

# A SHORT HISTORY OF ORC – 50 YEARS OF INSPIRING CONFIDENCE IN PROGRESS

by Cathy Colan Muth, CEO



O. R. Colan Associates was founded by my father, Owen Richard Colan, J.D., in 1969 and this year ORC is celebrating our 50th Anniversary!

A veteran of WWII, he was educated at Georgetown Law School and discovered the right of way business when he was hired to purchase right of way for the original WV Turnpike (now I-77 from Charleston to Bluefield).

The first two decades of ORC were built on our technical expertise in the practical implementation of the Uniform Act (URA) – primarily for highways and airports. As an attorney he understood the URA and became recognized as a gifted teacher who taught others how to implement this important legislation. He pioneered the concept of using

consultants for the right of way phase of highway programs.

When my father passed in 1989, management of the company fell to me. It was not a smooth transition. Our bookkeeping was 2 years behind and I could not get a line of credit. I used the life insurance I received to make the first payroll. I had a different vision for our company than the two partners I inherited, so I bought back their stock over a period of two years. Fortunately, we had several project managers who had been with the company for more than ten years and I made them our “Senior Managers” to form a team that advised me for the next ten years.

The next decade (the 1990s) was the era of airports for ORC and in the following decade (the 2000s) the Design-Build Highways became a big part of our added revenue.

Our technical expertise in the Uniform Act was the foundation of our success and in 2001 we formed a separate company called ORC Training. This company later became a division of O.R. Colan Associates, LLC after our reorganization in 2017.

After wearing many hats for many years, I realized that I wanted to build an executive team that could lead the company someday. Today I am proud to know that ORC is led by one of the best Leadership Teams in the industry.

ORC has continued to grow and adapt to change as the transportation and infrastructure needs of our county have evolved. Within the last four years our company has become one of the fastest growing right of way companies in the utility sector. This year we are opening a division for Disaster Recovery and Resiliency.



Owen Richard Colan, J.D.  
1922 – 1989

In 1969 our country was building an interstate highway system. Today the nation is focused on building an interstate transportation system for energy as well as development of renewable energy and ORC is at the forefront.

Our company is proud to be part of building the infrastructure of the United States. We have worked in every state and every territory, providing right of way acquisition, relocation assistance, program management or training. We know that the strength of our company is rooted in our values and the realization that our people are why we are successful. We are excited to have reached this 50-year landmark in our history and look forward to what lies ahead.

*inspiring confidence in progress...*