



**BILL CONNER ASSOCIATES LLC**  
**637 North Marion Street Oak Park, Illinois 60302**  
**708 437 0505 - office 708 323 1118 - fax**  
**www.bcaworld.com**

17 February 2014

R. Duane Wilson ASTC  
P.O. Box 1011  
La Luz, NM 88337

**Re: Ron Jerit ASTC Fellow Nomination**

Dear Duane:

I'm very honored to be asked to write this. My first encounter with Ron Jerit was, and my memory may not be accurate, in 1982 when he was presenting at a USITT panel in Denver. The panel topic was on the design of the proscenium area from first row to plaster line and the opportunities and challenges to get all of the theatre and building systems and equipment necessary to cooperate and support the artists. I seem to recall thinking what an opinionated s.o.b. It was, however, a good and thought provoking panel, something I can't say about many conference sessions. It probably wasn't until 1986 when I dared pursue membership in ASTC that I again encountered Ron at the ASTC forum around Expo in Vancouver. I will admit that my memory of that ASTC event and several subsequent meetings where both Ron and I attended are cloudy at best but obviously we must not have come to blows. Following breakfast at the 1989 annual meeting in New York, Linda Jerit invited my wife Kim, enlisted might be a better word, for a day of touring the city together. That must have gone really well since on Sunday morning Ron and Teddy approached me with an offer to join their Oak Park consultancy. A while later Kim and I traveled to Oak Park, landed late on a Friday evening on our first time ever in Chicago, and were met by Ron and Linda. I think they'd rolled out the 1956 Buick for the occasion, which made it even more an occasion. As anyone who has visited the Jerit homestead in Oak Park knows, there curiosities and surprises in abundance. Ron, Teddy, and I quickly came to an agreement on Saturday, Ron and Linda had a real estate agent lined up so we shopped houses on Sunday, and made an offer on Monday morning before flying back to New Haven, and still live there. We showed up in June and thus began a very formative and enjoyable nearly ten years in the employ of Ron and, of course, partner Teddy. Well, if I thought the Jerit house was filled with curiosities, the office was even more so, probably because it was the repository for all the items that wouldn't fit in the house or Linda would not permit, including a ten by ten foot portrait of Ron. All in keeping as it was a four storey non-elevated building which had been a funeral home and near oldest building on the block, replete with crumbling roof Ron had painted, uncertain furnace, antique furniture, and the classic black multi-line rotary dial phone, all of which Ron was eminently proud of. All in keeping with the ever present unlit cigar.

While I had seven years of consulting previously, the time with Ron was to be exciting, challenging, educational, and, above all, fun, in keeping with one of Ron's core principles, that if it wasn't fun, do something else. He was mentor and boss and tour leader in one. I'll always remember as well he was keeper of the rolodex, and never made the transition to a keyboard, which made for interesting sessions where I explained cad or some other computerized task. He dispatched me to a project interview within weeks, a show of faith had not really earned yet, and somehow their reputation and my beginner efforts resulted in JBI being selected. No doubt, the term "early adopter" and Ron Jerit don't belong on the same page, let alone same sentence, but the lessons he'd learned and shared with me were much more timeless. Curiously, his themes of that long ago USITT panel often returned, as his theatre planning stayed focused on the audience and performer. He championed supporting the forestage performer with lighting and

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acoustics and generally always reinvestigating that zone we all know may be only a small percentage of the theatre but the one on which we spend over fifty percent of the time designing. I don't want to underestimate the value of his lessons on the business of theatre consulting, ones he learned by experience himself. Whether finding leads, getting short listed and interviewing, or building long lasting relationships with clients, he always would pass those lessons on. In short he shared his knowledge and was generous in his understanding and patience.

Among numerous memorable contributions to ASTC , I remember his Sunday morning "State of the Association" addresses, prepared painstakingly over the week before delivery, during his term as President, and the Sunday morning "featurette" sessions. No doubt, none of us who ever heard Ron's pithy, incisive, and often acerbic sentiments on ASTC programs will forget them, even if we dare not often repeat them. Ron was always supportive of new idea and ventures, whether his or Teddy's or mine. He fully supported my speaking at the Safe-T(theatre) 93 event in London, and of course never questioned my time invested in the development of codes and standards. His caring and interest in Kim and I and our sons, both born while I was at JBI, seemed only superceded by his caring for his own family and the grand babies he so looked forward to spending time with.

It is with honor, pride, respect, and love that I most heartily support Ron Jerit becoming a Fellow of the ASTC.

Sincerely:

Bill Conner Associates LLC

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Conner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bill Conner ASTC