

# **The Start of the D F I**

**Bengt H. Fellenius**

**Looking back at the beginnings of the DFI  
Fulcrum, Deep Foundations Institute, April 1994, p. 4.**

Attending the DFI Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh last Fall triggered me to think back on how the DFI got started, or, rather, to reminiscence on the individuals launching the DFI in the early 1970s. My own involvement started in the Fall of 1973 on giving a presentation to the Canadian Geotechnical Society's Annual Conference on the Swedish Pile Commission and on the efforts to form a similar group in Canada. Hal Hunt was in attendance and he asked me to join a group of people thinking of doing the same thing in the US. Hal never let a good thought wilt for lack of attention. A few months later at a Piletalk Seminar in Saddle Brook, New Jersey, the idea of forming a "Pile Institute" was put forward to a larger audience, soliciting their comments. On October 27, 1974, at a Pile Talk meeting in St. Louis, a meeting was held to discuss the many responses received. The meeting resulted in the formation a few weeks later of a Steering Committee consisting of the following twelve persons:

Robert G. Compton, Koehring MK-T  
Joseph DeSalvo, Joseph Ward & Associates  
Thomas D. Dismuke, Bethlehem Steel Co.  
John J. Dougherty, Jr., Associated Pipe & Fitting Corp.  
Bengt H. Fellenius, Terratech Ltd.  
Richard H. Goettle III, Richard H. Goettle Inc.  
Hal W. Hunt, Associated Pipe & Fitting Corp.  
William E. Kruse, Falco Contracting Co.  
Harry Lindahl, US Steel  
Norman L. Liver, Lee Turzillo Construction Co.  
William F. Loftus, William F. Loftus Associates  
Stiles Stevens, Joseph S. Ward Associates

The Steering Committee held several meetings during the following two years. For me, being a North European newcomer to the North American democratic and social system, it was an immensely interesting educational involvement. Bylaws and organization of the Deep Foundations Institute took form, no, evolved, during sometimes very vocal exchanges of views. The common thread was that the organization should be one where the individuals coming from all the groups active in the deep foundation the industry, and that persons with very diverse

background and differing interests should have a forum for exchanging knowledge and views. Equally important was the aspect that the organization should provide the means for the members to get to know each other individually to foster understanding and mutual respect.

In 1976, the Deep Foundation Institute was formed, with Jack Dougherty as President and Hal Hunt as Secretary, and 66 member signing up as charter members. The Canadians joined in and later, thanks to primarily Bill Loftus efforts, the DFI became an organization with global engagements. Many individuals have put in much effort toward moving the DFI forward. If I tried to mention them all, I would have to make a long, long list and run out of space. However, I must single out Bob Compton, who served as President in 1979-1980 and who also made a decisive contribution to the organization as Executive Director from 1986 through 1993.

It has been 23 years and the DFI membership has grown. The membership receives and gives out information in conferences, continuing education courses, and publications. I think that it has developed into a group close to what the Steering Committee aspired. More can be done, though, and I am looking forward to what the next couple of years will show. Since the start, the DFI has been an organization of individuals working together. If the old and new members continue in the spirit of the formative years, the DFI's continued presence will be felt and appreciated in the deep foundation industry.