



# Golden OPPORTUNITY

BY LORE DEASTRA, SR/WA

Old Dominion Chapter 52 celebrates 50<sup>TH</sup> anniversary



On a brisk winter afternoon, Al Laube received a call from a former Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) colleague, Stewart “Stu” Tyler, SR/WA. Stu was on a mission to find the original members of the first Old Dominion Chapter 52, and his pursuit led him to Al, the first Chapter 52 President.

## A Worthy Resource

At the end of April, Al and his wife Harriet Laube met with Stu to reminisce about VDOT, discuss Chapter 52 and catch up on old times. Al’s career in the Old Dominion exceeded 35 years, first as a Right of Way Trainee to authoring the Right of Way Manual. Then he handled the Capital Outlay program enlarging the District and Residency offices across the state and helped to construct the new 14-story central highway office building in Richmond to accommodate the Interstate Highway program. After the interstate program started, Al became the State Utilities Relocation Engineer.



## Chapter History

The journey of the Old Dominion Chapter 52 began in 1966 when Al was being considered as the first Chapter President. He was the immediate past president of the Central Highway Office Employee Benefit Association, an organization with over 1,000 members. Al won The George Award for Outstanding Service in 1967 and 1968 as a member of the American Right of Way Association Liaison Committee. He was also awarded the Region 4 Professional of the Year. Chosen by Alva Mattox to be President, Al was elected by the membership. There were six members in Virginia, with 18 more needed to charter the Chapter.

After affiliating with the Maryland Potomac Chapter 14 on September 19, 1969, Chapter 52 was chartered with the American Right of Way Association (ARWA). There were over 150 members, family and friends in attendance with the welcoming address given by Douglas B. Fugate, the Virginia Commissioner of Highways. Entertainment was provided by the Virginia Museum Theatre Group.

As part of the American Right of Way Association, the installation of officers took place in the newly renovated 5-star Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, Virginia just two months after the Apollo 11 spaceflight landed on the moon and the Monkeys were Americas favorite TV band.



## Golden Anniversary

This year, Chapter 52 celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In honor of this historic event, our Board invited Al and his wife Harriet to the installation of officers at the Hanover Tavern on May 17, 2019. Before concluding the 2018-2019 year, Al shared that he was one of 24 charter members who started the Old



Dominion Chapter 52. They were an affiliate of the Potomac Chapter in Maryland for a few years before accumulating enough members to charter.

As the first author of the Virginia Right of Way Manual of Instructions, Al was presented with the 636-page 2016 edition approved by the Federal Highway Administration. He concluded the meeting with a loud thump from the gavel—much to the surprise of our members and guests who reciprocated with grateful applause.

## In Recognition

Since 1969, Chapter 52 has thrived and grown to over 250 members in Virginia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. These dedicated members come from many disciplines in right of way, including transportation, utilities, property management, environmental, appraisal, negotiation, legal and engineering.

Al is still active in the community. He has been the President of the XYZ (Extra Years of Zest) senior group for the past six years at the Overbrook Presbyterian Church. He and Harriet meet with the XYZ for lunch several times a month, travel throughout Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake Bay, and enjoy trips in Richmond such as the Federal Reserve Bank.

Thank you to Al and his lovely wife, Harriet, for their dedication and leadership to the Old Dominion Chapter 52 of the International Right of Way Association. We are grateful for your foresight, especially in assembling bylaws that withstand the tests of time. ★



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