

2024 Felix A. Anderson Image Award

Sean J. Kelley, PE, MBA

Senior Principal, The Mannik & Smith Group, Inc.



Sean Kelley has had an outstanding career: 38 years in the profession; always passionate about elevating the stature of the engineering profession and creating a more sustainable built environment. He has always kept the belief that – as we elevate the leadership and communication skills of engineers, we will elevate the stature of the engineering profession overall.

Sean is a man of action. He has influenced many through his coaching and mentoring to develop their leadership styles and communication skills so that the future of our profession will be in trusted and competent hands.

Sean has held various leadership positions, including the last 20 years as a Senior Principal with The Mannik & Smith Group, Inc. For ten years, Sean served on the Board of Directors for ACEC/Michigan, including a term as President.

Sean believes that you “bend the tree when it is young” – so he was often invited to college campuses to speak with students. He also developed interactive teaching events for Detroit high school students. All of these opportunities were to share his wisdom and to spark curiosity with these young minds towards engineering as their vocation. His speeches have revolved around the main theme:

why engineering is truly a noble endeavor and how we [as engineers] need to have more of a role in formulating public policy and funding priorities for infrastructure – for reliable transportation, clean water, healthy cities and a healthier planet.

Sean has always pushed the boundaries and was one of the visionaries who co-developed ACEC Michigan's *Emerging Leaders Program* where creative and interactive learning techniques were the driving force for his Business Development Session. His focus was to teach engineers how to communicate persuasively – while articulating a sincere value-proposition to clients and stakeholders. Sean believes it is imperative that we, as engineers, strive to understand our clients' core needs – and to clearly explain how our organizations will address those real or perceived needs.

As we talk about pushing the boundaries, Sean also played a key role in the early development of “smart mobility.” He was personally requested by the University of Michigan to lead the programming and development of their first-of-its-kind M City, as well as other smart mobility test facilities. He played a key role in the development of The Road Commission for Oakland County's ongoing Federally-recognized pilot study: *Leading in Sustainable Safety & Technology*.