



Sustainably Reliable

William (Bill) Biederman 1950 - 2011

For more than a quarter of a century, Bill Biederman, was the quiet visionary who oversaw the growth and environmental progress of Seattle Steam; a private utility with roots dating to 1890 and a long history of providing thermal energy and, in its earlier days, electricity to Seattle.

Bill's stewardship began very unexpectedly in 1985. That was the year Seattle Steam was purchased by Robert Brumley, a Chicago based real estate developer. When Brumley died suddenly a short time later, Bill Biederman, then a bright young corporate attorney for Brumley became the managing trustee. Bill thrived in his leadership role. He focused on Seattle Steam, seeing that innovation and investment could lead the company into a new world of energy efficiency, energy independence and renewable fuels.

The challenges were enormous. In 1985 the existing system was ready for extensive and expensive upgrades. New earthquake codes required reinforcing the steam generation plants. Asbestos insulation needed to be eliminated in steam manholes and plants, along with other hazardous materials. And standby electrical generators were needed to upgrade power supply reliability as the city grew. Bill's steadfast leadership ensured that the investments were made so that Seattle Steam could continue its remarkable record of reliability. These investments also allowed the utility to add new customers and continue its steady growth



Bill passed away on October 8th, 2011. During his tenure he not only took the company through many challenges but he made deep and lasting friendships with many of the employees. His vision of a strong Seattle Steam never faltered over time. His last decision, and perhaps his most important one, to transition the company from being a fossil based energy provider to a renewably fueled energy provider. This decision positioned the company as a leader in sustainable energy supply to our community – one he grew to enjoy and love. Bill left a legacy that was reflected in June 2011 when the Seattle Steam Company named its new wood fuel storage and handling building the Biederman Pavilion.

Bill was working on Seattle Steam's next steps in its sustainable energy plans. He encouraged the application for an ARRA grant to develop a combined heat and power plant to supply high efficiency energy to Seattle much as it did in 1890's. Seattle Steam was awarded the largest grant in its class – \$18 million. This project is underway, beating many development hurdles and, if successful, this next innovation will be in service in 2014 and would result in a reduction of fossil based carbon emissions when combined with the biomass plant by close to 85%

Bill lived and worked in the Chicago area for most of his life, but was a frequent visitor to Seattle and Seattle Steam. He was energetic, fearless, forward thinking, competitive and fair. We are grateful for his years of service and inspiration. Bill is survived by his wife Pat Schulman and their three adult children, Lucy, Sam and Felix.