. You are very special and so well respected by all.*

All my best, **John Cousins**, Senior Vice-President - Dal-Tile



*The union ceramic tile industry in the Chicagoland area has been a part of some of the most incredible tile projects in the country. The talents of our members and the dedication to quality by our signatory contractors is recognized throughout the industry. That being said, there is one-man, Earl Trostrud, who has been a giant in the industry for the past 50 years! Earl has devoted decades of service as Chairman of the CTI Pension and Welfare funds. His dedication not only to his company Trostrud Mosaic & Tile but to our members is truly inspirational.*

**Jim Allen**, President  
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers  
Administrative District Council 1 of Illinois





## In Memory of Robert L. Smyth

*April 30, 1928 - January 6, 2020*

Robert ("Bob") Smyth proudly served his country, his family, the ceramic tile industry and the Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA) with excellence during his 91 years on this earth. He lived in the state of Washington and is survived by his wife of 70 years, two of their three children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

After serving in the Navy, Bob entered the University of Washington School of Architecture in 1948 and then in 1956 he started Western Tile and Marble. Over the years his company gained a valued reputation based on quality workmanship and reliability and was known as a leader in the natural stone and commercial flooring industry.

With a strong reputation, he became a passionate advocate for the industry. He served the Seattle Tile Contractor's Association, the Pacific Northwest Tile Contractor's Association, and the Seattle Apprentice Association Board. In addition, he chaired the Seattle area Joint Arbitration Board, and as a member of the Seattle Construction Council acted as liaison between the sub-contractors and contractors. Bob also served on the board of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (IUBAC) National Health and Welfare Program.

Pursuant to Bob's first introduction to the Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA) in 1963, he played an active role in the organization. He served as TCAA Director of the Western States (Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho and Alaska), as TCAA President (1974-1975), and as Chairman of the TCAA Board of Trustees. Bob made tremendous contributions to the industry.

In 1994 TCAA presented Bob with the Carl V. Cesery Award, which was established in 1963 to esteem those who have served the industry with great distinction. Then in 2005 Robert L. Smyth was honored as the third recipient of TCAA's highest recognition, the Giacomo DeLazzeri Lifetime Achievement Award, for his achievements within both TCAA and the ceramic tile industry. (Since being instituted in 1999, the Lifetime Achievement Award has only been given a total of five times).

Rest in peace Robert Smyth. You could certainly say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." ♦





# HISTORY OF TILE



Moravian tile (#8B) from a 18<sup>th</sup> century stove plate, one of Mercer's earliest tiles.

## If Tiles Could Tell No Stories

As we began to appreciate the Winter issue of *9300 Contractor*, which featured the Moravian tiles produced for the State Capitol in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Henry Chapman Mercer had already become a pivotal figure in the evolution of handcrafted tiles. His innovations represented a phenomenon that was uniquely American, breaking away from the 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramic traditions and production methods inherited from English and Western European manufacturers.

From Mercer's "Notes on the Moravian pottery of Doylestown" (*Bucks County Historical Society Paper 4*, 1917:483) he wrote:

"The time was very opportune. On the one hand, owing to the reintroduction of fireplaces by modern architects into all the finer modern dwelling houses, a large

demand for ornamental tiles had suddenly sprung up. On the other, the repulsive colors, decadent designs, mechanical surface and texture, and chilling white background of most of the tiles then on the market, had so thoroughly disgusted modern architects of taste, that many of them refused to ornament fireplaces with tiles, and built and faced the latter with plain bricks."

Not about to shun European traditions entirely, Mercer favored preindustrial designs from countries throughout Europe as well as the craftsmanship involved in making tiles by hand, not machines. His interpretations of these designs resulted in a novel collection heretofore unimagined, among the first of his stove plate tiles.



Mercer's "brocade" depiction of Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," who fell asleep in the Catskill Mountains and awoke 20 years later having missed the American Revolution. Howe Branch of the Public Library, Albany, New York. Architect: Howard Rogers, 1929.

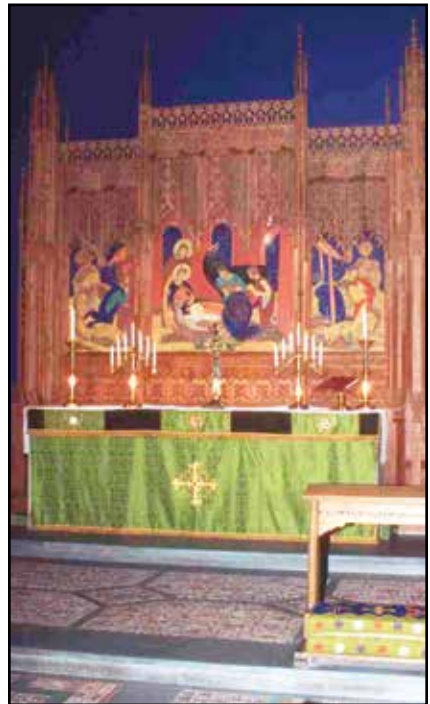


Just two years into his production at Indian House, Mercer published his first illustrated catalog in 1900. Following the success of the tile installation at Fenway Court at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, 1901, and then the massive install at Pennsylvania's State Capitol, increasing numbers of architects had become intrigued by Mercer's unusually decorative creations.

By 1910, the demand for his tiles necessitated the building of what is today the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, not far from his former operations on the family's estate in Doylestown. Completed in 1912 and still fully operational today, the building accommodated the production facilities, office space, storage and a large, well-lighted "studio." Products consisted of "plain" tiles for pavements, walls and ceilings in addition to roughly 400 decorative tiles, mosaics, and brocades (high-relief tiles), each of which was numbered and given a descriptive title reflecting the historic source or legend related to the particular design. As Mercer once said:



The Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, was completed in 1912. The tile production occupies the entire left (north) side of the building. The "studio" is at the bottom. Showroom and offices on the right. An original hand press (above) stands beside one of the kilns.



Moravian "pavement" tiles adorn the altar of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Duluth, Minnesota, designed in 1913 by architect Bertram Goodhue.

"If tiles could tell no story, inspire or teach nobody, and only serve to produce aesthetic thrills, I would have stopped making them years ago."

Today, representing the quintessence of the Arts and Crafts movement, Moravian tiles are found throughout the United States in schools, libraries, churches, government buildings, commercial establishments as well as in any number of period homes where fireplace mantels are appropriately decorated.

There are few, if any, individuals in America's tile history who have had as dramatic an impact on this country's ceramic traditions. In the words of historian Vance Koehler: "The success of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works rested on Mercer's pure genius."

Special thanks to Vance Koehler, Cleota Reed, Gaye Lindsey and Josh Blanc for their knowledge and assistance.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In 1991, a Special Edition of *Flash Point*, the publication of the Tile Heritage Foundation, was sponsored by a generous contribution from the American Olean Tile Company. Five Mercer scholars, each of whom provided a unique commentary on Henry Chapman Mercer, explore this exceptional individual whose legacy continues to inspire us today. Email [foundation@tileheritage.org](mailto:foundation@tileheritage.org) and we will mail you a **free** copy.

A reprint of "**Moravian Tiles,**" the 1913 (and final) sales catalogue of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works is available from Tile Heritage for \$16 including postage. ♦

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Joseph A. Taylor  
President, Tile Heritage Foundation  
Cesery Award recipient in 2003

[www.tileheritage.org](http://www.tileheritage.org)



A series of six Moravian "mosaic" panels featuring various manual trades decorate the exterior of the Cardozo Educational Campus (originally Central High School) in northwest Washington DC. Architect: William B. Ittner of St. Louis. 1916.





## **Trowel of Excellence™** **Certified Contractors**

**Trowel of Excellence** certification designates that a company consistently delivers outstanding skilled craftsmanship and superior management practices. Trowel of Excellence contractors employ only the best trained and most knowledgeable installation professionals and demonstrate their commitment to performing at the highest levels of industry standards, ethical business practices and financial responsibility on each and every job. That's why the Tile Council of North America and Atrivu both recognize Trowel of Excellence certification in contractor qualifications language which is included in the TCNA Handbook, MasterSpec, and BSD SpecLink.

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## **Trowel of Excellence™**

### **What is Trowel of Excellence?**

The TCAA Trowel of Excellence certification verifies that a ceramic tile contractor/company consistently performs the highest level of quality installations, demonstrates integrity and superior business practices, and is committed to the betterment of the industry.

Requiring that a certified contractor/company perform the ceramic tile installation on a project is a way of ensuring that the company is qualified; and a means of providing quality assurance.

Qualified contractor language, which includes TCAA's Trowel of Excellence certification, is included in MasterSpec and the Tile Council of North America (TCNA) Handbook, as well as a number of national account specifications.

### **Why Should a Ceramic Tile Contractor/Company Apply For Certification?**

As the ceramic tile industry becomes increasingly price driven and more competitive, it is vital that union contractors demonstrate superior service and installation. Companies that earn the TCAA Trowel of Excellence have a competitive edge with general contractors and architects, in that they have pro-actively documented that they have the knowledge, experience, training and capability to get the job done right, on time, and within budget.

### **Is My Company Eligible to Apply for Certification?**

To qualify for Trowel of Excellence certification, a company must:

- Be a member of TCAA in good standing
- Be a signatory contractor in good standing with the IUBAC
- Be a contributor to IMI
- Have been in the ceramic tile contracting business for a minimum of five years



For more information, please contact the  
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p. 800-655-TILE (8453) | f. 216-462-0808  
info@tcaainc.org | www.tcaainc.org

