It’s hard to believe that a quarter century has passed since a (then) young lawyer from Passaic County was offered the opportunity to serve as Legal Counsel to the Utility and Transportation Contractors Association of New Jersey. Looking back over the past 25 years, there are a number of things that stand out about the Association and the legal issues which have been most important to the organization and its members.

First and foremost, the UTCA has enjoyed unparalleled success in representing the interests of the heavy construction industry in New Jersey thanks to an unstinting commitment to one simple purpose: to provide contractors with a range of services that improve their businesses. Whether it is advocating for construction funding, supporting contractor-friendly legislation, meeting with regulatory officials on behalf of Association members, providing comprehensive group insurance programs or offering top-quality construction safety training, the UTCA has never forgotten that it is a contractors organization with the goal of improving the condition of its members.

That unerring focus comes from exceptional leadership provided by dedicated officers and directors and an extraordinary professional staff headed by Bob Briant, Jr. and, previously, Bob Briant, Sr. Notwithstanding the intense competition between firms represented on the UTCA Board, the directors have always put their individual interests aside to work cooperatively for the benefit of the industry. As a result of this attitude and dedication, the Association has grown to become the preeminent contractor trade group in New Jersey, and one of the most effective contractor association in the nation.

That same perspective has influenced the legal issues in which the UTCA has been involved since the mid-1980’s. Both the staff and the Board are always looking for legal disputes which present issues of broad significance to the industry, in furtherance of the general goal to improve the lot of contractors in the state. Many of the legal matters pursued by the Association over the years have involved the public bidding process and protection of a fair, open and unfettered competitive process for public work. In such cases, the UTCA track record is almost perfect in advancing the principles which underlie fair and honest public bidding.

Looking back over the last two decades, probably the most important case which the Association undertook was *George Harms Construction v. Turnpike Authority*, 137 N.J. 8 (1994), a landmark case decided by the Supreme Court of New Jersey which held that the use of union-only project labor agreements on public projects was impermissible because it violated state law and stifled competition by effectively disenfranchising non-union “open shop” contractors. In *Harms*, the UTCA aggressively advocated a pro-contractor position, and the ultimate vindication of that perspective was a fitting confirmation of the Association’s commitment to that purpose.

It has been an honor to serve as UTCA Legal Counsel for the past 25 years, and that position has provided both professional and personal gratification. The Association remains dedicated to the issues which it has pursued in the past, and it will continue to be an honor to work with the UTCA officers, directors, staff and members for many years to come.