

# AT 86, PETER HENSLEY STILL INSPIRES

Design efficiency, exacting assembly, graciousness and continuous improvement are among living legacy.



Peter Hensley holds an in-progress SJS-FP sample at his home-based EMSEAL workshop.

“How’s your father?” is the most asked, non-technical question during our SWRI-Validated Expansion Joint Training sessions at EMSEAL. More than 300 of you—architects, engineers, consultants, contractors, distributors, independent reps and owners—have come through this program so far, and we are flattered by how often you ask about Peter.

He’s doing great by the way. At 86 years young, he’s in his workshop every day, producing the immaculately assembled, de-burred “handling pieces”, which he has affectionately dubbed the beautiful SJS-FP samples that have become as representative a calling card as the Company’s logo.

I also love that, when asking, you invariably and respectfully use the term “father.”

While he’s my “dad” at Thanksgiving, Peter truly is “father” to so much more at EMSEAL.

The father of technical accuracy, quality, graciousness and integrity, Peter’s legacy influences each new generation of employees that joins the company and continues to shape our approach to market-driven innovation and customer-service.

Last November, as a panelist at the TransOvation innovation conference held in 3M’s Innovation Center in St. Paul, MN, I was asked to reflect on EMSEAL’s innovation ethic. My summation: **“Innovation is the distillation of purpose to its simplest form.”**

EMSEAL’s many breakthroughs, from SEISMIC COLORSEAL to SJS to DSM to EMSHIELD, QUIETJOINT and the just-released QUICKCOVER, have been driven by simplifying systems, removing extraneous components, reducing tensile stresses at bond-lines and within materials, eliminating invasive anchoring and incorporating multiple functions into one product.

This innovation foundation is in no small part built on, and perpetuated by, what Peter Hensley taught and continues to remind us of today. I called him yesterday to check in and learned that he had 10 new samples ready to deliver, but that he had also spent the day “improving the ergonomics of my workshop.”

Ergonomics—the study of efficiency—and its resulting application of continuous improvement are an ingrained trait of Peter’s and a cornerstone of our company.

An aeronautical engineer by training, Peter was on the design team in 1947 that prototyped the plane that first flew in 1952 and would become the Handley Page Victor B-1 bomber in the UK. The Victor featured many breakthroughs in design that enabled its 35-years



**Always seeking improvement, Peter demonstrates his latest finishing technique.**

of continuous service. The notions ingrained in him there—design efficiency, material selection and exacting assembly—became the measure of how we innovate and manufacture at EMSEAL to this day.

Peter’s practical resolve and love of problem solving are at the heart of our “Custom Quick” philosophy of solving the myriad unique expansion joint challenges presented by an ever-evolving built environment. Providing out-of-the-box, as well as tailored, solutions and then delivering “bespoke” products and assemblies is what we do. And we pull it off at lead times to meet the demanding schedules of the stadium, airport, school, municipal, highway and other construction projects we service by the hundreds around the world every year.

If patience is a virtue, Peter is truly a saint. On some long days in the office though, even his seemingly tireless reserves as a teacher had their limits. If one took advantage of his knowledge, by not first applying one’s own ample brains to solving a problem, he would allow us to stumble into the brambles of logical breakdown then dismiss us, not with as pithy a motto as IBM’s “Think”, but with the far more poetic, **“Use your LOAF man!”**

Thanks for placing your trust in EMSEAL, and thanks for asking!

—Lester Hensley, CEO (and grateful son) 🔥