

Self Storage



Bob Abernethy

Business Pioneer, Southern California Benefactor

By John Yelland

In Southern California real estate development and civic circles, Bob Abernethy is a bit of a legend. In self storage circles, he's a giant. As this industry was just getting started, Bob and I worked with a few other industry pioneers to help structure the concept of self storage out here on the West Coast. Defining this new sector was not easy. It took commitment, creativity and a lot of foresight. Bob had all of these qualities. He was the right man at the right time.

I remember Bob, the president of Self Storage Management Company, working tirelessly just to get self-service storage and mini-storage listed as separate sections of the yellow pages. As everyone now knows, during the infancy

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Hall of Fame



Foy Cooley

*Inspiration to Women
in Self Storage*

By Nancy Gunning

I am very excited that the Self Storage Association is inducting Foy Cooley as a member of the 2009 class of the Self Storage Hall of Fame. She's a particularly deserving candidate—a volunteer who has dedicated countless hours to not only her business, but to the entire industry.

I met Foy in 1998 when we both served on the board of directors of the Northeast Region board of the Self Storage Association. The focus of the board at that time was to form state associations in the Northeast Region. With Foy working on this mission, the NE board achieved this goal. Knowing that associations are the advocates for storage owners, Foy was a pioneer in promoting local and national

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Don Temple

*Adventurer, Innovator,
Philanthropist*

By Joanne Geiler

Don Temple is an entrepreneur, self storage innovator, philanthropist and accomplished pilot. It was my pleasure to meet Don more than 20 years ago when I was still learning the self storage business. In his usual manner, Don shared his business philosophies with me and the other members of a storage operators' group that he co-founded in southern California. It was obvious from the first time I met him that he was a man who loved what he did and a person who approached each day with enthusiasm.

Don was born in Kansas, but spent his entire adult life in the Long Beach, California area. After serving in both World War II and Korea, he started an auto service and

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of this industry, the yellow pages and drive-by were the bread and butter of our promotions. Bob's influence has also always been important in the legislative arena. Another of the early developers in the mid-1970s and 1980s was Jim Knappe. Before e-mail, before cell phones, even before faxes, Bob, Jim attorney Joe Joiner worked feverishly to get the first California lien law passed.

Abernethy strung together an impressive academic career, achieving his bachelor's degree at Johns Hopkins University, his MBA at Harvard Business School, and receiving his certificates in real estate and construction management from UCLA. He also served his country for a bit in the Navy Supply Corps.

Bob's work was intriguing before he entered self storage. He spent a few years with Hughes Aircraft, managing programs for innovative fighter jets and missile systems. During this period he started to show a knack for real estate. Bob would buy houses to rent out for slightly more than the mortgages on those properties. When he decided to sell them, the valuations had grown significantly. He was flipping houses before it was fashionable. He was very smart that way. Before he'd invest in a property, he'd thoroughly look into everything, even sitting in his car for hours counting the traffic.

Bob opened his first self storage facility in Santa Ana, California, in 1974. While successfully operating his own business, he joined the board of Public Storage where his unique touch helped guide the world's largest self storage company to its current tremendous success. As chairman of the audit committee, Bob's careful nature fostered a fiscally responsible, yet aggressive, strategy. To this day, he is the largest individual shareholder in the company outside of the Hughes family.

If anyone typifies a patron of his community, it is Bob Abernethy. He has seats on transportation commissions and arts councils in various southern California locales, and sits on boards at all of his former schools (and other schools). His philanthropy in the culture of Los Angeles is extraordinary. He's a board member of the Hollywood Bowl, the YMCA of Metro Los Angeles, L.A. County Music Center, and the William Parker L.A. Police Foundation, among other volunteer posts.

Bob has served as an L.A. County planning commissioner and was for a time the vice chairman of the Los Angeles Economic Development Council. He also stays active in the issues that matter to him, such as the RAND Institute

for Global Risk and Security, the Pacific Council on International Policy and the Brookings Institution.

Through it all, Bob has been an SSA proponent. He truly has always believed that we can accomplish more together than just by simply competing with each other. Back when the Association was broken in to regions, Bob served as the Western Region president, as well as SSA secretary and treasurer. A bit of intriguing SSA lore: Bob tied for the SSA presidency (now chairman) one year, and lost the appointment on a coin flip to Dave Ebershoff. In fact, the first Executive Ski Workshop was held at Bob's house in Snowbird.

Because of his tireless support of these many interests, Bob Abernethy is an ideal and deserving honoree for the Self Storage Hall of Fame. I'm proud to have worked with such an active contributor to both our industry and the community.

John Yelland is the president of Pouch Self Storage and Yelland Properties of Irvine, California.

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storage associations. I feel that this spirit of cooperation has become the hallmark of the SSA in part because of her foresight.

Foy and her husband, Ken Cooley, are wonderful people who are respected and admired by the self storage community. Both of them are always willing to lend a hand to anyone asking for advice or assistance. Foy continues to be actively involved in the storage industry within her state and continues to participate in the SSA, an organization she was so dedicated to advancing.

There are literally dozens of reasons that Foy is admired by her peers as a distinguished storage owner and operator. Her integrity and work ethic have made her company, Access Management, a respected developer and management company in the New Jersey market. A fitting testament to Foy's values and beliefs is the longevity of her staff. In this business, keeping good workers is particularly difficult. It conveys a sense of loyalty, respect and self-value among her employees.

This doesn't mean that Foy is in any way a pushover. She works very hard herself and expects a lot from those around her. She is one of the first woman visionaries

within this industry, with a sharp mind and a competitive spirit. Her energy level is always on overdrive. In 2001, when Foy served as SSA chair, her daily e-mails to board members were routinely sent after 2:00 a.m. As the next woman to take the helm of the Association, I can tell you that her example was tremendous.

Interestingly, although the storage business has played a major role in Foy's life for more than two decades, she actually started her professional career on Wall Street. I guess this is why she loves to run those numbers—over and over and over—until she is convinced that her investors will receive a substantial return on their investment. Needless to say, Foy believes in thorough due diligence because information and research builds knowledge and confidence.

Foy and Ken have a particularly adventurous spirit. I'm exhausted just writing about their globe-trotting ways. The two of them are known for taking exotic trips to hike, fish and see the world—places that I have only seen in *National Geographic*. From the beginning, she and her family have also been tremendous supporters of the SSA Executive Ski Workshop, and they continue to participate in this fun week every year. Like most entrepreneurs, Foy attempts to live a balanced life, which includes yoga, pilates and skiing.

Like so many successful entrepreneurs in this great industry, Foy does not hesitate to "give back" to her community, in particular supporting youth, student and women's groups. Self storage is very fortunate to have had such a dynamic woman dedicated so completely to the industry. I'm proud to say that she is not only a dear friend, but also a worthy inductee to the Self Storage Hall of Fame.

Nancy Gunning is a principal of Chesapeake Resources and was 2004 chair of the SSA board of directors.



towing business in Long Beach. In 1968, he decided to try a new venture, and although it had not yet been done in the Los Angeles area, he built a self storage facility. He approached this new business with his usual dedication and "hands on" attitude, and in a short time he had rented all of the spaces and realized that he would have to expand in order to keep up with demand. It became obvious that self storage was a great business.

Don continued to innovate. He has been credited with building the first ground-up, multi-story self storage facility in the country. He was the co-founder and first chairman of Bancap Self Storage Group. Don still owns three self storage businesses within the Long Beach area and still specializes in personalized customer service.

Don's professional life has been matched by his philanthropic life in Long Beach, having supported the community through his involvement in the Rotary Club, Elks Lodge, Executive Club of Long Beach, the Long Beach Airport Commission, and most notably with Long Beach Community Hospital. Don's dedication and donations to Long Beach Community Hospital helped make possible its "Temple Family Cancer Center."

Don has been a pilot for more than 40 years and has logged 5,000-plus hours of flight time. He has owned and flown a variety of aircraft. Never one to settle for ordinary experiences, he accepted an invitation to fly his twin engine Cessna 421/C along with 21 other small planes in a 20-day "flight around the world" in 1992. The 22 planes landed in Moscow by invitation, becoming the first private planes to land there after the overthrow of Communism.

While in Moscow, a Russian teenager acted as Don's interpreter at a meeting with retired cosmonaut Igor Volk. Don was impressed by her intelligence, skill and industriousness. Not willing to just say "thank you," Don offered to help her get into a U.S. college and to fund her entire education. She has since graduated from Chapman College and has a successful career in southern California.

Don has contributed millions of dollars and thousands of hours helping others in his community and in the self storage industry. It has been my good fortune—and the good fortune of numerous others in the self storage community—to have Don as a friend and mentor. He is truly deserving of recognition as an industry leader and is a tremendous addition to the Self Storage Hall of Fame.

Joanne Geiler, a member of the 2008 class of the Self Storage Hall of Fame, is the owner of SoCal Self Storage.