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-Jay Reed, ABC of Alabama President



Jim Cooper

2019 CORNERSTONE AWARD WINNER

by PAIGE TOWNLEY

ALABAMA CONSTRUCTION NEWS IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT JIM COOPER, PRESIDENT OF COOPER CONSTRUCTION, IS THIS YEAR'S CORNERSTONE AWARD RECIPIENT.

"IT'S VERY EXCITING FOR ME TO ANNOUNCE JIM COOPER AS THE recipient of the Cornerstone Award," said ABC of Alabama 2019 Chairman of the Board Buddy Stewart. "While every recipient has different strengths, one of Jim's is the backbone of our association, and that's governmental affairs. Jim believes in merit shop. Jim believes in less government. And Jim believes in the free enterprise way. I share those beliefs with him, and I'm honored that he's receiving it during my year as chairman."

The Cornerstone Award began in 1994 and is presented to an individual who has made an exemplary lifelong commitment to Alabama construction and has brought favorable recognition to the industry as a result of his or her personal integrity, business ethics and community involvement.

"I have known Jim since the early 1970s, as a Boy Scout, a friend, a competitor and finally as a strong advocate for both our industry and conservative thinking," said Jack Darnall of Brasfield & Gorrie. "Jim's service to this industry and our community uniquely qualify him to be recognized with this honor."

Garry Ard of Ard Contracting echoes those sentiments. "When Jim took on the pro-lottery forces in Alabama and won, I knew he would be a successful contractor as well," he said. "He just has that 'get it done' personality. More importantly, he is a man of unquestionable integrity and is extremely generous. And most importantly, he is keenly aware that any success we achieve here is because of the unique gifts God has given to each of us."

Cooper founded Cooper Construction in 1991 with a focus on personal relationships. The company operates as a general contractor and specializes in industrial, warehouse/distribution and multi-family projects. The \$200 million plus company today performs work all over the United States. "I have had the pleasure of working with and alongside Jim since 2002," said Paul Vardaman. "It is hard to put into words how much I have learned from Jim and how much respect I have for him. The values and integrity that he employs daily are unparalleled. In an industry where cutting corners happens frequently, Jim has managed to hold a straight line

and a steady course, and these values have led to tremendous growth and great respect in the industry. I could not think of a more deserving person for this award. I am proud to be a partner with such a great person."

Cooper serves on a number of boards for a variety of community organizations, and he currently serves as ABC of Alabama's federal legislative chairman. "Whenever I think about Jim Cooper, I think of two things: integrity and involvement," said Craig Fravert. "Jim is one of those people that you quickly recognize his honesty in everything he does. He looks at things with an eye towards what is in the best interest of all parties involved and works hard to make things happen. That type of integrity does not happen overnight. It is something practiced every day. It is easy to 'talk the talk,' but Jim 'walks the walk,' which is much more difficult. The other thing that Jim does so well is his involvement, particularly with regard to industry issues. When Jim gets involved, he puts his shoulder into it. Whether that's talking up our industry locally, in Montgomery or in Washington, Jim knows the issues and he works hard to make our industry better."

That drive to make the industry better by getting involved in political matters is what also got the attention of Tim Hightower of Southern Carpet, Hardwood & Tile. "I've gotten to know Jim well through working on legislative matters with ABC of Alabama," he said. "He's very passionate about politics and how it affects our industry. He wants to make sure that legislative policies have a positive impact on construction, and he's willing to put in the work to help make that happen."

Adds ABC of Alabama President Jay Reed, "I've had the pleasure of knowing Jim for more than 20 years, and he exemplifies exactly what our association and this award stands for, and that's a pillar of the community doing what's right regardless and speaking up for free enterprise and for our industry. Jim's knowledge and passion is a key reason that our board of directors are moving in the direction we're moving. He cares about the industry and really wants to better it daily. We look forward to presenting Jim his award this fall."