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TCNA's Tile Person of the Year Awarded to Richard Baiter

Tile Council of North America (TCNA) presented its prestigious Tile Person of the Year award to Mr. Richard Baiter at Coverings 2011 in Las Vegas, NV.

The award given to Mr. Baiter was a beautiful tile mural handcrafted by Ms. Brigid O'Connor of Artfind Tile (Wooster, OH).

After almost twenty years with First National City Bank (Citi Bank), Mr. Baiter began his career in the tile industry in 1978 when he purchased Quarry Tile Co. Shortly thereafter, Quarry Tile joined Tile Council and has been a steadfast member ever since.

In the late 1990's, Quarry Tile invested in a fast fire kiln, a purchase normally reserved for manufacturers of much greater size. The company grew as it stuck to its niches: colors other companies did not make, custom colors in any quantity, sizes other companies did not make, and odd shapes made affordable through its adoption of fast fire technology. In 2000, Quarry Tile acquired Dirk Elliott Tile Co. with the revolutionary idea of making art tile in a fast fire (roller hearth) kiln.

Additionally, with the founding of Precision H2O in 1992, Mr. Baiter became one of the earliest providers of water jet technology.

"Dick's service to the tile industry is immeasurable," commented TCNA Executive Director, Eric Astrachan. "In addition to his long-time service on TCNA's Board of Directors and as TCNA's treasurer, his idea to create art tile in a fast-fire kiln truly bridged the gap between handmade and mass produced tile. This contribution helped fuel the resurgence of art tile in the U.S. by making it more affordable and widely used."

Some of the numerous ways Mr. Baiter has served and continues to serve the industry include:

- TCNA treasurer, 1999-present
- TCNA Board of Directors, 1981-present
- TCNA Executive Committee, 1999-present
- TCNA Government Relations Committee

TILE COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA, INC.

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- TCNA Tile Technical Committee
- TCNA Marketing Committee
- Ceramic Tile Education Foundation's Certified Installer program sponsor, 2011

Quarry Tile is a recipient of multiple first place Spectrum Awards, which are given in recognition of excellence in tile design.

- Salt Lake City and County Building, Salt Lake City, UT: restoration of 1910 encaustic tiles
- Discovery Cove, Disney World, Orlando, FL: multicolored broken mosaic tiles
- Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland OH: new construction, multiple sizes and colors, and waterjet

Quarry Tile also received an honorable mention for the DeKalb Subway Station (New York, NY) project for its new construction and restoration mosaic.

“One of Dick’s greatest assets at Quarry Tile was the trust he placed in his key employees to accomplish the goals we set for ourselves,” remarked Tom Sawyer, vice president of Quarry Tile. “Our goal was to be the best and largest specialty tile manufacturer in the U.S. Over the past 30 years, he has always provided the leadership and financial strength to help us reach that goal. That is why Quarry Tile has won so many Spectrum awards and made significant contributions to the advancement of the tile industry.”

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