

# BRADLEY GILES

## 2020-21 ASSP President-Elect

**With more than 40 years of experience in the safety, health, environmental and security disciplines, Bradley D. Giles, P.E., CSP, STS, FASSP, GIOSH, is well versed in the ways that occupational safety affects more than just the lives of workers. Like many OSH professionals, Giles's family history was marked by the need for workplace safety measures.**



### Bradley D. Giles

**Bradley D. Giles, P.E., CSP, STS, FASSP, GIOSH, is principal of Bradley Giles and Associates. He has more than 40 years of experience in the safety, health, environmental and security disciplines. Giles has served as an ASSP Foundation trustee and earned the Foundation's Distinguished Service Award. He is a professional member of the Snake River Chapter as well as a member of the Construction and Management practice specialties. He has served on several committees including Nominations and Elections, Governance and Student Task Force. Giles has served as president of the Board of Certified Safety Professionals and holds a B.S. and an M.S. in Education from Southern Illinois University.**

**This became especially poignant** in his first position in 1977 as safety supervisor in the surface mines for the Consolidation Coal Co. in Illinois, the largest U.S. coal company at the time. "My family has been coal miners for generations and that was a big economy in southern Illinois at the time," he says, so it was a natural transition for him. His father, grandfathers, uncles, cousins and brother were all coal miners. His grandfather died in a mining incident before Giles was born, and his great-grandfather lost his life in a similar incident. "You help people. You not only help those people, but you help that circle of people around them," says Giles, reflecting on the role of OSH professionals in the lives of those they protect. "You help them in their families and that impacts generations."

In high school, Giles began absorbing these lessons in safety while working as a laborer, building houses during summer breaks. He continued this learning through college, working as both a laborer and ironworker. During graduate school, Giles worked at the Southern Illinois University Safety Center teaching police and ambulance personnel high-speed driving maneuvers. From there, he began a 44-year safety career that took him to six continents: "Everywhere but Antarctica," Giles jokes.

In 1980, Giles began working at Morrison-Knudson, a large construction, engineering and mining company, and he relocated to Boise, ID. During his time with the company, Giles was known for his values of loyalty and integrity. "I had the same employee number for 36 years," he says. The job involved lots of travel and high-profile projects and jobsites.

"The company helped build the Hoover Dam, the Alaska pipeline, most of NASA down in Cape Canaveral, all the Anheuser-Busch plants, most of General Motors' plants, roads, bridges, dams. . . . We probably built more power during the '50s, '60s and '70s than any other company, both fossil fuels and nuclear," Giles recalls. "We were part of the Manhattan Project, built the facility in Hanford, WA, the reactors there, and we were involved with the Department of Energy."

While he started in a mining safety role, overseeing mining sites across the U.S. and around the world, Giles eventually moved into a corporate setting. In 1991, he was called upon to help out with the construction of the Denver Airport, a project that was supposed to keep Giles there for two weeks.

"They asked me to stay 2 months, then 4 months, then 6 months, then a year and then until the end of the job," Giles says. "I ended up coming home 2 1/2 years later. We had 110 major contracts going on, so I ended up having a staff of about 45 safety and

health professionals and operated as the oversight contractor for the city-county of Denver."

That position taught him a lot about the demanding nature of the corporate safety world, and helped him make an impact on workplace safety at the site. "You're there at 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning and you're going home at 6:00 or 6:30 at night," Giles explains. "You're juggling the balls and spinning the plates and you have a hula hoop going all at the same time. You've got so many things going on, it's just a great job to throw yourself into. We were able to realize some significant impacts on employee safety."

In the next phase of his career, Giles transitioned into the firm's government and environmental group, where he spent time traveling for work that involved cleaning up chemical facilities, managing Department of Energy sites, and even dismantling Soviet ICBM missiles after the fall of the Berlin wall.

During the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, Giles lost 13 coworkers in the World Trade Center. In the wake of the tragedy, Giles and colleague Stewart Burkhammer gathered a team of safety professionals to help recovery activities and develop safety and health plans for recovery workers.

"We spent the first 3 1/2 months on site. We were on one of the first planes into the city and when we went in, we were about the only ones on the plane," Giles recalls. "We worked 12-hour shifts, 7 days a week coordinating with OSHA to help develop plans and provide oversight for the contractors, provide guidance for the firefighters and police officers who were working, and set up the stations where they could get all their PPE."

Although the work was hazardous, Giles says the experience had a lasting impression. "I'm proud of what we did," he says. "I wouldn't want to do it again but it was the right thing to do. We got a chance to help out, and I know we impacted the safety and health of a number of people, so that was beneficial."

He decided to launch Bradley Giles and Associates LLP in 2016. "It didn't interest me to stand on the side with a clipboard for somebody else to do the work, and I saw it as a chance to do things on my own." The company is now celebrating 5 years of success.

### Getting Involved in ASSP

Giles became acquainted with ASSP because of R. Benjamin Rietze, the director of safety at his company who was active in the Society and eventually served as its president in 1990. Giles joined ASSP in 1981 and met many safety professionals who helped shape his work.

During his membership tenure, he has received the President's Award twice and in 2010, Giles was hon-

ored as an ASSP Fellow for his significant contributions to the OSH profession. “It kind of takes your breath away,” Giles says of that experience. “I always had my heroes that I looked up to—the Del Tallys of the world who helped shape our profession and the Society.”

Giles returned to the ASSP Board of Directors in July 2019 after serving as a director-at-large from 2015 to 2018. He previously served as an ASSP Foundation trustee and earned the Foundation’s Distinguished Service Award.

When Giles was elected senior vice president, he saw it as another opportunity to work alongside Deb Roy, who was a fellow board member during his term as director-at-large. “Deb and I worked together for a couple of years and we have similar goals related to the future of our Society,” Giles says.

Although they had served on the board before, the colleagues agreed they still had more to offer. “So this gave us a chance to continue to move things further down the road on how to help the Society,” Giles says.

### **The Safety Professional Pipeline**

Giles sees tremendous potential for the future growth of the OSH profession, and this extends beyond universities. “We have to look for alternate ways,” Giles says. “We need to look at the military and the trades, figure out how we can transition people who are involved in safety functions.”

Giles says those with a military background have a unique skill set that would be an asset for the OSH profession. “They’ve been trained as leaders,” he says. “They know how to analyze and execute. They know how to work as a team. They know how to work individually. They’ve built strong communication skills. Those are great attributes we are looking for, and they’re coming in with them.”

The trades are another potential source of safety professionals. With some additional learning and certification, Giles sees the safety profession as a good fit for these individuals after a military career or transitioning from the trades. “There are ways now for those individuals to pursue an education and earn professional certifications,” Giles explains.

One example is the safety management specialist (SMS) certification from BCSP. “That requires 10 years of experience in safety, and you take a test with the same rigor as your associate safety professional to get that certification.” The SMS certification is designed to be accessible for those without degrees and can help make the hiring process simpler. “It allows individuals to demonstrate to employers and others that they have a professional credential that backs up their knowledge and experience,” he says.

### **The Voice of the Emerging Professional**

Giles also sees students coming out of academic programs as an important part of the profession’s pipeline. Mentoring them earlier in their careers is a great way to help them build the soft skills needed to work with employees in the field.

“I lined up the emerging professionals I hired for the first year or two to work with a senior person or

a group of senior people to get them ingrained into how to work in the field,” he explains. “How do you talk to employees? How do you analyze work? How do you talk to your boss?”

For those who he could not pair with mentors in person, he set up virtual visits. “This was before Zoom, so we did monthly phone calls and meetings,” Giles says. “We talked about different books. We connected each emerging professional with some good coaches and mentors. They all had access to me as we went through it. They all had my email and phone number, and we spent a lot of time together.”

For emerging professionals, Giles recommends getting involved and volunteering with a safety organization to gain experience that can be useful elsewhere. “Volunteering and giving back to ASSP helps you gain experience in areas like leadership, budgeting, staffing and scheduling, often before you get that in your workplace,” he says. The emerging professional’s voice is something that Giles hopes to hear more in the year ahead.

### **The Importance of Volunteering**

When it comes to shaping the future of ASSP, Giles recognizes the work of those before him. “A lot of good people have worked for years to get the Society to where it is today,” he says.

He credits volunteering as a catalyst for that progress. “A lot of talented, passionate people have to raise their hand to get in and make those improvements,” he says.

And Giles understands the importance of laying the groundwork for the future leadership of the Society. “That developmental process is something we’re going to be working on. The goal is to get members ready for 2, 3 or 5 years down the road.”

Making it easier for members to volunteer and advance their careers by getting involved in ASSP is a key goal for the 2021-22 year, Giles says. “Working on that professional development aspect of what we can do for our members, that’s a huge thing,” he explains. And helping people succeed is an important function not only for the future of ASSP, but also for the OSH profession itself. When people are ready to volunteer and get involved, he says, “we need to help them get those experiences, help them be great candidates and great performers. They may not be ready today, but we can help them get those experiences within the Society so they will be ready.”

### **Off the Clock**

Giles likes snow skiing, a perfect sport for his home of New Meadows, ID, which sits at a 4,500-ft elevation. He enjoys fishing, golfing with his wife, Linda Lou, spending time with his son, Chip, who is an attorney, an avid kayaker and a professional rodeo cowboy, and riding his electric bike and motorcycle. But safety professionals need not worry: “I’ve always been a helmet guy,” Giles laughs. And after the presidency, Giles says his first plan is to get another hunting dog. **PSJ**



**Brad shows off a steelhead trout he caught in March during a fishing trip in southern Oregon. He released it after snapping this photo.**