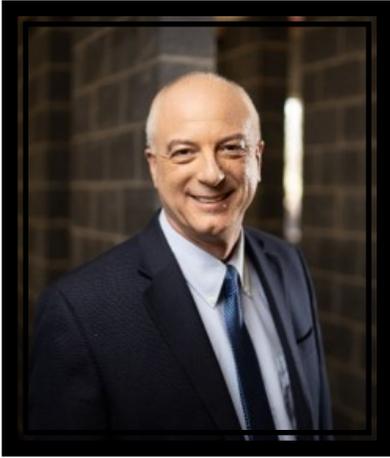


# Allan Block

## *Always Better* Wall of Fame 2019



allanblock.com



### **Bob Thomas**

**NCMA**

*Herndon, VA*

Bob Thomas has been the President of the NCMA (National Concrete Masonry Association) since 2008, but what is his story? How has he been instrumental in helping the SRW (Segmental Retaining Wall) industry become a mainstay with concrete block producers the world over? Bob started at NCMA in 1990, about the same time that the SRW industry was finding a home at the NCMA as well. As a young engineer fresh out of graduate school, he has worked his way up the ladder to lead our industry association. As he completes his 30<sup>th</sup> year, he has seen a dramatic change as we worked our way through a full-scale recession in the construction industry. During his tenure he has also been with us to celebrate an industry association hitting a 100-year milestone.

Bob and the NCMA had many challenges in trying to find ways to integrate the SRW industry into what they had historically done. They also had to find a way to help associate members, like Allan Block, feel that there was value in being part of an association based on producer members. This was no easy task, but Bob continued to find ways to guide us through the minefields and changes were made under his leadership to look to the future as we learned from our past. Under Bob's leadership, staff was brought on that focused on advancing the SRW market through the advancement in design and construction practices. He also helped to revamp the committee structure to put SRWs on an even level with concrete masonry units.

His personal touch of getting to know all of us, from time on the basketball court in our younger days, to late night social events during our many gatherings, provided him a way to not only understand the SRW industry and our needs, but also the many people that helped to drive the industry behind the scene.

Bob is famous for his tables and charts during our business meetings that give us the facts and details to make decisions for the betterment of all. As he would walk through a detailed explanation on one of many topics, it was common for Bill Holden to pipe in with, “*what Bob is trying to say*”. He has helped guide us through the mess called Washington bureaucracy to create a Check Off program, to fund ways to grow the block industry in a universal manner. When people have asked the question of what value an association can bring to their business, Bob gets it. He understands that the NCMA needs to bring value, they need to look forward, and they need to understand what the members need to help their business thrive. Most importantly, he understands the people that make up the industry and the NCMA staff. Although he is an engineer by education, his attention to the personal side of the business has helped bring many competitors together to work for the common good.



Bob and his wife Jerri also take great pride in their children, Abby, Bradley, and Nora. From listening to his engagement on Abby’s decision-making process for moving on with her life in selecting a college and course of study, to helping Bradley get through the final details of his Eagle Scout rank, they are all in.

For those of you that do not know about Bob’s other talents, he sings in a barber shop quartet. The next time you see him, ask him to sing a bar or two for you.

Bob, for all you have done over the last thirty years, thank you from Allan Block and the entire SRW Industry, for working to make us *Always Better*.