

# Leadership Luncheon: Two Thoughts

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Written by [Rick Fedrizzi](#), [Rick Fedrizzi](#)

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One of my favorite events each year at [Greenbuild](#) is our annual leadership luncheon at which we give out a handful of awards and take a moment to honor those who have distinguished themselves and/or their firms or organizations by advancing the cause of sustainability and the green building movement.

I won't single out any specific honoree here, but urge you to [read for yourself](#) a little about each winner and see this year's list of LEED Fellows.

Instead, I just wanted to take a quick moment to point out two things in particular that happened at the luncheon today, both of which made a deep and, I'm sure, lasting impression on me.

The first was Brendan Owens' brief but moving remembrance of Malcolm Lewis, who chaired our Technical and Scientific Advisory Committee. The green building community sadly lost Malcolm last month to cancer, and I have grieved for him, both as a friend and a colleague, almost non-stop since that time.

But for all the accolades I've heard and read about Malcolm since his passing, and all the thoughts and words I've shared with others about what he meant to me, not only professionally but personally, I'm not sure I've ever seen or heard anyone capture the essence of his towering presence or his lasting legacy with any greater sense of poignancy or simple beauty than Brendan did today.

My favorite line was when he said of the man he considered his mentor and role model, "(Malcolm) was like the moon. He was gravitational and everything moved toward him."

Just beautiful. And I found myself choking up even as Brendan was saying it.

And it was only fitting then that the USGBC subsequently announced that we had re-named our Volunteer Impact Award, the Malcolm Lewis Volunteer Impact Award, and that this very first year the award would be given out by Malcolm's son, Geoff Lewis, who just like his dad, is not only a commanding presence at a podium, and one tall drink of water, but a guy who could make us laugh even as we wiped away the tears.

Great job, Geoff.

The other thing I'll not quickly forget is something that Sandy Diehl, the chair of the American Architectural Foundation said about our organization when he bestowed upon the U.S. Green Building Council and its staff its coveted Keystone Award for 2012. Sandy, who I've known and worked with since the very beginning of this journey, said at one point something that stopped me and made the emotion well up inside.

He told the crowd before rolling his video tribute, "Without question, the five most important letters in design today are U...S...G...B...C."

On behalf of some of the most dedicated people I've ever known in my life, Sandy, thank you. And not just for your honoring us, but what we all felt the moment those five letters began to sink in.

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