

# Denny Hayward, W.F. Hayward Company



## LEGENDS

Our family is originally from England, my grandfather came over in 1913. My grandmother traveled over separately, and they got married in Winnipeg, Canada in 1917. It is hard to plaster in 40 below so they moved to California when my father was 5 years old. I still have relatives in England to this day. I remember my father went back and made contact with them. It had been so long since my grandfather left England that they did not believe my father was family until they dug back in the archives and verified names. Some of the family ended up traveling here for a visit. One of the things that vividly sticks in my mind is they did not understand or like Mexican food at all.

My Father was in the army at 23 years old getting ready to go to war with 3 kids at home. Luckily by the time he spent 7 months going to bootcamp and officer's candidate school the war was over, and they let him out.

My Grandfather worked for The Bolster Company for 25 years as a plaster foreman. He built some beautiful churches and fancy buildings, most of them in LA and Pasadena. I recall he went to work every morning just as he came home in the evening, wearing wool slacks and a long sleeve white shirt. He was very proud of his work and loved showing it off to anyone he met. He was not very mechanically inclined and would not know what to do if the mixer stopped, but he was an incredible artist when it came to mud. He made all the plaster molds by hand. When I was little, I used to go out in his garage and watch him make molds for the next workday. He had so many special tools that you do not see these days. Today most companies use Styrofoam instead of plaster to add detail to the buildings.

My father was working for a company building houses and convinced my grandfather to starting their own business to plaster those homes. Grandfather, Wilford Frank Hayward and my father Reg Hayward formed a union plaster company, W. F. Hayward in 1948.

I was born into this business, going to jobs when I was 7 years old. I helped set up scaffold on the weekends so the plasterers had something to do during the week although I would mostly end up playing in the sandpile. My father's sister, nicknamed Buddy lived down the street from us. She helped raise my brother, 3 sisters and I after my mother passed away when I was 15. She would not only feed us breakfast and dinner each day but also ran the company for many years.

You could not do anything wrong at the office or boy she was after you big time! She was an incredible talented woman, a great gal. She even taught me how to play golf. Unfortunately, she passed away at the young age of 55 from a brain tumor. She had a son who just recently retired from the roofing business.

After I got out of school, I completed the lathers apprenticeship program. The estimator at the office quit so I had week to train with him and mostly learned by doing the job. That is how I got started with the family business in 1955 and am still here 72 years after playing in the sandpile.

When drywall came into the industry in the early 60's and everything on the interior got flipped to drywall, we formed Light Steel Fabricators Inc. which we later renamed LSF Inc. We decided to shut that company down and merge all drywall work with W. F. Hayward about 20 years ago. My grandfather hated drywall and would have turned over in his grave if he knew what we were doing.

My dad was a part of the association, on the board of directors for many years. He was a part of the hiring team when Ian got approached to run the association. Once he was ready to retire, I took his spot over 30 years ago. It was much better participation back in those days. The meetings had hundreds of people in attendance. There used to be a lot more family businesses like ours, now there are a great number of multi-million-dollar corporations on the forefront that have divisions to handle drywall and plaster.

I like being involved, knowing where the industry is going and what is happening. One of my favorite things to do is to interact with people. I feel it is a very important part of business. We used to have lunch with people we worked with. Today, we do not meet in person anymore, just send an email. I do not like it at all.

I love maintaining the family business, it never even occurred to me to do anything else. My oldest son Darryl runs the place as a head estimator and lets me relax. My Nephew also works with me as a project engineer. We have always walked through the entire job with our clients. Dealing with the architects, general contractors, the same person from bidding process, project management to finished job.

We made it through a lot of hardships in the industry but luckily never had a truly bad time. There were always ups and downs, but we kept busy.

Our main niche used to be retail. We built about 35 malls, a lot of J.C. Penny, Broadway, May Co., and Nordstrom stores. We had some projects on the East Coast as well, they brought us in special just to show how it is done. These days malls are finished. It makes you feel old seeing them being torn down, they are supposed to last forever.

Our Northern California operations were very busy and successful, but we shut them down 6 years ago.

We do a lot of different smaller projects now. We remodel a lot of Kaiser and other hospitals, Target stores, Glendale Market Place, Harry Potter, and we build the Laemmle Theatres in Newhall.

My father used to fly; he had a couple of airplanes. He did a lot of hunting trips to Los Mochis, Mexico about 900 miles down. It was a great place that spoiled you for hunting birds. You could go out in the morning and easily shoot 200 if you wanted to. He would feed many families down there with all the meat. I used to join him for several years for at least one trip per year. He had a great springer spaniel hunting dog. I would take her out after everyone was done for the day, get a bird up and shoot. I never forget the look on her face as she turned around as to say, "What the heck is the matter with you?"

I also used to fly, had about 78 hours in the comanche we had. I was done with all the schooling and all the tests ready to get my license. I remember I was delivering payroll down to Palm Desert at 3500 feet and could not recall why I was doing it. After landing that day I decided that will be the last time and I have not flown since.

My father also enjoyed fishing. Him and my grandfather would take me to Catalina on their beautiful handmade cabin cruiser for the weekend. It went only about 8 knots and I used to get seasick every time, mostly from the fumes that would come over the cabin. Once I slept it off, I was ready to go. It was great fishing back then, lots of albacore, tuna, and marlin. My grandmother used to can them. The boat took a lot of years to build, they started it before the war in 1938 and could not get materials for a long time. It sat in the yard for years and was finally finished in 1948 just before they opened the business. It had all oak frames and mahogany level planks. It was an open boat to begin with. My dad took a canoe all over Newport, snapped pictures of boats and designed the cabin.

I vividly remember being in the back of that boat watching the Spruce Goose fly. I was very young and had no expectations. It only got about 3 feet off the water and traveled 2 miles but was a very big to do. There were many people and boats all around waiting to see it.

We had many 4-5-day family Catalina vacations on that beautiful little boat. It was crowded with only 2 bunks, but we slept on the deck in sleeping bags. I have a lot of good memories watching the cruise ships come in a few times a day bringing people to the big dances and live bands at the casino. My father would tell me about the times him and my aunt would go over to those dances before the depression.

The cruiser was in the water for about 12 years. A lot of work to keep in shape, I was proud to help with sanding and varnishing when I got old enough. They sold it when I was 16 or 17 because it was too slow for my dad, and my grandfather had a stroke so he could not go out anymore.

I now have a boat now that goes 100 miles/hour. It has a 3-speed transmission and 750 horsepower. It was a famous boat, had some heavy-duty use before I bought it in the early 80's.

It used to pull the US water ski team in 1980 in Spain and was in the Catalina water ski race for a few years. I do not use it very much at all anymore, we used to take it out on lakes and houseboat trips quite often. Every once in a while, Karen and I still put it in the water for a little loud put put around the harbors.

My wife, Karen and I were introduced by a friend of mine 41 years ago. A buyer at the Hahn Corporation set us up on a blind date that was it. We did not mess around, 5 months later we were married, and she has been busy raising kids and taking incredible care of our family all these years.

Our daughter Olivia just graduated from Yale and had her 6-month review at Yale hospital as a PA hospitalist. She is doing very well, keeping busy and has about 12-14 patients at all times.

My older daughter Tina graduated from UC Santa Cruz then went onto getting her masters at a school in San Francisco. She is now married to Jeff, an engineer for Apple and has a business tutoring special needs children.

I used to watch my older son Darryl when he was a little baby. He would take toys apart and put them back together. He got a Camaro when he was 15 and redid that car himself. Completely took it apart, transmission, engine, suspension, and body work. Some of us are just born that way.

Our younger son Brett is also very mechanically inclined. He is quite an amazing worker keeping busy on an off-road racing team. My Tahoe was totaled last December, and he rebuilt the front end, fenders and took the cab off to replace the bent frame in his spare time to save us a lot of money. He even bought a wrap from the company he worked for at the time and wrapped the entire car for a fraction of the cost of painting it. It was a huge job and he did it. He also has a 34-foot cabin cruiser at the office which we have been working on to put in the water. He has rebuilt the bottom, both engines, rudders, shaft and slowly making it just right.

It is good to be handy with things, saves you a lot of money. I must have laid close to 4000 brick at my house. Fireplace, patios, walls. I recall Olivia and I talking about different types of dads one day when she was young. She said "That's' what dads supposed to do all day is build right?"

We had a great group of people in this industry and spent a lot of wonderful times together. A lot of trips, stories and golf shared. One of the last group vacations was on a trip to a lake up north with 9 households. The Rutherfords, Martins, Teeds, Heimerls, Huffs, Hendrys, Treadwells and of course Moyneurs. Leo definitely kept us entertained.

My advice to the younger generation is to spend time enjoying their friends and family. Time flies. Find something you enjoy doing. You want to be happy when you go to work.