

GREEN BUILDINGS

Principal of Wayne DeFeo Associates, a full service environmental consulting firm

Twenty questions with movers & shakers: Wayne DeFeo talks sustainability & waste mgmt.

Wayne DeFeo, LEED AP BD+C, MA ES and principal of Wayne DeFeo Associates,

a full service environmental consulting firm, has spent the past three decades guiding public and private sector clients, including dozens of municipalities, Fortune 100 firms, and Universities through the complexities of energy conservation, solid waste management, recycling and LEED green building development. The former vice chairman of the USGBC-NJ, Wayne has dedicated his career to promoting practical sustainability solutions. A recognized expert in environmental issues in state and federal court and a faculty coordinator at Rutgers, Wayne is considered one of the most influential people in the fields of sustainability and waste management in the region.



Wayne DeFeo

1. Was there a single incident or event that inspired you to focus on sustainability?

Sustainability has been something I have worked on before there was a term to identify it. However, working with Bill Ruckelshaus while at BFI, I had the opportunity to get a first hand look at the meaning of sustainability on a global level. This led me to determine that my earlier training and experience had a new meaning.

2. Other than family, who has

inspired you the most in your career?

There were many that inspired my career. Starting with my junior high school science teachers, Mr. D'Anton and Mr. Villano as well as my high school environmental science teacher, Mr. Cieri and my high school social studies teacher Ms. Schneider.....and of course, my college biology teacher, Marie Kuhnen.

3. When did you first feel that you had "made it" professionally?

I am not certain that I have truly made it professionally. I would say that as people in the sustainability field now recognize me and I actually receive inquiries about the topic it might be that I have finally started to make it professionally.

4. What project or aspect of your career has been the most humbling?

When I left state government, where I was a Deputy Director, and had many phone calls asking for my help, I was warned that the telephone would stop ringing the day that I left. That was so true.

5. What project or aspect of your career has made you personally, the most proud?

Seeing some of my students from the courses that I teach at Rutgers School of Professional Education take what they have learned and make it real.

6. With what project do you wish that you had been involved?

Would very much like to have been involved with some of the sustainabil-

ity projects in NYC during the recent rebuilding. It would have been an exciting set of projects to work on.

7. Where do you feel the most significant growth will occur in waste management in the next two years and how will you manage those changes?

Organics recycling in many forms is and will be the new frontier. The opportunity to develop new energy sources from organic material in a sustainable fashion offers the opportunity to provide us with fuel, compost and liquid fertilizer.

8. Are you most inspired by the challenges of retrofitting an existing building or working with an architecture firm to collaboratively design a new building?

Since the use of existing building stock is, in my opinion, the more sustainable avenue, and the harder of the two to convince people to travel down, it is clear that working with retrofitting is more inspiring...It is also more frustrating.

9. What one word would you like others to use to describe you? What word would you use to describe yourself?

Dedicated.

Tenacious

10. Are you a glass half full or a glass half empty person?

I tend to think more of things from their potential to grow and succeed. I certainly could not have started a business as I did, with no clients or prospects, and survived for over 20 years if I was a glass half empty person.

11. Do you have a daily ritual? How do you start each day?

Generally by taking care of the dog and walking. This means a walk, then feeding him and myself. The second part of the morning is to read the newspaper; a real newspaper or two if I have the time.

12. What types of projects are you most interested in pursuing and why?

Sustainability projects that consider themselves holistically where I have the ability to work with and educate the building users.

13. What one thing on your bucket list would most surprise your friends and colleagues?

Going to Lambeau Field in winter, maybe.

14. If you could be a super hero, who would you be and why?

Probably the most flawed. They are often the most interesting. Thor comes to mind...powerful, yet flawed.

15. After Sandy, many communities are focusing on creating most resilient and sustainable infrastructures. What are the main challenges, from a waste management perspective, facing communities?

The issue of sustainability cannot

be thought of in isolation. Considering waste management as a separate part of the whole is part of the problem with those considering sustainability. We, as professionals are often pigeonholed into our respective areas of perceived expertise. Mine is based on my resume and experience after teaching high school in the recycling and waste management fields. To be truly sustainable and resilient communities, people need to seek out those that can transcend the professions and the areas of experience and have them be a manager of the entire redevelopment system.

16. What misconception about sustainability do you find most frustrating?

That it is somehow a liberal UN plot.

17. There are quite a wide variety of experimental processes and new technology that could revolutionize waste management. Are there any specifically that you are most interested in or excited about?

See #7. More importantly, there are multiple technologies for sustainability that are coming online quickly. That is most exciting. From LED lighting to making a building more holistically healthy, there are many technologies that offer us the opportunity to become more sustainable. The Passivehaus and living building concepts are most impressive and these are the most exciting because they are holistic and think of the building as a part of the people in them.

18. What do you hope to achieve professionally before you retire?

To be considered more for my sustainability knowledge than solid waste and recycling knowledge.

19. What type of music to you listen to and do you play any instruments?

Generally, classical, with classic rock as a second choice. Unfortunately, I cannot even read music.

20. What one piece of advice would you give someone who wanted to follow in your footsteps?

Don't. No, kidding...Get as broad an education as you can. Notwithstanding my youthful stubbornness regarding taking art, industrial arts and literature, in some ways these are the courses that have helped me the most in broadening my experiences and ability to transcend disciplines.

To interview Wayne DeFeo or find out more about Wayne DeFeo Associates, contact Alexandra Merrill at Orndee Omnimedia. Orndee handles public relations and brand management for some of the most well-known names in sustainability, real estate development, engineering, architecture and construction. www.Orndee.com 212-203-0363. ■

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