

Michael Taylor ([00:38](#)):

Hello, everybody. This is Michael Taylor and Adam Roseman of the global law firm, Greenberg Traurig. Welcome to the next episode of the Workplace Safety Review podcast. I am the Chair of the GT OSHA Practice Group and am based out of our are Washington DC and Northern Virginia offices.

Michael Taylor ([01:00](#)):

My colleague, Adam, is a member of the GT OSHA Practice Group as well. He is a co-host and he is based out of our Philadelphia office. To learn more about me, Adam or OSHA Practice Group, please feel free to go to www.gtlaw.com where you'll find the information you're looking for.

Adam Roseman ([01:22](#)):

We are really, really lucky today to have with us Brad Giles. He is the principal of Bradley Giles & Associates, and he has more than 40 years of experience in the safety, health, environmental, and security disciplines. Brad joined the American Society of Safety Professionals, or ASSP, which is what we're going to be talking about today, in 1981, which I will concede was well before I was born.

Adam Roseman ([01:50](#)):

In 2019, he returned to the ASSP Board of Directors after serving as a Director at Large from 2015 to 2018. In 2010, he was named the ASSP Fellow for significant contributions to the occupational safety and health profession. He's received the ASSP President's Award twice, and he is currently ASSP's President, and has been since last year.

Adam Roseman ([02:18](#)):

During his long tenure with the ASSP, he has served as the ASSP Foundation Trustee. He's earned the Foundation's Distinguished Service Award, and he is also a professional member of the Snake River Chapter, as well as the construction and management practice specialties. He has served on several committees, including nominations and elections, governance and the student task force. Outside of ASSP, Brad has served as President of the Board of Certified Safety Professionals.

Adam Roseman ([02:50](#)):

Before we start, I would also be remiss if I didn't mention that he played a significant role in recovery activities and developing safety and health plans for the recovery of workers in the wake of the September 11th attacks in New York City.

Adam Roseman ([03:05](#)):

If I'm not mistaken, Brad is coming to us from the great state of Idaho where he is an avid outdoors man. Brad, welcome so much to the Work Place Safety Review podcast. Thank you for coming on.

Brad Giles ([03:17](#)):

Thank you, Adam, for the opportunity to talk to you all.

Adam Roseman ([03:20](#)):

Let's hop right into it. Let's inform our listeners when and why was the American Society of Safety Professionals founded?

Brad Giles ([03:31](#)):

It goes back to 1911. You may remember, or heard about it, but there was a large fire that killed almost 150 individuals. It was a 10 story building. A lot of it was mostly women and children. They had the doors were locked, or they were doors that opened inwards. They didn't have access to get help to them. It was a big garment industry activity off of that, and that's what generated the whole national outcry for taking a look at industrial safety aspects and how you protect employees. That was really the genesis of it. Here we are a hundred years later on what we've done. We came a long way.

Michael Taylor ([04:16](#)):

What would you say actually defines ASSP?

Brad Giles ([04:20](#)):

What defines it? It's our membership. I mean, that's really our greatest strength that is our members. We have a very diverse group of people in a lot of different industries and a lot of different backgrounds that come in and they join together through ASSP.

Brad Giles ([04:35](#)):

We're the oldest safety organization. We have currently about 36,000 members. Majority of those are North America based, but we do have international folks that they're involved with the aspect of it. But I think the ability to network and share has been a lot of the benefit of this, of the membership and the association,

Brad Giles ([04:57](#)):

We're geared towards professional development. That's really the main thing that we work towards. We do have advocacy programs. We have standards development doing that part, but really what we're focused on is taking those individuals who are in the health and safety environment and making them better as leaders, as making the impact in the safety profession.

Brad Giles ([05:21](#)):

When you look at safety, to me you have to take a look at it like at the large umbrella. It's not just the occupational safety, you'll have industrial hygiene, you'll have occupational medicine, you'll have health physics, fire protection, emergency preparedness. You have a lot of different aspects that are given to those people under that umbrella of safety professional.

Brad Giles ([05:43](#)):

I think it's a very large, diverse group of folks that come in. One of the key things I've tried to focus on is value of our profession. I think the last 24 months has probably been the best demonstration of the value of safety professionals in our career. The safety professionals have continued their day job protecting the health and safety of the employees that they're responsible for.

Brad Giles ([06:07](#)):

They've also had to develop protocols to protect those employees, their families, communities during COVID, at the same time, keeping the doors open for business. I can't imagine what our economy would've been like if the safe professionals hadn't worked out protocols to get the workforce, to keep them engaged over the last 24 months. I think it's been incredible off of that.

Brad Giles ([06:30](#)):

It has given the opportunity to raise the visibility of the safety profession. Where they may have talked to their CEO or chief operations person once a quarter, once a month, the last 24 months they've been talking on a daily or weekly basis. How do you ingrain that into it? Hopefully, as we move forward, the value that those individuals bring on the continuity operations and how you continue to be successful at your business will continue to engage those folks.

Adam Roseman ([07:02](#)):

You talked a little bit about if someone wants to join, what are some of the things that come with memberships? What sort of benefits?

Brad Giles ([07:13](#)):

Well, we provide a number of educational offerings, both podcasts, seminars, doing that part of it, as well as the face-to-face activities, which is probably one of the bigger aspects of it. But again, it goes back to that networking opportunity and working within communities. We have a variety of ways that folks can engage.

Brad Giles ([07:34](#)):

Traditionally, it started out as chapter based, which were geographic, either in a city or a region of a state, as you went through that, Well, travel difficulties and schedules doesn't make it always the best way to engage. But by having the opportunity to have virtual engagements now, that's improved that a bunch.

Brad Giles ([07:55](#)):

We have 18 practice specialties, so that is organizations, communities within ASSP that may deal with engineering, that may deal with risk management, that may deal with industrial hygiene. You have a community there based on a technical basis. We also have a community base called common interest groups. We have four of those. Our emerging professionals is our largest ones, so that's early career folks coming into the business. Doesn't necessarily mean you're right out of college. It just, if you have less than five years in business. We have a lot of second career folks coming in, so get them engaged.

Brad Giles ([08:32](#)):

Women in safety is probably our next largest common interest group. We also have one for Blacks and safety and Hispanics and safety. So it gives them a community of like-minded people to engage with. A lot of different ways to perform your activities here.

Brad Giles ([08:50](#)):

I think one of the biggest benefits that happen is each one of those, the chapters and the other communities, have leadership roles. As I encouraged my early career folks, get involved. Mainly, I encourage them to ASSP, but really get involved in any type of volunteer activity and whether it's our association or one or the other in the health and safety world, get into that. Because the opportunity for developing their leadership and management skills goes a long way for them. It gives them an opportunity to develop those management skills, taking care of budgets, strategic planning, coordinating meetings, doing all that part a lot of times way before they get that opportunity in their day job.

Brad Giles ([09:33](#)):

I know a lot of people, a lot of my colleagues, have given credit to the experience that they've gotten through ASSP to help them get that next job, to demonstrate to their employer or future employer the capabilities that they have, the business acumen that they have. A lot of that gets developed through the volunteer activities with an organization like ASSP.

Brad Giles ([09:57](#)):

My recommendation is always raise your hand. There's always opportunities for you to get involved, and not only does it help to give back, whether it's to your university or society or whatever to make that benefit, but it also makes you a better professional and a better employee. When I tell people the challenges you may have from your supervision taking on additional role, we need to explain those other benefits to them that's going to make them a better employer or better manager, better leader for them.

Adam Roseman ([10:31](#)):

That's great, Brett.

Michael Taylor ([10:32](#)):

This is Mike. How would you describe how ASSP has helped its members and improved workplace safety during the pandemic? Do you see a shift in the way ASSP is going to interact with its members going forward in the future?

Brad Giles ([10:54](#)):

Yes. You have two questions there, and I think the first one, we provided a number of resources that were available for free to all the members, and actually to any safety professional. They could come in on the website and access those.

Brad Giles ([11:09](#)):

We had not only documentation on plans and procedures that they should take a look at considering, but we did a number of podcasts, and those were up in way more than a hundred thousand interactions that went on. We provided a lot of that service as we went to that.

Brad Giles ([11:28](#)):

The networking opportunities, especially when you took a look at the practice specialties, when people worked in a common industry. If they might have been in manufacturing, might have been in construction, might have been in a different work environment, they were able to communicate back and forth what some of the best practices were. It gave them a great platform to network with colleagues.

Brad Giles ([11:54](#)):

What we found out was, safety's not proprietary, and especially with something like the pandemic, sharing thoughts and processes, what worked or what didn't work, was one of the biggest values that could have happened. I think not only, Mike, did we give them technical resources to help them do better and not have to recreate the wheel, but also to give them people to talk with.

Brad Giles ([12:19](#)):

I think our past president, Deb Roy, her background was an occupational nurse. She was exactly the right person to be leading ASSP at the time you went through the pandemic. She's recognized as one of the most knowledgeable health and safety professionals related to communicable diseases. Having her lead our organization and provide I don't know how many different webcasts and presentations she did over the last two years, and continues to do, to help our membership in the safety profession, know how to handle the pandemic, what's coming up, as well as some best practices.

Brad Giles ([13:01](#)):

I think we were ideally suited to have Deb Roy help us out as we went through that. She was also referenced by Wall Street Journal. When they wanted a quotes related to occupation safety and COVID, Deb Roy was the go to person as we went through that.

Brad Giles ([13:19](#)):

Now, how has that changed us, Mike? Before, we were traditionally more face-to-face activities. Our engagements, our professional development activities were face-to-face, and we had been looking at the time COVID came on about trying to expand our capability, have better ways to engage our folks. But that was more of a two to three year plan.

Brad Giles ([13:46](#)):

In 2020, when COVID came in hot and heavy, we had our Professional Development Conference scheduled for June down in Orlando. COVID came in, hit pretty hard in March, April. We made a pivot from a face-to-face engagement to a virtual engagement. The staff did a great job of redirecting all that and put together a very great conference for us virtually.

Brad Giles ([14:16](#)):

We realized the benefits of that as we've gone through a couple things. We do a Professional Development Conference and we do something called Safety Focus. Safety Focus, right, is going on right now. It is being conducted out of Phoenix. This week was virtual and in person. Next week, be all virtual. What we saw last year in our Safety Focus activities was 70% of the attendees were new attendees to Safety Focus.

Brad Giles ([14:44](#)):

We had a similar number for Austin in September when we did our PDC. We did an in person and a virtual, so we had about 2,500 people attend in person and about 2,500 attend virtually. What we found is, a number of our membership have budgets for education. They may not have a budget for travel, so we've opened this part up. We've seen that increase in those operations. Like I said, 70% of the people at Safety Focus had never been there before because they didn't have travel budget.

Brad Giles ([15:18](#)):

It's given us the ability to expand our reach. We do two major conferences a year internally, and that's the Future Safety Leaders Conference, which we invite and host student members from about a hundred plus universities to come in and then participate for three days on some development activities to get through there. This has given us the ability to more than double or almost triple the number of students that participate because the travel restrictions are gone.

Brad Giles ([15:49](#)):

We do something called our Leadership Conference, which takes chapters and community leaders within the society and helps them become better management tools in the society as well as out in their day job. We more than doubled that number. That was typically about 250. We went almost to 550 last October. I think it's given us a lot more ability to provide outreach and contact and engage our employees and bring those values to them that we haven't had in the past.

Brad Giles ([16:21](#)):

I think that's one of the benefits that was driven by the COVID. Two years ago, I couldn't tell you what Zoom was, and here it is, it's a daily activity. I can't imagine how our economy could have survived without something like Zoom on how we're engaging with others and learning and doing all those different things. We're not sitting idle.

Adam Roseman ([16:50](#)):

Brett, let me switch gears real quick. I mean, OSHA obviously has national workplace safety standards that companies have to comply with, but ASSP is also involved in developing workplace safety standards. Can you explain the difference there and talk a little bit about ASSP's role in that?

Brad Giles ([17:10](#)):

Yeah. We're involved in the voluntary consensus standards. That's pretty much taking what is viewed as best practices in industry and trying to put those into a workable, concise way to share those, and we're able to do that internally. You utilize a lot of your subject matter experts to go through and address the problem, and they put the together the consensus standards.

Brad Giles ([17:37](#)):

Whereas, OSHA has standards that may take five, ten, fifteen years to update. The majority of the things that are in the OSHA standards go back to 1971, haven't been updated. As they've taken a look at a few different components within that, it's taken years and years and maybe never getting published, not getting the consensus that you need.

Brad Giles ([18:06](#)):

What we work on is voluntary. It's best practices. How do we help employers do better? The thing about it is, the small employer can utilize those. They've seen what the larger employers have done to get that, to develop it, and they get the benefit of that. It helps everyone as we go through that. It also lets you know that you're not the only one out there doing it. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, and you see the benefits on utilizing those best practices and standards to make your company better.

Brad Giles ([18:41](#)):

What happens off of that? You protect your people better. You got less injuries, your productivity is better, your profitability is better. I mean, those things are all tied into it, so the better you can do to support your employees, get them engaged, to protect them from their health and safety hazards, it's going to make you a better, stronger business.

Michael Taylor ([19:02](#)):

Interesting. Brett, what one last question. What would you say are the main areas of focus for ASSP in 2022?

Brad Giles ([19:14](#)):

Well, 2022, a couple things is continuing our education offerings as we go through that. How are we switching that up? Like I said, right now we're actively engaged with a number of individuals in Phoenix doing face-to-face training, and we've got to continue to provide those things. What's the new aspects of it for them to go through?

Brad Giles ([19:38](#)):

We have to continue to help companies because COVID is not over. The pandemic's not over. We've got to have them prepared, not only to finish up this one, but they got to be prepared for the next one. No matter what we think, something similar will rise its head, two, three, five years down the road. That's one of the things that my colleagues said, "Man, we threw away our pandemic plan after Avian Flu or some of the other things and we had to recreate the wheel." Well, I mean, we want to have people get prepared and ready to go going forward.

Brad Giles ([20:12](#)):

We've really been making an active push on our diversity equity inclusion. We developed a task force two years ago. We've had recommendations come in from them on how to do better to bring more diverse group of folks into our industry and give them opportunities. I really think that's been happening. When you take a look 50 years ago, when OSHA came in, they took the people who were doing other jobs. They took someone who was involved as a crafts person or a union representative or someone who may have been a paramedic or a medic, and they were a safety professional.

Brad Giles ([20:52](#)):

It was all on more reactive, so you're treating the employees who are injured, not necessarily preventing injuries. We've move moved from that standpoint all the way through. At that time, there were a very limited number of academic programs that could help you get ready. Now there's about 140 accredited academic programs out there to help provide that basis for individuals to come in.

Brad Giles ([21:23](#)):

Developing the pipeline. It can't just be the academic backgrounds that this is going to bring people into the safety profession. We need about 5,000 new state professionals every year. Academic programs can only do maybe 30, 40% of that, so we have to look at other avenues. The ones I think are the best for us to do is take our veterans. Our veterans come in, we owe it to them first for what they've done for country. But we take them from protecting our country last year to protecting our employees this year.

Brad Giles ([21:53](#)):

They have a lot of the innate skills that we want. They've been trained in leadership. They've been trained in communication. They know how to plan and execute. That's a key component, I think, is bringing our veterans in. The problem is they and their counselors don't know safety profession is a viable option for them, so we're trying to educate them to get into it. But I think the veterans are a key place for us to be going.

Brad Giles ([22:16](#)):

It's also taking a look at the crafts individuals, the people who work every day out turning the wrench as you get into it. I've explained to folks that they have the opportunity now to develop their self, to step into that role. They don't have to leave their job. We have a number of accredited academic programs that are distance learning. Today, you can get your Associates, your Bachelor's, Master's, and even a PhD virtually. You're able to continue your job, support your family at home, develop an opportunity for a long term rewarding career in safety and do that part.

Brad Giles ([22:54](#)):

I think the options that we have on that pipeline are pretty significant. I think those are really the things that I think we're working on the most, Mike, and we're where we're looking to go.

Michael Taylor ([23:07](#)):

This has been terrific, Brad. We really appreciate you being on the show and talking about all the benefits associated with being a part of ASSP, and thank you very, very much.

Brad Giles ([23:19](#)):

Oh, you're more than welcome. Happy to talk about it. It's a rewarding profession. As I tell people, you're not just making an impact on that individual employee, you're impacting their family and you're impacting generations. If we can help that part of, it's great, and the more we can do to make our practitioners better, the more people benefit by it. But I appreciate the opportunity and very proud of this Association that we have and what we're able to do to help out not only our members, but the economy.

Michael Taylor ([23:55](#)):

Terrific. Stay tuned everyone for the next episode of the Workplace Safety Review podcast. Stay safe out there, America.