

## A Summer of Growth and Achievement: Austin Mizen's Internship Journey with Baker Construction

The ACI Foundation's 2024-2025 Baker Student Fellowship recipient, Austin Mizen from Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, USA, had a remarkable opportunity to intern with Baker Construction during the summer of 2024.

### Diverse portfolio of projects

Throughout his internship, Mizen's work spanned several high-profile projects, primarily based in Cleveland, OH, with a brief stint in Buffalo, NY, USA. His role as a Co-Op Project Engineer involved him in the Sherwin-Williams global headquarters project in downtown Cleveland, comprising a 38-story skyscraper and a bridge-connected parking garage. He had the opportunity to contribute to the construction of the John Carroll University Athletic Wellness & Event Center, a comprehensive facility featuring an indoor track, wrestling area, basketball courts, and large event space. During his 1-week stint in Buffalo, Mizen worked on the New Highmark Stadium, which is on track to open in Fall 2026 as the home of the Buffalo Bills NFL football team.

While it was exciting to apply his knowledge and skills to these high-profile projects, Mizen's most rewarding moment was completing his first project from start to finish. It was a charity project at East Technical High School, Cleveland, OH. "I had a meeting with the school to discuss their needs and ideas. I had to get commitments from vendors in the area to supply all labor, materials, and equipment. I designed the patio's size and shape based on the customer's needs and vendor's commitment," he explained. From that point forward, he was the Superintendent, Project Manager, and Project Coordinator on this project. "It was a unique experience for a co-op, and I learned so much. Seeing people using the finished project, like sitting on the benches I helped design, was incredibly gratifying," he remarked.

### The day-to-day and mentorship

Mizen's daily tasks included material tracking, time logging, closing Procore Punch List/rolling construction list items, obtaining vendor quotes for materials, organizing vendor prices in Microsoft Excel, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) submittals, meeting planning, and building permits. He worked closely with project managers. "They taught me everything I needed to know in the office, and the foremen from previous summers provided on-site training. Their guidance was invaluable," Mizen remarked.

His experience underscored the importance of mentorship for professional development. "For being as young as I am



Austin Mizen at work during his internship with Baker Construction



Mizen contributed to construction of the New Highmark Stadium

and with as little experience as I have, I'm very happy with the responsibility they've entrusted me with," he said. "I always had those guys who have been around the block with different projects to help me if I had a question or to correct me if I was doing something that could cause issues later on."

### Rewarding experience

Reflecting on his internship, Mizen noted, "It exceeded my expectations. Many internships can feel like rolling the dice, but this experience was different. I was given responsibilities that challenged me and allowed me to grow." His experience with Baker Construction highlights the transformative power of hands-on experience, mentorship, and a supportive professional environment. "It has been a pleasure having Austin on the Baker Team," Tonya Beesley, Regional Manager, Talent Management, said. "His energy and positive attitude have been refreshing. He is willing to do whatever is needed to help the project succeed. We believe he has a bright future in front of him." His journey not only highlights personal achievement but also showcases the value of collaborative efforts in the construction industry.

## Donor Spotlight: Tim Cost



Cost

Tim Cost's journey within ACI and the ACI Foundation is a testament to his deep-rooted passion for the concrete industry and unwavering commitment to its advancement. From his early days as a civil engineering student at Mississippi State University (MSU), Mississippi State, MS, USA, Cost has consistently recognized the value of ACI resources.

"Seems like I've always been familiar with ACI since civil engineering students are introduced to ACI resources in their coursework, even back in the 1970s, when I was in school," he recalled. However, it wasn't until 1986, when his career path led him into the concrete and cement industries, that he truly began to immerse himself in ACI activities.

A Fellow of ACI, Cost's involvement with the Institute has been extensive and impactful. He has served on numerous ACI committees and is currently a member of ACI Committee 325, Concrete Pavements, and ACI Subcommittee 325-D, Proportioning for Pavements. Notably, he was Chair of ACI Committee 330, Concrete Parking Lots and Site Paving, for 6 years during the 2000s. His dedication to these committees has not only enriched his professional growth but also

contributed significantly to ACI and the industry.

Over the years, Cost has closely followed the progress of the ACI Foundation, particularly its scholarship programs, fellowships, and sponsored research. "I've kept up with the ACI Foundation through articles in *CI* and other news, and more recently began getting more involved when I became aware of the excellent progress with scholarship programs and sponsored research and fellowships," he stated. He has witnessed firsthand the positive impact these programs have had on young researchers and industry professionals, many of whom have gone on to make significant contributions to the field.

Cost's own experiences with the ACI Foundation have been profoundly rewarding. He recently presented his work at a Foundation-sponsored Concrete Innovation Forum and was tremendously impressed with the content from the other participants. "This kind of activity can significantly benefit ACI and its members," he noted. The valuable information shared through Foundation activities has not only benefited his work but has also inspired additional research and study within ACI committees.

Cost's career is marked by his dedication to solving complex concrete construction challenges and his passion for research. His work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Waterways Experiment Station (now the Engineer Research

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and Development Center [ERDC]), Portland Cement Association (PCA), and the concrete and cement industries has involved extensive technical services, troubleshooting, and collaboration with academia and other researchers. He fondly recalled relationships developed through his ACI involvement, which not only contributed to his professional development but also resulted in many long-lasting personal relationships that have made his career memorable.

One notable experience from the early 2000s involved addressing severe concrete set delays and strength development issues in common mixture designs. Through networking with ACI colleagues, Cost was able to develop protocols for avoiding the issue and educating customers, and he helped refine a new testing procedure that was useful in diagnosing the issue. The help he received from experts like Larry Roberts and Paul Sandberg was key in this endeavor. This collaborative effort ultimately led to the development of an ASTM Standard Practice document on evaluating hydrating cementitious mixtures, now known as ASTM C1753/C1753M.

Cost's work on portland-limestone cement and the influence of finely ground limestone on concrete performance attributes is another example of helping advance industry technology. He credited networking with experts like Dale Bentz and Doug Hooton with much of his success and noted that collaboration with other professionals in ACI committee work, which is critical to the development of credible technical documents, also provides valuable opportunities to learn from and share information with experts.

Reflecting on his career, Cost pointed out, "The concrete industry provided me a great and satisfying career—one in which I always felt good about the contributions of what I was doing for society. I feel that it's important to give back." Tim and his wife, Linda, are committed to leaving a lasting legacy through their estate planning. They have planned for their resources to be sustained beyond their lifetimes, ensuring that their donations will continue to benefit future generations. "Naturally, there are family members we want to include, but I think I owe it to my profession and the institutions that contributed to my development to give back and to support future generations," he explained. Tim and Linda Cost have included the ACI Foundation in their legacy giving, creating a gift plan with the ACI Foundation to support future student leaders and programs. They encourage ACI friends and colleagues to consider including the ACI Foundation in their wills and estate planning. They have also included the MSU Foundation, creating a gift plan for support of the Construction Materials Research Center of the MSU Richard A. Rula School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, another organization he feels passionate about.

Cost's involvement with ACI has been a cornerstone of his

professional journey. He is grateful for the opportunities ACI has provided for his continued education and professional development. He views the ACI Foundation as the perfect vehicle through which he can give back in support of meaningful research and the education of future industry professionals.

Cost's story serves as an inspiring reminder of the importance of mentorship, community, and legacy within the concrete industry. As he aptly put it, "I see the ACI Foundation as the perfect conduit for providing support for students and researchers most likely to enhance the knowledge and sustainable use of concrete in our world and to serve the greater mission of ACI." His legacy of giving back is a call to action for others in the industry to consider including the ACI Foundation in their estate planning, ensuring the continued growth and success of the concrete industry for generations to come.

## Plan Your Legacy

Have you thought about the advancement of the concrete industry in the years to come? The ACI Foundation programs focus on building the future of the concrete industry and rely on organizations and individuals like you who want to pay it forward and give back to the industry that you helped advance and for which you have a passion.

- A gift to the ACI Foundation is an opportunity to invest in the next generation of leaders, new technical knowledge, and innovation.
- A gift to the ACI Foundation as part of your financial plan, whether through your estate, will, donor-advised fund, cash, stocks, bonds, insurance, or other retirement assets, will carry your technical legacy into the future of the concrete industry.

It's never too early to plan your legacy. To start the conversation, contact Kari Martin, ACI Foundation Fundraising Manager, at +1.248.848.3757 or [kari.martin@acifoundation.org](mailto:kari.martin@acifoundation.org).

## Tribute Donations

Honor the memory of someone who made a significant impact in your life with a tribute donation to the ACI Foundation. Your gift will preserve their legacy while also making a positive impact on the industry. A tribute donation lays the groundwork for a bright future while honoring the past. Donate online at [www.acifoundation.org/giving](http://www.acifoundation.org/giving).