

[Tile Council Recognizes Industry “Guru” Dave Gobis](#)
[With 2015 TCNA Tile Person of the Year Award](#)



In recognition of his innumerable contributions and exceptional service in the North American tile industry over several decades, Tile Council of North America (TCNA) awarded Mr. Dave Gobis its 2015 Tile Person of the Year Award. In presenting the award, TCNA Executive Director Eric Astrachan said that Gobis, who started out as a tile helper for his grandfather, came to be recognized as an “industry guru,” a go-to resource in the tile industry who has had—and continues to have—enormous influence in the realms of training and education, standards development, and inspection and consulting.

In accepting the award Gobis remarked that the honor was like winning an Academy Award, “because tile’s been what I’m all about.”

“He started in tile as early as he could haul a bucket,” said Astrachan, who also noted that his own longtime friendship with Gobis began when Gobis was the regional director for the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) in Region 6, where Astrachan was at the time running installation crews. “Every time Dave and I would get together, I learned something new about tile and tile standards. Twenty plus years later that is still true,” said Astrachan thinking back to their long history together.

In cataloging Gobis’s many noteworthy achievements, Astrachan focused on Gobis’s nearly-decade-long post as executive director and technical director for the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF). In this role Gobis demonstrated his strong commitment to standards-based, non-proprietary training, and much of the core curriculum he created is still in use today at CTEF for its various installation and inspection courses, said Astrachan. He also

credited Gobis with “keeping CTEF going at a difficult time,” saying that doing so very much relied on Gobis’s generosity of time and resources.

“My time at CTEF represents the pinnacle of my career,” said Gobis. “I feel very strongly about training, standards, and standards development. It is really important to have verifiable conformance and develop even, non-biased, and non-marketing-driven standards for our products.”

Gobis also urged industry leaders to invest resources in expanding training efforts and marketing tile as a career choice, especially installation. It’s getting more and more difficult to get people interested in tile setting, said Gobis. “But, one of the reasons I’m so passionate about training and education is because I was able to do so well in tile.”

After learning the trade from working closely with his grandfather, Ralph G. Mayfield, a master tile and stone installer and owner of Mayfield Mantel and Tile, Gobis received formal tile setting training in Jacksonville, FL.

Later in life Gobis set up shop as a tile contractor in Racine, WI, first as GM Associates and later as Tile Concepts, and he started getting involved in the industry. In the 1980s Gobis joined the Southern Tile, Terrazzo, and Marble Contractors Association (STTMCA), which later became the NTCA. In addition to serving as director of NTCA’s Region 6, Gobis was active in the association’s committees including chairing its Training and Education Committee and its Website Committee.

In addition to supporting his fellow contractors through association work, Gobis said he took special pride in taking care of his employees, paying them wages equal to those of union workers even before his shop became unionized, and providing them with generous benefits, including merit raises for employees who attended educational sessions.

After selling Tile Concepts in 1998, Gobis readily accepted the challenge to lead the fledgling CTEF, and he expanded his participation in the tile industry by regularly contributing articles to trade publications and speaking at industry events. “This is really when we started to see a lot from Dave,” said Astrachan, “in an inimitable style that is absolutely the one and only Dave.” Gobis also got much more heavily involved in standards development, especially through the ANSI Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) A108, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) C-21 Ceramic Whitewares Committee, and the TCNA Handbook Committee.

Gobis retired from CTEF in 2008, and in 2009 NTCA honored Gobis with its prestigious Joe Tarver Cornerstone Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Gobis is now self-employed, undertaking forensic tile installation inspections and consulting on a national basis for owners, end users, manufacturers, and contractors. “For Dave the thrill is really in the challenge, and the challenge now for him is figuring out what’s happening on jobs that he’s consulting on. As he has told me more than once: ‘if you don’t wanna know, don’t ask,’” said Astrachan, who also noted that Gobis is a regular lab customer to TCNA and CTL and that he has built a laboratory in his own home.

“All the testing that I’ve always wanted to do but never could do because there was no budget for it, *now* I can do it,” said Gobis, adding, “if there’s a problem, I *will* find out what caused it.”



About TCNA and the TCNA Tile Person of the Year Award

TCNA is a trade association representing manufacturers of ceramic tile, tile installation materials, tile equipment, raw materials, and other tile-related products. Established in 1945 as the Tile Council of America (TCA), it became TCNA in 2003, reflecting its membership expansion to all of North America.

The Tile Council is recognized for its leadership role in facilitating the development of North American and international industry quality standards to benefit tile consumers. Additionally, TCNA regularly conducts independent research and product testing, works with regulatory, trade, and other government agencies, offers professional training, and publishes industry-consensus guidelines and standards, economic reports, and promotional literature.

The TCNA Tile Person of the Year Award is given annually to an individual in recognition of his or her exceptional service to the North American tile industry, as determined by the TCNA Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

For photos of Mr. Gobis or the Tile Person of the Year award presentation, please visit www.tcnatile.com.

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