

# APPRENTICESHIP

## A Word From A Business Agent

*What does apprenticeship mean to you?*



**David Johnson**

*Business Agent, Plasterers and Cement Masons Local 300*

"I first started my career in construction as a cement mason apprentice in September of 1984. I was employed by Williams & Burrows. I cannot believe that it has been almost 37 years, when it seems like just yesterday.

I met Hardy Garrett on a Sunday when I just randomly helped a woman carrying her groceries in her house, and when Mr. Garrett got up out of his chair to help, I said to him 'I got it sir,' and he just smiled at me, afterwards we introduce ourselves and after a brief conversation he invited me to come to the union hall Local 580 in San Francisco the following Monday. I learn later that he was the President of

the Union in San Francisco. I joined the union that same day and was working that same week for the first time in building trades/construction.

I began going to the apprenticeship school in Pleasanton on Saturdays. This is where I learned so much about being an apprentice, and what was to be expected of me. I enjoyed my time as an apprentice and created lifelong friendships with some of the other apprentices that are still in the industry to this day. All my instructors at the school were great all around people, too. I always participated in the apprenticeship contest and I even won a couple of them. My biggest win was in our International contest in Atlantic City in 1987. It was also great because Harry Jamerson, my business agent at the time, went with me.

Now fast forward to present day and I'm the business agent in San Francisco and San Mateo. I represent some of the guys I went to school with 30+ years ago. I'm also the agent to my brother, 2 nephews and my son. Talk about keeping it in the family! It's a great opportunity for anyone who likes hands-on type of work. You're able to look back at all the projects you worked on for years to come, you can earn a good honest living and a great retirement as well. If I had a chance to do it all over again I wouldn't change a thing. More than anything at this stage of my career I enjoy giving back or passing it forward. One of my greatest accomplishments was getting an established

apprenticeship program with the Department of Public Works in San Francisco and working closely with City Build, a pre-apprenticeship training for inner city youth throughout San Francisco. I am so thankful for the opportunity that was given to me as an 18-year-old apprentice so many years ago. Our apprenticeship programs are so important, I am eternally grateful to be part of one, and that's my story."