

# marketer

Volume 30, Issue 4, August 2011

The Journal of the Society for Marketing Professional Services

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*Remembrances of  
The First Marketer*

SMPS

Society for Marketing  
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Society for Marketing  
Professional Services

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The Society for Marketing Professional Services represents a dynamic network of 7,000 marketing and business development professionals from architectural, engineering, planning, interior design, construction, and related specialty consulting firms located throughout the United States and Canada. The Society and its 50+ chapters benefit from the support of 3,250 design and building firms. SMPS's mission is to advocate for, educate, and connect leaders in the building industry.

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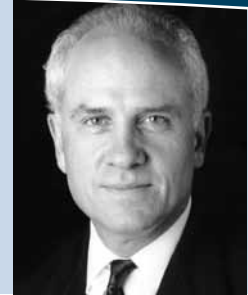
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## The Way We Market Now

In this issue, we remember Weld Coxe, Hon. AIA, FSMPS, and 1989 recipient of the SMPS Marketing Achievement Award—and salute and celebrate his exceptional life, which ended on March 15 of this year.

Widely respected, loved, and admired by many, he was peerless as an author, champion, colleague, friend, leader, mentor, and even an architectural patron. He was consultant extraordinaire to 2,000 firms including more than half of the AIA Firm Award winners, and to tens of thousands of practitioners. Not incidentally, he was also a founder of SMPS and held membership #2.

Never before have we focused on a single person—nor are we likely to ever again. That's because there has never been anyone who helped define and shape the profession we practice as did Weld.

Contributing editor Marjanne Pearson, who knew Weld personally, curated our special tribute with great insight, intelligence, and skill—qualities of her work we have come to know so well. We thank her for reaching out to people he knew and worked with throughout his career, some of whom you may know of in other contexts. You will enjoy reading how deeply Weld influenced so many different people. Not just his partners or clients but also some of SMPS's most distinguished and beloved members, who knew him back in the day. Only here, in this first draft of a future biography, can you read it all.

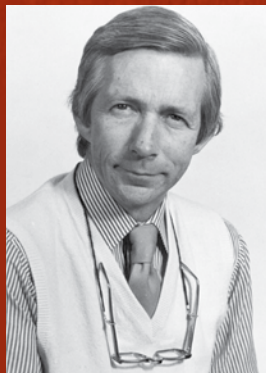
I knew of Weld, a living legend at the time I entered the field. What I came to appreciate quickly was his impact on people I respected and who adored him. I always loved that he hired Robert Venturi—one of the greatest architectural theorists of the 20th century and a Pritzker Prize winner—to design houses on Block Island, off the Rhode Island coast. That was the site of an unforgettable SMPS National Board retreat in 2004, when I was president, but it was scheduled for the week after my wedding. I didn't make the meeting or see the house—but I did have a great wedding.

For those of you who knew or knew of Weld, we hope this set of remembrances rings true. For those of you who did not know him, we hope this tribute introduces you to someone who gets and deserves much of the credit for defining our roles in the design and construction industry, whatever they may be. Without Weld, your job would not exist, nor would SMPS, and certainly not this journal. ■



# A Tribute to Weld Coxe

CURATED BY MARJANNE PEARSON



Most people knew **Weld Coxe, Hon. AIA, FSMPS**, as the founder of The Coxe Group; author of the seminal books *Marketing Architectural and Engineering Services* and *Managing Architectural and Engineering Services*, and co-author of *Success Strategies for Design Professionals*; and a perennially engaging speaker. But for those of us involved with marketing, it's important to note that Weld was the driving force behind the creation of an identity for "those non-professionals who sold professional services."

How did Weld come to the world of professional services marketing? He had studied at Harvard College but was asked to leave after two years because he neglected his studies to write for Harvard's newspaper, *The Crimson*. Weld's first jobs were as a journalist, working for newspapers in Massachusetts, Arizona, and Rhode Island. He shifted into public relations and began working with the architect Vincent G. Kling, becoming active in the design community in 1960.



## The Forecaster

In the 1960s, it was unethical for architects to advertise, and there were many strictures on promoting their firms. Things that we now consider to be common practice—like an email blast on a newly won project—would have been unethical.

As **Laurin McCracken, AIA, FSMPS**, a recipient of the SMPS Marketing Achievement Award and former SMPS National president, remembers, “A few architects were changing the way they garnered business for their firms, such as industry leaders Bill Caudill (CRS) and George Hellmuth, Sr. (HOK). Weld recognized that what these industry leaders were doing *could* and *should* be codified and applied to the whole profession.”

Weld saw an opportunity to meld his journalistic skills with his interest in design and formed a consulting firm, Coxe & Associates. (In 1979, Coxe & Associates became The Coxe Group.)

**Joan Capelin, Hon. AIA, FSMPS**, also a recipient of the SMPS Marketing Achievement Award, observes, “While Weld’s background was in public relations, and his work for Kling was largely in marketing communications, he had observed that few firms had a marketing plan—and that was because they first and foremost didn’t have a business plan. Once he realized that his real talent was to enable design professionals to realize their goals, he began helping them to organize their thinking, set a beneficial course of action, and thus enhance and extend the success of their organizations.”

Weld began writing *Marketing Architectural and Engineering Services* in 1967, and after reviews and discussions with numerous people, it was published in 1971. His partner **Hugh Hochberg** says, “At the beginning of an era of unrestricted marketing of architectural services, and with no precedent for what to do and how to do it, Weld developed concepts that are foundational to virtually all marketing of professional services today.”

Weld literally had the answers that design firms were seeking about marketing their services. He began to proselytize, converting disciples as he went. He wrote *The Coxe Letter*, which became the must-read newsletter in many offices. He became a frequent speaker for the American Institute of Architects, engineering associations, and other professional venues. In addition, he and his colleagues in Coxe Associates began offering seminars on marketing professional services.

In 1975, in his first job marketing for an architectural firm, **Bruce Lea**, a former SMPS National president and SMPS Marketing Achievement Award recipient, found that the firm principals had gone to one of Weld’s seminars, read his book and *The Coxe Letter*, and adopted Weld’s marketing fundamentals for their own practice. “Weld developed the blueprint,” he recalls, “not only

for my first job but also for what became my career. And I’m just one of hundreds, probably thousands, of marketers for which the same can be said.”

## The Builder

According to **Andy Zinsmeyer**, an SMPS co-founder and the first SMPS National president, in 1973, “Weld was conducting an AIA-sponsored seminar on marketing. . . . The half-dozen ‘non-licensed’ individuals who were selling professional services made eye contact and later agreed to have drinks together that evening. Weld was not invited. We announced the results of our meeting to Weld the next morning, calling ourselves the Society of Birddogs (or SOBs).” **Diane Creel**, a Marketing Achievement Award winner, remembers, “Weld was the first to speak up and say the society needed to be inclusive of all marketing jobs, not just birddogs.”

“Weld’s fervor was undoubtedly most contagious for those who participated in a new program specifically designed for a position that he invented: the marketing coordinator.”

Weld then offered to host a meeting in Chicago where the name changed to the National Society for Marketing Professional Services (NSMPS). Weld published an article about it in *The Coxe Letter*, and the new organization became today’s SMPS. Andy opened a checking account for SMPS, depositing his own check for \$50. Weld made the second contribution to the new organization, thereby becoming member #2.

Weld was actively involved in SMPS and served as an ambassador and advocate for the organization. He spoke at national conferences and always enjoyed meeting new people. Former SMPS National president and Marketing Achievement Award winner **Mitch Levitt, FSMPS, ACHE, Assoc. AIA**, remembers their first meeting, “In 1986, while trying to clear the cobwebs from my head at the national conference in San Francisco, a dapper gentleman sat down, smiled, and said, in words I can still hear in my head, ‘Hello, I’m Weld Coxe, and numerous people have told me I need to meet you. I hear you have no fear of failure and take very little personally. That is exactly what it will take to succeed in the A/E/C world.’ Once I got over my amazement of meeting Weld, I sat with him for several hours just talking about life in marketing our profession.”

“Weld had a major impact on the development of marketing and business development as an essential element in the A/E/C industry...he was SMPS member #2.”

**Betty Helms, FSMPS**, remembers, “In 1994, as a marketing coordinator new to the industry and new to SMPS, I didn’t realize what a privilege it was to serve on the SMPS National Certification Exam Task Force on which Weld Coxe served as co-chair. I quickly came to admire him as he generously shared his wisdom about promotion and business development. He very graciously made me feel that my contribution to the committee was valued.”

According to **Carla Thompson, FSMPS**, director of marketing and business development for MulvannyG2 Architecture, Weld’s support of SMPS never waned. “SMPS held silent auctions at a couple of conventions (as they were called then) to raise funds for the SMPS Foundation, and Weld was the first Fellow to respond, both times. He generously donated his Robert Venturi-designed guest house on a windswept hill on Block Island, and not surprisingly, it received the most bids and raised the most money. Weld was even more generous with his time and advice. He was one of a kind—a true gentleman.”

It wasn’t only SMPS that benefited from Weld’s donation of the Block Island guest house. **Rhodes White, FSMPS, CPSM**, bid on a three-night stay, and along with the stay, she got three hours of one-on-one consulting with Weld. She said, “It was a wonderful experience. ... He asked me why I was working for someone else. ... He told me I could not change the world; all I could do was to advise.” As with so many others, her conversation with Weld changed her life.

## The Revolutionary<sup>1</sup>

Weld taught in conference settings, consulting assignments, and universities, but his fervor was undoubtedly most contagious for those who participated in a new program specifically designed for a position that he invented: the marketing coordinator.

### For More Information

- “Weld Coxe, Hon. AIA, Dies at 81,” by Edward Keegan, *ARCHITECT*, March 18, 2011: [www.architectmagazine.com/business/weld-coxe-hon-aia-dies-at-81.aspx](http://www.architectmagazine.com/business/weld-coxe-hon-aia-dies-at-81.aspx)
- The Coxe Group Web site: [www.coxegroup.com/emeritus.cfm#WeldCoxe](http://www.coxegroup.com/emeritus.cfm#WeldCoxe)

<sup>1</sup>Weld loved to relate that his ancestor, Tench Coxe, was the “bag man” of the American Revolution.

As **Gail Gabriel**, principal with Marjanne Pearson Associates and a past president of SMPS San Francisco Bay, relates, “I remember meeting Weld Coxe for the first time in 1979 or 1980, when my firm, Robinson Mills & Williams, sent me to one of the first Marketing Coordinators Clinics, in St. Louis. It was an exciting time, as all of the attendees were embarking on a new adventure with a new job title. He made each of us feel that we had an important role to fill as a member of the marketing team for our offices. I’ll never forget the quotation that he gave us, which I kept on the wall in my work area: ‘It is not the responsibility of the marketing department to feed the firm, but to teach others how to feed themselves.’”

**Rose Fetter**, director of business development for Reynolds Construction Management, who went to the 1988 clinic, said, “I’ll never forget the workshop, because not only was it sold out but the attendees consisted of many levels of marketing professionals, and I was so young and naïve that I felt my firm made a mistake in sending me. However, by the end of the clinic, I had learned such valuable marketing basics that I couldn’t wait to get back to the office to start incorporating them. ... To this day, I incorporate Weld’s principles on marketing professional services—simply timeless!”

## The Mentor

Weld’s influence on SMPS in itself had a major impact on the development of marketing and business development as an essential element in the A/E/C industry. But perhaps more important is the influence he had on so many of our professional and personal lives. Weld’s long-time partner **Peter Piven, FAIA** [now principal of Peter Piven Management Consulting], first met Weld in 1972, when Peter was interviewed for a position with Geddes Brecher Qualls & Cunningham’s in Philadelphia. “Weld’s recommendation that they hire me changed my life.” It led not only to relocation to Philadelphia (and later, living in a residence that adjoined Weld’s), but teaching with Weld at Drexel Institute and then collaborative consulting.

**Janet Aubry, Diane Creel, Nancy Egan, Kay Lentz, and Liz Quebe**—all SMPS Fellows, recipients of the SMPS Marketing Achievement Award, and founders of SMPS Houston, shared their stories about working with and learning from Weld.

According to Janet, “He was the only person in our field who truly did know everything because he made it up as he went along.



He was always dead-on right and light years ahead of anyone else.” Weld asked her to teach the Marketing Coordinators Clinic, and although she was afraid at first, he helped her, and she came to love doing them. “He was the voice that I looked to, first in books and then in person.” Liz added, “He didn’t tell you what to do, but he lifted the fog so you could find your own way.”

Kay “met Weld Coxe for the first time when I was co-instructor of a Marketing Coordinators Clinic in Philadelphia. ... He never imposed his views or thoughts on people, but rather let them learn by speaking—a lesson I carried throughout my own consulting work of many years in this industry.”

Weld gave Diane “guidance when no one else could, because no one else knew what to do or how to do it.” She added, “As time went on and my roles changed, I always knew he was there for me, even as a CEO.”

Nancy relates, “He helped us find the right positions and do the jobs better.” Weld was “unfailingly generous with his advice, whether it was advising SMPS in its fledgling years or making thoughtful suggestions on a wide range of issues.”

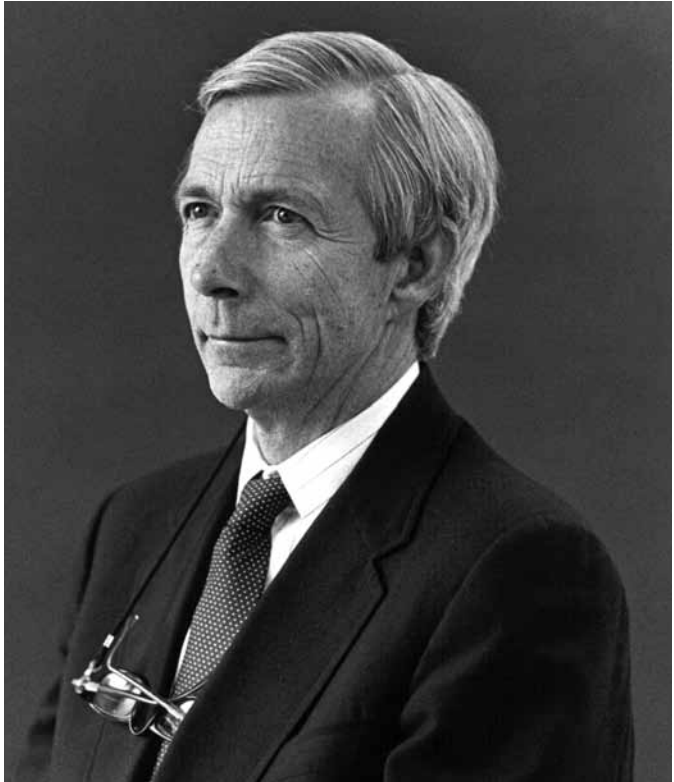
Bruce Lea shared his story about succeeding Janet Aubry as lead instructor for the Marketing Coordinators Clinic. “He inspired me to dig deeper, balance creativity with pragmatism, and keep growing in the profession. Best of all, he became a friend and mentor. ... I was one of many careers and lives he touched and influenced, but when we talked, I felt he was focused on me and that, at least for those moments, I was singularly important to him. What a gift he had.”

As a registered architect working for General Electric, **Frank H. Smith, III, AIA**, “heard architecture calling.” It was Weld who recommended him for his next position, marketing for an A/E firm. **Phil Bannan, FSMPS, CPSM**, adds, “Weld was open and shared his wisdom with all with whom he came in contact—whether they were the managing partner or a rookie marketing coordinator.”

## The Visionary

“Weld’s other great gift was his ability to see the field better than the rest of us and quite literally to change the game,” recalls Nancy Egan. “He reshaped entire firms, helping to develop some of the most competitive practices in the industry. He helped to set SMPS on course to be the premier marketing organization for the built environment.”

In 1985, **Robert Venturi, FAIA, Int. FRIBA**, introduced **Alan Chimacoff, AIA** [now principal of ikon.5 architects], to Weld, when Alan was contemplating a life change: leaving the university



for practice. Alan observes, “From a brief professional mentorship grew a fascinating friendship that for me was characterized by the limpid calm of Weld’s penetrating mind. More or less effortlessly, he grasped the focal essence of any subject, bringing a simple wisdom to complex situations, while the lean, squinting smile of his countenance, certain of its position, seemed to look beyond the moment, anticipating the future—or the next consequence of the topic at hand.”

As a true testament to Weld’s vision, **Bob Frasca, FAIA**, relates, “Weld moved us [ZGF] from the 19th century (which is where the profession was in the mid-1970s) to the 20th, and his thinking has enabled us to think in a smart way about how we will do what we do best in the 21st century.” ■

### About the Author



**Contributing Editor Marjanne Pearson, who reviewed *The Art of Managing Professional Services* in the February 2010 issue, is the founder of Marjanne Pearson Associates—a consulting practice that focuses on strategies for organizational resiliency and success. †**

**She can be contacted at mp@talentstar. For more information about her perspective on Weld Coxe and his legacy, visit**

**†<https://talentstar.com/spotlight/category/weld-coxe/>**



(L to R) Houston girlfriends Kay Lentz, Janet Aubry, Diane Creel, Nancy Egan, JoAnn Stone, and Liz Quebe. For a number of years, this group of friends, all of whom worked together in Houston in the early '80s and helped to found SMPS Houston, have been meeting at least annually. The bonds of their friendship are strengthened by their shared experience in the profession and the Society, their wide network of friends in SMPS, and the influence of Weld Coxe in their professional and personal lives.

### **Janet Aubry, FSMPS**

*Marketing Consultant, Bob Brown Inc.; SMPS National Co-Founder; and 1991 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

The partners at The Warren Holmes Company hired a marketing consultant from Philadelphia to help them build a marketing program based on a book one of them read called *Marketing Architectural and Engineering Services*.

Weld Coxe came to explain everything to them—he was the guy who wrote the book both literally and figuratively. He interviewed everyone in the firm to try to come up with a structure to facilitate the goals. I was the receptionist, and for whatever reason, he decided to interview me. He told the partners that they needed someone to coordinate the program he envisioned for them and told them it should be me.

It was 1968, and I was 20 years old. He built a job description around me and called it the “marketing coordinator.” Then he taught me how to be one. For the rest

Society for Marketing Professional Services

of my life, Weld was my mentor, my friend, and one of the most influential people in marketing and architecture, engineering and the other related-design fields. For me, he was the reason I was able to move to Houston and eventually become the only non-architect woman partner in what became the 5th largest architectural practice in the country.

He was the reason I had the confidence to do whatever was asked of me and a few things that weren't. I loved what I did, and he was always there to help me. I was afraid when he asked me

to teach the Coxe Associates' Marketing Coordinators Clinics for him, but yet again he helped me, and I came to love doing them. I met some great professionals who are my friends today.

Weld asked me to work with him and other founding SMPS members to write the *ALA Handbook* chapter on marketing, a pivotal shift for the profession as a whole, as well as for the few fledgling architectural career marketing people.

There is nothing I can say about Weld that everyone doesn't already know from a professional standpoint. He was the only person in our field who truly did know everything because he made it up as he went along, he was always dead-on right, and he was light years ahead of anyone else. Nobody will ever achieve professionally what he did in our industry.

Weld's passing is a great loss to me personally. We remained lifelong friends and saw each other often over the years. I felt him here with us today as we wrote

this and could see him smile and laugh, encouraging us as we collaborated. I am so grateful to you, Weld—for the fun, the friendship, the love, and for being the consummate mentor and friend. I will miss you always.

### **Diane C. Creel, FSMPS**

*Retired, SMPS National President (1981–82), and 1987 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

It was 1971, in Columbia, SC. I was a journalism graduate working on my master's when I got a writing job at an A/E firm. Soon after I took the position, the firm hired Weld Coxe to advise us on marketing. Suddenly, I became a marketing coordinator! With Weld's help, I learned what that actually was. It was pretty much a license to do whatever needed to be done to make the company grow. He gave me guidance when no one else could because no one else knew what to do or how to do it.

As time went on and my roles changed, I always knew he was there for me, even as a CEO. I remember in the 1990s, Weld and I were on a panel together in Boston where we ganged up on a certain person in this industry who will remain anonymous. Weld said to me afterwards, “This is the first time I have agreed so thoroughly with a CEO,” to which I responded, “But you trained the CEO.”

In addition to career advice, we all owe him for the formation of SMPS. I remember when we discussed with Weld calling ourselves the Society of Birddogs. Weld was the first to speak up and say the society needed to be inclusive of all marketing jobs, not just birddogs.

If I could talk to you today, Weld, I would say “thank you”—for your guidance and your wisdom over the years, and to all you brought to our careers, our industry, and to our lives.



### **Nancy Egan, FSMPS**

*Principal, New Voodoo; SMPS National President (1983–84); and 1996 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

In Houston, TX, in 1978, the A/E/C world was buzzing, and the emergent marketing professional services scene was filled with some of the smartest people I have ever known. I had almost no training or experience, but everyone was willing to help. How did they know so much? What I eventually learned was that most of the best had been mentored by Weld Coxe.

Of course, I read the book and met the man himself. While I didn't develop the close relationships that friends like Janet and Diane had with him, Weld was unfailingly generous with his advice, whether it was advising SMPS in its fledgling years or making thoughtful suggestions on a wide range of issues.

It was only when I moved to Philadelphia in the early '80s that I realized Weld was watching over my career, too. Once I was in town, he made strategic introductions and invited me to special events, quietly positioning me in ways that surprised me. It was the year of my SMPS presidency, and now I understand that Weld was not only mentoring me, he was also continuing to guide the organization that he had helped to found and so believed in.

We all know how articulate Weld was, whether on the podium, in a workshop, or on paper. His other great gift was his ability to see the field better than the rest of us and to quite literally change the game. He helped us find the right positions and do the jobs better. He reshaped entire firms, helping to develop some of the most competitive practices in the industry. He helped to set SMPS on course to be the premier marketing organization for the built environment.

So, Weld, we honor your memory personally, gathered here together talking about all that you did for us as mentor and friend. What we owe you now is to continue your legacy by holding ourselves and SMPS to your high standards of intellectual discourse and contribution. Thank you.

### **Kay Lentz, FSMPS**

*Chief Executive Officer, The Lentz Group, and 1998 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

I met Weld Coxe for the very first time when I was co-instructor of a Marketing Coordinators Clinic in Philadelphia. Weld invited the clinic attendees to his brownstone home in Philadelphia for cocktails. I spent the evening watching Weld move from person to person smiling and listening. He never imposed his views or thoughts on people but rather let them learn by speaking—a lesson I carried throughout my own consulting work of many years in this industry.

The next major event in my professional association with Weld was when I was asked to speak with him—just the two of us—at an SMPS convention program in Chicago entitled “Legends in Marketing.” I remember asking myself, “How can I speak with Weld Coxe?” He spoke first—knowledgeably and eloquently—and his audience was enraptured. When I got up to speak, I didn't know how I was going to follow a tough act like Weld. So I just spoke what I knew and in my own style. Afterward, Weld took me aside and said, “I enjoyed your presentation very much—I wish I could be as energetic and entertaining as you are.” I said, “No my friend, it's because I can't be as eloquent as you.”

Weld was my mentor, my friend—but I was never his peer—at least that is how I felt. I don't think anybody was. To Weld: Your spirit will live forever.

### **Lisbeth Quebe, FSMPS**

*Retired; Author of Plan It: A Down-to-Earth Guide to Market Planning and Budgeting; and 1995 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

When I stepped tentatively into the field of marketing, there were only three or four books that you could read on the subject. At least two were Weld's. He was the voice that I looked to, first in books and then in person. He was amazing to me. He was wise and so adept at managing those who defied management, whether firm principals or senior marketers. He listened and then immediately cut to the chase. He did it in a way that was both elegant and down to earth, and he was always right.

He didn't tell you what to do, but he lifted the fog so you could find your own way.

Because Weld believed in me, I learned to believe in myself. One of the most important to me was his eagerness to serve as moderator in my mid-1990s debate with Frank Stasiowski on the true cost of marketing. Frank's surveys were well-established and well-referenced, but I wanted to get across the point that costs varied on what a firm was trying to do. That debate launched me into my “marketing-and-budgeting” area of concentration, a course that really defined the rest of my career.

Weld's support was critical, and when I retired, the last thing I did was write a book on the subject. When Weld endorsed the book at my last SMPS conference, I felt so honored.

I am so lucky to have known Weld, to have learned from him, to have been mentored by him, and to have had him for a friend. We are all so fortunate to have had his wisdom, counsel, and graciousness. Thank you, Weld, for all you did.

### **Philip E. Bannan, FSMPS, CPSM**



*Director of Business Development, Gillan & Hartmann, Inc.*

I came into the A/E/C marketing profession after careers in the government and the military. My

first position was in Birmingham, AL. I was introduced to Weld via his writings. Moving to Philadelphia, I had the privilege to get to know him, learn from him, and come to the realization that not only was he a brilliant marketer, a creative pioneer, and an expert in all things in firm management but also (and more importantly) he was open and shared his wisdom with all with whom he came in contact—whether they were the managing partner or a rookie marketing coordinator.

I can think of no one more deserving of the title, “Legend in His Own Time.”

### **Joan Capelin, Hon. AIA, Fellow PRSA, FSMPS**



*President, Capelin Communications, Inc., and 1990 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

“Why did you give up working for

Vincent Kling and start your consulting practice?” I once asked Weld Coxe. He answered that while his background was public relations and his work for Kling was largely in marketing communications, he had observed that few firms had a marketing plan—and that was because they first and foremost didn’t have a business plan. Once he realized that his real talent was to enable design professionals to realize their goals, he began helping them to organize their thinking, set a beneficial

course of action, and thus enhance and extend the success of their organization.

Tall, lanky, charming, well-mannered, as well as insightful and articulate, Weld thus became not just a consultant but also a revolutionary.

In the early 1980s, Weld, by then founder of the formidable Coxe Group, reached his 15th successful anniversary as a consultant. He felt they lacked a brochure, and that they needed someone outside the firm to create one for them. They interviewed a few people and chose Capelin Communications, my newly minted office.

The day I presented the concept to Weld, Nina Hartung, Brian Lewis, and Peter Piven [alas, the last man standing], I was excited and understandably anxious. Imagine knowing that, if this concept exceeded Weld’s high expectations, my firm would probably be cleared for take-off in the industry. But what if we didn’t measure up? Well, let’s not go there.

For an hour, my ideas tumbled out. Sketches covered the table. Not a word from them the whole time. Finally, I asked Weld for his reaction. Big moment of truth. He smiled, put his hand gently on my arm, and said: “You can breathe now.”

A few weeks later I mobilized and traveled again to Philadelphia, breathing more naturally. We began the brochure process, Weld and me side by side. “What do you do, really?” I asked him. Weld answered: “It has been said that a consultant is one who borrows your watch to tell you what time it is. The real question is: ‘What time do you want it to be?’” The introduction had just written itself.

Next, we came to the section for The Coxe Group’s services. Weld favored B-School terms that I was unable to define. I asked him for examples, and the natural story-

teller in him rose to the occasion. In short order, there were a dozen success stories to work with. While I distilled them into three-sentence anecdotes, Weld devised definitions for the terms so that novices could grasp their importance. And then we swapped our drafts and edited each other’s words.

Weld was so clear on what needed to be conveyed, the six-page brochure was written and signed off that same day! Years later, its format and words hardly changed when it became the basis for The Coxe Group Web site, except that the stories were updated periodically.

They say that you should save pictures of the important moments in your life, but my mental snapshots of those two occasions—the presentation and the work session—remain vivid 30 years later. They also say that you should record and thus save the sound of someone’s voice, so you can “hear that wonderful voice just one more time.” Yet again, in Weld Coxe’s case, I don’t need a tape; I can still hear his distinctive voice, laugh, and patrician diction in my head. How remarkable he was, how memorable he remains.

### **Robert Frasca, FAIA**



*Partner, ZGF Architects LLP*

I first met Weld in 1977. Weld had made a “cold call” to Norm Zimmer, our senior partner, and Weld, Norm, Brooks Gunsul, and I had a chat.

We had just moved into a new office—a historic building in the Old Town section of Portland, OR. At the time, we had one of the several recessions we had and would have in my 50 years of practice.



We were acting like Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead*, sitting by the phone, waiting for it to ring.

I didn't know who Weld was at the time. He asked us how we were doing, how we went about getting work, and how we were interviewed. I gave what I thought was a smart answer, "I always throw deep." (That was the mantra of the Oakland Raiders quarterback Kenny "The Snake" Stabler, who I think was hot at the time.) Weld looked at me unsmilingly—a look that I would experience again through the next several years when he was letting me know that I had something to learn. (And I did learn a lot from him over the next several years.)

I didn't know it at the time, but Weld had invented a sub-field in the practice of architecture that did not previously exist, and it turned out to be very important to the profession. He had learned at the feet of one of the master practitioners of the mid-20th century, Vincent Kling, who, by the way, was producing some noteworthy buildings at the time I first entered the profession.

What Weld did was to take what he had learned, extend the breadth of it, and then codify it into an intelligent approach to the practice. It would allow architects to do what we do best, which was to design and build good and sometimes very good buildings, but also keep us from getting in our own way with the bad habits that had been passed down from generation to generation of our profession. And some of those habits still persist today.

Our tradition as architects was that of the "artist in his garret" alone with his thoughts. (It was a male-dominated profession in those days, so I can say "his.") As I said earlier, it was Howard Roark sitting by the telephone waiting for it to

ring. Weld thought that it was okay for us to be portrayed that way in the movies, but in real life, it wasn't that way, and by the way, there was no background music.

What Weld helped us do was to set aside these myths and then explain to the lay client who we were and how we could do good things for them that would elevate their own business and, in turn, their lives by contributing to the built environment in important ways.

Weld had founded The Coxe Group, which continues to thrive to this day, and he included a broad array of talented people who complemented his own abilities in the fields of human resources (to teach us how to keep our egos in check) and finance (to keep us out of the bankruptcy court). Over the next 20 or so years, he helped us and a lot of our competitors to keep professionalism in our profession so we could concentrate on doing better work.

During the time we worked together, we became good friends, meeting for work or relaxation at his townhouse in Philadelphia or at Mary Hayden's house in Rocky Hill outside of Princeton. We also did some mindless things like watching the re-enactment of Washington Crossing the Delaware, or less mindless things like visiting George Nakashima's studio outside of Philadelphia.

In Weld's retirement, we would see each other not often enough, but at times we stayed at that beautiful Venturi house or visited him and [his long-time companion] Barbara MacDougall in Arizona. He continued to maintain a keen interest in our work and that of the entire profession, and he always maintained a perfect balance of what was most important in life. I will miss him greatly, but it was a great privilege to be his client and friend.

### **Betty E. Helms, FSMPS**



*President, Helms Consulting*

I was honored to attend a dinner in Weld's honor at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, where his colleagues regaled him with tributes as he was "cutting back" at The Coxe Group. He was a man of marvelous vision, and his influence on the A/E/C industry, on SMPS, and on many, many individuals including me is still felt.

### **Hugh Hochberg**



*President, The Coxe Group, Inc.*

Everyone who has ever associated with The Coxe Group—colleagues, clients, friends, students—mourns the passing of Weld Coxe, Hon. AIA, on March 15, 2011. We also celebrate his life, his contribution to society, and his contribution to the world of architects, engineers, and other design professionals.

At a very personal level, I celebrate the life, mentoring, and friendship of an amazingly intuitive thinker and innovator. Beginning in the 1960s, at the beginning of the era of unrestricted marketing of architectural services and with no precedent for what to do and how to do it, Weld developed concepts that are foundational to virtually all marketing of professional services today.

In the late 1960s, Weld wrote *Marketing Architectural and Engineering Services*, drafts of which he asked architects who were also friends to read and criticize. They indeed read and commented, and in many cases asked him to help their firms, which led to

the founding of a consulting practice that is today The Coxe Group. The early years of consulting delayed the publication of the book until 1971.

The impact of Weld includes the results of his efforts at mentoring and collaborating. When I joined The Coxe Group—then Coxe Associates—in 1976, the firm had worked with about 75 clients. By the time Weld entered into semi-retirement in 1995, the number had risen to about 1,000, with the majority of that increase a consequence of the work by other members of The Coxe Group, all of whom were individuals to whose professional growth Weld contributed. By the time of his death, that number had grown to nearly 2,000.

To me, Weld was a rare individual, one who provided great guidance, encouraged and inspired innovative thinking, and gave and received criticism with equal grace. He had a great sense for individuals' potential, which he encouraged them to attain. Of even more value and enjoyment to me personally were the one-on-one times we spent speculating about what was coming around the bend and how our clients' worlds would be affected.

When I succeeded Weld as managing partner of The Coxe Group about 20 years ago, Weld said something that has proven so valuable to me I have passed it on to many senior partners in client organizations as they began stepping aside from the leadership of their practices and wondered what should be their roles: "I will always be available to advise and be a sounding board for you, but I will never tell you what to do, even if you ask." The wisdom of that is obvious; it puts successor leaders clearly in position of *leading*.

There is no doubt that I would not be where I am today were it not for Weld's friendship, collaboration, and guidance. Of greater importance, nearly 2,000 firms and tens of thousands of practitioners that

have been touched by The Coxe Group have benefited from Weld's wisdom, philosophy, intuition, and innovation.

### **Bruce Lea, FSMPS**



*Coach/Advisor, Wayne O'Neill & Associates; SMPS National President (1986–87); and 2008 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

When interviewing for my first job marketing for an architectural firm, I complimented the principals on the thoroughness and clarity of their job description. Their reply was, "We have no idea what the job description should really be. We got this one at a Weld Coxe seminar we attended a few weeks ago."

My first day on the job, they presented me with a copy of Weld's book on marketing architecture and engineering services and a stack of back issues of *The Coxe Letter*, the leading newsletter in the field at that time. A couple of weeks later, I accompanied the managing principal to the 1975 AIA convention in Atlanta. The first session I attended was led by—surely you've guessed this by now—Weld Coxe. In fact, his group conducted multiple sessions on marketing-related subjects at that convention. Clearly, Weld developed the blueprint not only for my first job but also for what became my career. And I'm just one of hundreds, probably thousands, of marketers for which the same can be said.

Over the years, I came to know and work with Weld in a variety of capacities, one of the most important of which was when he tapped me to succeed Janet Aubry as lead instructor for The Coxe Group's renowned Marketing Coordinators Clinic. That experience deepened my insight into his methods and principles. He inspired me to dig deeper, balance creativity with pragmatism, and keep growing in the

profession. Best of all, he became a friend and mentor. As above, I was one of many careers and lives he touched and influenced, but when we talked, I felt he was focused on me, and that at least for those moments, I was singularly important to him. What a gift he had.

Similarly Weld helped establish the blueprint for SMPS. He was there at the very beginning, and he had the good judgment and persuasive skill to talk his fellow founders out of calling the new organization the Society of Birddogs (SOBs). He said the greatest benefit SMPS provides its members is that it created and continually nurtures a career path. I was overwhelmed by the power of that concept. As I think about it today, I'm also moved by the linkage between SMPS and Weld's work and vision.

### **Mitchel R. Levitt, FSMPS, ACHE, Assoc. AIA**



*Senior Vice President, FKP Architects; SMPS National President (2001–02); and 2006 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

When I joined SMPS in 1982, I had the pleasure of being guided by a handful of mentors like Laurin McCracken, Nancy Egan, Liz Quebe, Diane Creel, Kay Lentz, Bruce Lea, and Randy Tucker, who promised to be there whenever I needed help and guidance, and to try and never let me fail. I heard them talk about their mentor, Weld Coxe, and was always in awe when they expounded on his wisdom.

In 1986, while trying to clear the cobwebs from my head at the national conference in San Francisco, a dapper gentleman sat down, smiled and said, in words I can still hear in my head, "Hello, I'm Weld Coxe, and numerous people have told me I need



to meet you. I hear you have no fear of failure and take very little personally. That is exactly what it will take to succeed in the A/E/C world.”

Once I got over my amazement of meeting Weld, and Liz Quebe had brought me a strong cup of coffee, I sat with him for several hours just talking about life in marketing our profession. For many years, Weld was also available to answer questions, provide advice, and talk me off the occasional ledge.

While the talks and email exchanges became less frequent over the years, I knew Weld was always there if needed. He sent an email congratulating me when I won the Distinguished Life Member Award, so I knew he continued to follow my progress even in his retirement years.

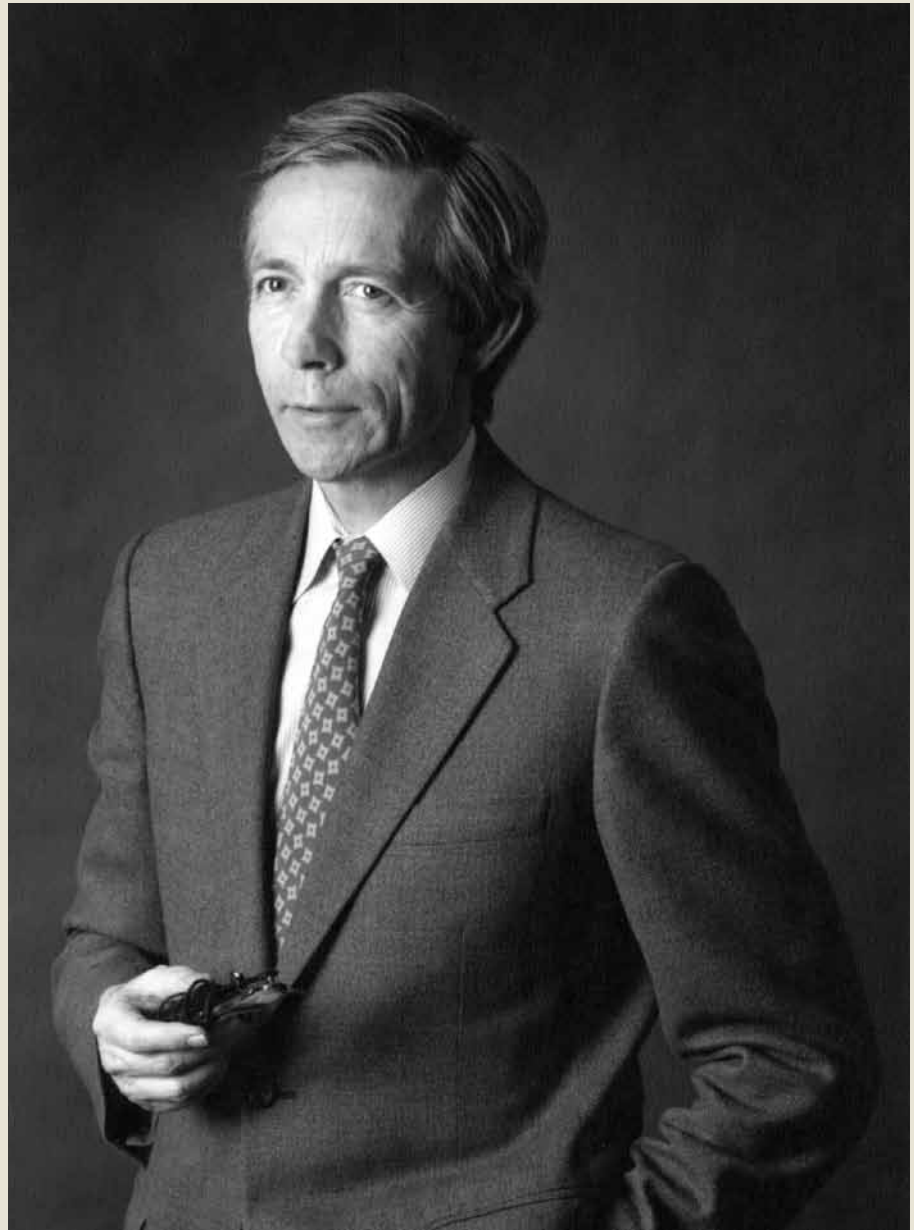
Weld Coxe was a friend to many, a mentor to some of the best marketers this industry will ever see, and a friend. His character, knowledge, and gift of sharing will be missed.

### **Laurin McCracken, AIA, FSMPS**



*Chief Marketing Officer, Jacobs Global Buildings; SMPS National President (1987–88); and 1997 SMPS Marketing Achievement Award Recipient*

Weld Coxe was one of the very first to define the field of professional services marketing. He came along when marketing was frowned on by the profession. Projects had traditionally been secured through the “good old boy network.” It was against the law for architects to advertise. However, there were a few architects who were changing the way they garnered business for their firms, such as industry leaders Bill Caudill and George Hellmuth. What Weld saw was a changing of the process by which firms secured work. He also saw that what



*The First Marketer: Weld Coxe, Hon. AIA, FSMPS*

these industry leaders were doing could and should be codified and applied to the whole profession. He did this in his first book, *Marketing Architectural and Engineering Services*, published in 1971. It is still one of the best books on marketing ever written.

I had the pleasure of sharing a few long conversations with Weld over the years. Ever the gentleman, it was a great pleasure to hear how he had predicted the many

problems that were to grow out of the shift in the way that firms procured their work. He also forecasted the changes in the issues of how firms managed themselves. That led to his book *Managing Architectural and Engineering Services*. The appendix of this book gave us the best job descriptions of the various marketing roles that were ever written.

Our profession owes a lot to Weld. He helped set us on the path that created the profession of marketing A/E/C services. He took marketing, and its many manifestations, out of the shadows and put it into the spotlight. He showed the professions that create the built environment that they had more control over their destiny than they realized, if they adapted and embraced marketing as part of their core business strategy. Thank you, Weld.

### **Frank H. Smith III, AIA**



*Sole Proprietor, Frank Smith Marketing Consultant*

I had gotten a good education in marketing from General Electric [where he worked in

Human Factors at the GE Space Division], but I was a registered architect and could hear architecture calling. I met Weld through some architectural contacts in Philadelphia. Through several conversations with Weld, in one of which we discussed working together, I took a position with Reynolds Smith & Hills in Jacksonville. It was Weld who recommended me to them.

I was recruited from there to FABRAP in Atlanta. In 1980, I went out on my own as a marketing consultant to the design profession nationwide.

### **Robert Venturi, FAIA, Int. FRIBA**



*Principal, Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.*

Weld Coxe: He was two wonderful things in our lives.

One, he was an adviser to us concerning business and financial matters and for running our professional office. And he was extremely helpful and significant in that, especially in the early days when we especially needed that kind of help.

Two, very importantly, he was our first client for a building. Before that, our clients had been mostly those who asked us to do renovations in existing buildings. And he was a wonderful client. He naturally had quite specific program needs for a house and a second building as a studio. We had a wonderful relationship in our discussions with him coming up with these buildings. Weld was just a very understanding and agreeable client, as was his wife [Mary Hayden], for whom the studio was built.

And I remember thinking at the time: We're going to make these buildings look like buildings—meaning they weren't going to follow the fashion of the time, in which you made buildings into dramatic sculptural forms—but they're going to look like buildings.

Looking at these photos [of the Coxe-Hayden house and studio, see page 19] brings back lovely memories. It's so sad that the architecture of the immediate past looks sort of ordinary. At that time it wasn't ordinary—or put it this way: Being ordinary wasn't ordinary. And so it was a kind of daring thing to do.

And our approach was something Vincent Scully learned about and studied, and he wrote about the buildings, and that was encouraging.

The buildings had—unheard of at the time—windows in them. The idea of having a window that looked like a window was unusual; we liked being perverse. And of course they were on a wonderful site on Block Island, in this very, very natural

environment—there was this wonderful New England wall in front—and we just kind of sensitively put them on the site but didn't change the site in any way.

And they did connect with the shingle style. There was a book called *The Shingle Style* by Vincent Scully. Now it seems so obvious, but then—the shingle style! was kind of looked upon as dreary late-Victorian. So we had fun doing what we considered Modern buildings—that weren't Mies van der Rohe or Frank Lloyd Wright in their vocabulary—that connected with the idea of using/employing/recognizing/acknowledging/loving the ordinary vernacular.

And again, that was something people didn't do at the time. The ordinary vernacular was not appreciated, although the Pop artists were doing that in art, but not architects. So we had fun doing all sorts of naughty things—the idea of doing a building with an arch in it! and windows! Horrifying (at the time).

Weld was just wonderful. I remember once he was giving a lecture in Philadelphia, I think at The Bellevue, talking about his career and his role in advising architects. He was, I believe, unique at that time for being a business and financial adviser to architects, and it was very, very useful and helpful. And he just sort of looked toward me and said, "Oh Bob, I just want to mention, that the house and studio you did for us in New England is my most valued possession." He made me feel so pleased I had gotten up that morning.

We stayed friends. Weld had just a wonderful face: just an American vernacular Protestant country face. He was a very kind and helpful and generous giving person.





PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY VENTURI, SCOTT BROWN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

*"My most valued possession": Weld's house and studio on Block Island, RI, designed by Robert Venturi*

### **Rhodes B. White, FSMPS, CPSM**



*President, White Consulting, and Immediate Past President and Trustee, SMPS Foundation*

Having been involved in the SMPS Foundation prior to being on the Board [of Trustees], I believed in its mission of research and education related to marketing of professional services. With this said, [during a fundraising auction for the Foundation] I bid on a three-night stay at Weld Coxe's home on Block Island, RI. Along with this stay, I would get three hours of one-on-one consulting time with Weld.

It was a wonderful experience. He and I walked in the maze that he created in the back part of his property. We talked about marketing. At the end of the maze, he asked me why I was working for someone else. He thought I should be a consultant. We then went into his office on the third floor of the cottage in which we were staying and discussed my becoming a consultant.

He told me I could not change the world; all I could do was to advise. He said in order to put yourself in this role, you must have knowledge and facts to back you up. He told me it would be hard for me at first, but once I had proven myself to several firms, that would be excellent advertising of my services. It is true; I am like the

cobbler. I hardly do marketing for White Consulting. The word of mouth and my knowing facts to back up what I say have made my firm successful.

### **Andy Zinsmeyer**



*Manager, ZTP LLC, and Co-Founder and First SMPS National President (1973-74)*

Though I have not seen Weld for years, I do think of him.

Several remembrances: Weld is the one who actually got us to meet (secretly) that first night. On September 15, 1973, in Kansas City, Weld was conducting an AIA-sponsored seminar on marketing.



*SMPS National Conference, Chicago 2002: SMPS Marketing Achievement Award recipients (bottom, l to r) Weld Coxe and Joan Capelin, (top, l to r) Nancy Egan, Kay Lentz, Laurin McCracken, and Liz Quebe.*



*Block Island, RI, June 2004: SMPS National President-Elect Karen Courtney, AIA, FSMPS, asked Weld to facilitate the planning retreat of the incoming 2004–05 National Board of Directors. Gathered on Weld's porch on Block Island are (l to r) Karen Courtney; Weld Coxe; At-Large Delegate Tony Steinhardt, III, FSMPS, CPSM; Fellows Delegate Peter Lyon, FSMPS, and his wife, Vicki; Judy Kienle, CPSM; President-Elect Andrea Fitch; Secretary/Treasurer Pete Kienle, FSMPS, CPSM; and SMPS staffers Lisa Bowman; Ron Worth, CAE, FSMPS, CPSM; and Tina Myers, CAE.*

During the first hour, Weld broke the ice by introducing the participants in groups: architects, engineers, and “non-licensed” individuals who were selling professional services. The half-dozen of us (with raised hands) made eye contact and later agreed to have drinks together that evening. Weld was not invited. Thus, the “secret meeting” where the Society of Birddogs was created. We announced the results of our meeting to Weld the next morning, and as they say, the rest is history.

Weld quickly offered to host a Chicago meeting where Lou Zickler, Pete Moffett, Janet Goodman [Aubry], Weld, and myself (hope I haven't left anyone out) quickly changed the name to the National Society for Marketing Professional Services (NSMPS). Then came an article in *The Coxe Letter* (where I think we became SMPS).

My second remembrance: Why you should be the first SMPS treasurer. In opening an account for SMPS, I had to deposit funds. Thus, my \$50. Two days later came Weld's \$50. I knew he'd not want to be Member #1, but #2's not bad.

Several years after SMPS was founded, we were able to hand out membership certificates for the first time, at an SMPS national conference in Atlanta. I had Weld's #2 framed and was at the podium. I announced that the board had reconsidered, and we were going back to calling ourselves the Society of Birddogs. The first laugh was Weld's—which gave me the opportunity to say that it wasn't true, but due to Weld's enthusiastic support, I had something for him—his certificate. This wasn't planned. Everyone, especially Weld, was excited and gave Weld a standing ovation.

This is how my memory of Weld will last—a standing ovation for Weld, a gentleman, scholar, innovator, and sailor. [m](#)