

September in Austin AGC History – Austin AGC Membership Begins to Grow in the late 1940s

On the afternoon of Tuesday, September 7, 1948, the Austin AGC Board of Directors held a lunch meeting in the Chapter offices beginning at 12:15pm. With membership growing steadily since the Chapter started in 1946, staff was directed to compile a printed directory with the names, addresses and contact information of all Chapter companies for distribution to members and industry partners. While a copy of that document does not exist today, records indicate that roughly 30 companies were members of the Austin AGC at the time, with 10 of those being “Active Member” general contractors and the remaining 20 or so specialty contractors, suppliers and service providers assembled as “Associate Members.”



*Leslie Crockett, Austin AGC
President 1950-1951*

A big reason for associate firms – particularly the specialty contractors - to join was access to Chapter plan room and the bidding information therein. The plan room had become increasingly popular to the point where, at a Chapter Board meeting in June 1949, associate members asked Vice President Leslie Crockett and the other general contractors in attendance about getting two sets of paper plans for each project bidding - especially for the larger jobs - so there would be less waiting to review them and furnish a price.

Also as evidence of the growing Austin AGC membership, a sign was placed at the front of the building directing members to park in the back and not block the main entry. Seems folks were often forced to park out front on Fredericksburg Road which today is a very busy South Lamar Boulevard. The sign was subsequently furnished at a cost of \$6.25 (about \$70 today.) With the current growth of Austin along the South Lamar corridor, we certainly understand the parking heartburn that members were already feeling back then!

By September of 1949, several associate members requested to hold their own regular meeting, separate from the general contractors, to discuss industry matters of unique importance to their companies. The Board agreed, and the first meeting of associate firms took place on September 27, 1949, beginning at 7:30pm with 25 companies represented. One of the first issues addressed was a resolution asking that general contractors furnish the AGC office a list of their subcontract awards for publishing in the weekly bulletin.

Also that month, the Chapter approved associate membership for the John A. Barclay Agency, an independent insurance agency based in Austin that's been providing solutions for businesses and families since 1946. Now known as [Barclay Insurance](#), the firm today is led by John Barclay III whose father started the insurance agency after his return from World War II. John says that “For those fortunate to have known my Dad (a plain speaking, old school, civic minded gentleman with the great ability to judge people when he met them), they would certainly know that he was a very positive force in expanding both my insurance business knowledge and my view of the world. He instilled a desire to serve people and give something back to the town we grew up in.” Congratulations on the long success of your company, John! We greatly appreciate your 72 years of membership in the Chapter as well.



*John Barclay III, whose insurance agency has
been an Austin AGC member since 1949*

Among our general contractors, the oldest company member of the Austin AGC is Emerson Construction, a privately held, full service general contracting firm based in Temple, Texas. Started in 1979, Emerson has developed a solid, satisfied



*George Emerson, Austin
AGC President in 1983*

customer base in educational, government, municipal, retail, and other specialized markets with over 90% of typical yearly volume of work from repeat customers. Emerson was approved as an Austin AGC member in January 1980, and founder George Emerson quickly moved up the Chapter's leadership ranks at to become President in 1983.

Today, [Emerson Construction](#) is led by President Chuck Emerson who joined his father at the company as concrete superintendent in 1982. From there he advanced to Project Manager and Vice President of Construction. In 2006 Chuck was named President and Chief Executive Officer, where he continues to grow the company by focusing on its key values– “Quality, Honesty, Integrity, and Trust.” Emerson Construction continues to help build successful Texas with projects such as upgrading the Arkansas Bend Park for Travis County in Lago Vista, military buildings at Fort Hood, schools, and GLO cemetery projects throughout Texas. Congratulations on over 40 years of success as a general contractor, and we wish you continued good fortune in the years to come!

Looking back at the life and building career of early AGC leader Leslie Crockett, he graduated from the University of Texas in 1926 and went on to serve as Austin AGC Chapter President in 1950 and 1951. He lived for many years with his wife, Mary Ann, in the Miller-Crockett House just off South Congress, one of five remaining Victorian homes of twelve originally built along this stretch of the Colorado River. In 2008, that renovated home was reopened as the [Hotel St. Cecilia](#), arguably Austin's coolest boutique hotel. Projects he worked on around town include [St. Stephens Episcopal School](#), and a fascinating architectural review of campus buildings he worked on can be found in the [April 1954 issue of Progressive Architecture here \(see page 28.\)](#)



The Hotel St. Cecilia, formerly known as the Miller-Crockett House, off South Congress (photo courtesy Levy Architects)

As always, the previous generation of builders continues to have a positive influence on today's Austin AGC members. including [Rogers-O'Brien Construction](#) (RO) that has now [completed 5 building projects over the past 15 years](#) on the St. Stephens campus. Alan Codina, Director of Operations for RO, also serves as the current Austin AGC Chair. Also it's worth noting that the two sons of John Barclay III both attended St. Stephens's high school. Sometimes it really is a small world, and one that the 260 member firms of today's Austin AGC continue to enjoy building!