

The History of the Certified Restorer

Retrospective on Marty King, CR, ASA

By: Pete Consigli, CR, WLS

Origins and Vision

RIA was established in 1946 by a group of rug specialists and cleaners and was known as the National Institute of Rug Cleaners (NIRC). Through the years, the Association adapted the focus of its membership to reflect the changing times of the decades and the population-at-large.

During the 40s, 50s and 60s, the Association primarily represented professionals in the Oriental and specialty rug industry, along with upholstery and wall-to-wall carpeting specialists. Through those decades and into the early 2000s, the Association structured itself internally with multiple "institutes" serving different facets of its membership. A total of five Institutes operated under the auspices of the Association, representing Oriental and specialty rugs, carpet and upholstery, fire and smoke, water and mold and mechanical hygiene.

In the late 1960s, the Association additionally changed its name from the Institute of Rug Cleaners, to the Association of Interior Décor Specialists (AIDS).

In 1971, Marty King came to the Association of Interior Décor Specialists with a group of 45 damage restoration companies. This group, which specialized in fire and smoke restoration and reconstruction, was looking for a home to function as a trade group.

In 1980, the Association rebranded itself to the Association of Specialists in Cleaning in Restoration (ASCR) to better reflect the make-up of its growing membership base. Marty's group formed the basis for the founding of the National Institute of Fire Restoration (NIFR), operating as another "Institute" under the auspices of the Association.

In the 1990's, the NIFR institute changed to the National Institute of Disaster Restoration (NIDR) to again reflect the changing demographics of the growing and maturing industry sector of restoration and damage repair.

When asked what his goal was when he created NIFR with the guidance of the Association Leadership, Marty's reply was, "My goal was to see the practice of insurance damage repair become a profession."

In 2007, ASCR rebranded to Restoration Industry Association (RIA). The metamorphosis of the industry's oldest and largest trade association serving the specialty cleaning and restoration sector came full circle.

Innovations and Leadership

Over the past four decades, Marty raised the bar for restoration to a professional level. His teachings, writings and innovative restoration product concepts influenced a generation of restorers, some who are retired and others who have become industry leaders in their own right.

In order to raise the awareness of those restoration professionals who focused on fire and smoke restoration, Marty believed that quality education, practical applications and a demanding examination would create a quality industry-recognized "certification" lending lasting credence to the professional.

Using these precepts, in 1980, In tandem with Association leadership, Marty King developed the certification known as the *Certified Restorer*[®] (CR), recognized as the equivalent to a Ph.D. degree at the time within the restoration profession. This program is Marty's most lasting individual achievement and has left an indelible legacy.

The long held *CR Code of Ethics and Conduct* has set Certified Restorers on a path to promote a long held doctrine of teachings that promote quality work, fair business dealings and ethical practices benefitting the restorer, insurance company and general public.

Other Contributions

In addition to helping to create and establish the CR certification, Marty was a prolific writer and author.

The RIA Guidelines for Fire and Smoke Damage Repair (originally published under the NIDR Institute), was expanded into a U.K. version which also had a global application in the emerging Australasian restoration industry. As the primary author, Marty lead an RIA/industry peer review group in the mid to late 1990s to define the discipline and philosophy of fire damage restoration from the frame of reference of a CR.

Other publications and writings include:

- *The Emergency Tips* brochure, a long time RIA member favorite, which included a video in the 1980's and 90's.
- *The Journal of Insurance Damage Repair*, used to educate insurance agents and adjuster for almost 3 decades.
- *The Homeowner's Bill of Rights*, particularly important in the 1970's and 80's when restoration was considered a sideline business and Damage Repair had not achieved marketplace status. This document eventually was rebranded as a frequently asked questions brochure called, *After the Disaster*.
- *Controlling Water Damage* in the 1980's a presentation ahead of its time.
- *Get Out Alive* awareness program used by RIA members in the 1980s for public awareness on safety precautions in commercial fire loss scenarios.
- *Water Damage Risk, Diagnosis, and Repair* video created in the early 1990's, it was an association collaboration with RIA associate (vendor) members, and a prelude to the emergence of the Restorative Drying segment of the restoration industry
- And several restoration specific ASCR/RIA consumer information flyers.

In the 1980s Marty pioneered the Clearscope computer estimating program language and format, serving as a model for much of what is commonly used in today's industry estimating programs.

Marty continues to work to establish best practices for the business of restoration. His white paper published under the RIA brand called *Cost Accounting Issues for Damage Repair* served as the catalyst for the Association's present initiative, *RIA's Restoration Contractor Accounting and Financial Management Guidelines*.

Marty was a technical adviser to the subcommittee that developed *RIA's Glossary of Terms* a critical document which establishes standardized restoration industry terminology for two other major RIA initiatives.

RIA's Standardized Contracts and Forms and the *Comprehensive Standards for Smoke and Fire Damage Restoration* an ANSI standards initiative in collaboration with IESO, are being developed by referencing the standardized terminology in the glossary.

When you combine all these accomplishments with his hundreds of articles, including monthly *Restoration Corner* columns in *C&R* magazine, the NIFR and NIDR technical and management seminar presentations of the 1980s and 1990s, RIA convention and conference presentations, and years of advice given to RIA members in his role as technical advisor, Marty's legacy will last for years and influence and define what professional restoration is and should be.

The King Legacy

Over the past four decades, the restoration and damage repair educational content of RIA programs and events has been largely due to the influence of one person Martin L. King, CR, ASA, simply known as "Marty" to his friends and colleagues.

As RIA approaches its seventh decade as the leading trade association serving the restoration and damage repair industry, the question can be asked: "What will today's generation of leaders add to the foundation that has been laid before them?"

In some ways, that question is already being answered by RIA's CR Redevelopment Committee work in establishing the body of knowledge for the 21st century Certified Restorer. The work of the CR transition team that is serving as a bridge from the past to the future will ensure Candidates interested in becoming a CR will continue to follow the path Marty forged decades ago.

The CR transition and redevelopment process along with the standardized Glossary, Accounting, Contracts and Fire Standard initiatives, is giving the next generation tools to build on the legacy Martin L. King has laid for the profession of restoration and damage repair.

When restoration historians reflect two decades from now, will they be able to say with clarity, accuracy and in a truthful manner that the succeeding generation of innovative pioneering restoration leaders continued to raise the bar? Will they say those entrusted to follow in the footsteps of those who came before them took the industry to the next level, helping further define the profession and gaining the respect of related industry colleagues and the public they serve? Finally, will it be evident that today's leaders were good stewards of the legacy passed on to them? Time will answer these important questions, but the Association is off to a great start!

Epilogue

Certified Restorers are the most qualified professionals the industry has to offer to victims of a disaster and the insurance companies who primarily provide the funding for restoration and damage repair. Those who carry the CR acronym after their name should remember they represent themselves, their company, their association and their industry to those they serve and ultimately pay for the services they provide. Serve them well and represent the profession with pride and integrity!



Author's note: Pete Consigli, CR, WLS, Industry Advisor to RIA. Pete has been a member of RIA since 1977 and attended the CR class in 1988. In 2008 Pete received the Martin L. King award at the RIA convention in Grapevine, Texas.

In 2012 the RIA board of directors made Pete only the 2nd honorary member of the association in its almost 7 decades following in the footsteps of his mentor, Marty King.

Prepared as historical reference for CR Candidates

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2 of 2