

# Credentials: No Free Rides

*Editor's Note: This column from IIBEC Past President Richard Canon originally appeared in the June 1987 issue of IIBEC Interface. It shows the organization's historical commitment to its credentialing programs. While much of IIBEC's history is roofing-centric—this article emphasizes IIBEC's (then RCI's) first certification, the Certified Roof Consultant, now called the Registered Roof Consultant (RRC®)—a key part of the group's expansion of its mission to encompass the full building enclosure has extended to IIBEC's numerous credential programs spanning exterior walls, waterproofing, and building enclosure commissioning. The CBECxP®, or Certified Building Enclosure Commissioning Provider, is IIBEC's newest certification program. (In May of 2023 IIBEC celebrated its first class of CBECxP certifications.) Canon's column is a reminder that credentials continue to be a key component in increasing IIBEC's visibility and respect among the building enclosure industry.*

By Richard P. Canon, PE  
RCI Past President (1985-1986)

**WHEN I WAS** about 11 years old my brother and I were given a Soap Box Derby car—one of those classic stream-lined kinds from the 1940s and '50s. We called it the Silver Streak. It had been built by a man named Herbert Yates, who worked for my dad. We used to push that heavy contraption up Granny Smith T's Hill in Opelika, Alabama, jump aboard, and ride that little wooden car down the hill like a bat out of hell—until we ran out of hill. Back up we would go, huffing and puffing until we reached the top again, and then back down.

We worked mighty hard pushing the Silver Streak up hills. Nobody could ride the Silver Streak unless they did their share of the work. Work your tum or just watch with envy as the Silver Streak cut the air racing down Granny Smith T's Hill. There were no free rides on the Streak.

## **YOU HAVE TO EARN IT**

I learned in the years that followed that you did not wear an eagle on your Scout uniform unless you *earned* 21 merit badges. You did not get to wear the Scout's Mile Swim Badge unless you had fought the 5,208 feet (or 74,360 inches) of water, one stroke at a time. You did not get a degree from college or registration as an engineer or architect until you served your time, learned from others, made some mistakes, and passed some tests. Then and only then could you carry the title of professional engineer or registered architect.

And then I woke up one morning, many years later, after a lot of experience in highway



Richard Canon

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construction, the military service, and structural engineering and found that my new job title was not downhill racer, Eagle Scout, mile swimmer, college graduate, or structural engineer.

I was a roof consultant!

This new title—roof consultant—did not always represent what one would call an elite group. We were a mixture of “ex”es: ex-roof material salesmen; ex-roof material distributors; ex-construction specifiers; ex-structural, mechanical, chemical, electrical, and industrial engineers; ex-architects; and dozens of other varieties.

We also had a group of “still are but gonna diversify”ers and a final group who represented what I’ll call “sigmas,” a Greek word sometimes meaning “the summation,” or in Latin, “et al.,” meaning “and everybody else who wants in on the action.”

## THE CERTIFIED ROOF CONSULTANT

The problem with all of this is that although there is a profession called roof consulting,

there is no distinction between “one who is” and “one who ain’t.” Which is to say, in the past there was no distinction, but there soon will be! And this, my friends, brings us to the Certified Roof Consultant.

From the first meeting of the Roof Consultants Institute (RCI) to this day, a common complaint among bona fide, experienced, and qualified roof consultants has been that there is no distinction between a fast-talking charlatan or crooked snake oil salesman and the legitimate professional roof consultant. What can be done to protect the honest consultant? Where will this profession wind up if something is not done to curb the runaway misuse of the title of roof consultant?

I am pleased to report to you that the first examination for certification of roof consultants was administered by RCI at its annual convention in Orlando, Florida, on March 23, 1987.

To recap the procedure, only Qualified Professional and Industry Members may sit for the closed-book exam. This examination is the second part of a two-part certification

program. The first part is documentation of the applicant’s education and/or work experience. This documentation procedure was presented at the 1987 convention for a vote during the annual meeting.

All-in-all, we have come a very long way in a relatively brief period of time. We still have years of work ahead of us to implement recognition of the certification program by governmental agencies and in the private sector. But to become a Certified Roof Consultant will require work. Just like riding the Silver Streak, you can only enjoy the pleasure and benefits if you exert personal effort, work, and labor. There will be no free rides to certification, no grandfathering, no giveaways.

We need your support in this endeavor. Please be a positive force in helping us to help you. There are enough negative forces out there against us now. You too can make *the difference*. Become a Certified Roof Consultant.

They *are* the difference. 