



Southeast Pennsylvania Chapter
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PRESS RELEASE

Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc. Announces the Passing of a Pioneer in Merit Construction, J. Leon Altemose

East Norriton, PA – Associated Builders and Contractors Inc. Southeast Pennsylvania Chapter (ABC SEPA) announced today that J. Leon Altemose, a pioneer for the Merit construction philosophy, passed away on April 11 at his home in Malvern, Pa. due to complications from Multiple Sclerosis.

Altemose was well known in the construction industry for his passion for ‘right to work’ construction. The physical attacks made on him and his business by the local building trade unions in the 1970s and 1980s garnered local and national media attention for Merit construction and his resulting legal battles led to a landmark labor rights law.

“Leon believed strongly in the Merit shop philosophy and would not back down when attacked by the unions,” said Geoffrey Zeh, president and CEO of ABC SEPA. “He is an icon in our industry and will always be remembered for the challenges he faced, the determination he had and the advancements he made for the entire construction industry.”

Altemose, his wife, Carol Clemson and cousin Roger Altemose founded The Altemose Construction Co., which built many notable Philadelphia area projects from churches, homes, office and hospitality centers and manufacturing facilities, including the Valley Forge Convention center, Radisson Hotel Valley Forge, Valley Forge Towers Condominiums and Apartments. A graduate of Norristown High School in 1957, he attended Penn State University and also served in the United States Army Reserves.

He received many recognitions and awards over his career including ABC’s “Leader of the Century’ Award in 2000. Altemose also won the 1973 Engineering News Record Man of the Year, the United States Citizens Congress Award in 1976 and the Montgomery County Humanitarian Award for Mentally Challenged Citizens in 1986, to name a few. Additionally, author, Samuel Cook, dedicated an entire chapter of his “Freedom in the Workplace” book to Altemose.

Altemose is survived by his wife, Carol; daughter, Lynn Jarrett; son, Lance; a sister and two grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 19 at the Cornerstone Church on Skippack Pike and Stump Hall Road in Skippack. It will be preceded by calling hours at 9 a.m. in the church.

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ABC is a national association representing more than 24,000 Merit construction and construction-related firms in 78 chapters across the United States. The Southeast Pennsylvania Chapter represents Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

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