# Patrick J. Ruane, Inc.

*In the early 1900s, construction had begun on the New York Stock Exchange, the nation's first Rose Bowl game was played, and the Wright brothers successfully tested their airplane at Kittyhawk. People went to great lengths to achieve their dreams in this era, including two young brothers with the last name of Ruane. During this time, they set out from their home in Ireland to America. Upon arriving in San Francisco, they joined the Plasterers and Shophands Local Union 66.*

Patrick and Malachy Ruane might not have known then that they would eventually create their own plaster company in 1940 — or that the following family generations would someday operate the company that helped shape "The City by the Bay," with buildings such as the Golden Gate Theater, Coit Tower and San Francisco City Hall.

Jim Ruane Sr., nephew of original owner Patrick and son of subsequent owner Malachy, started out driving trucks and running scaffolding in the summers of the mid-1960s. He has been the company president since 1975. Now the company, as a modern, full-service lath, plaster and drywall contracting firm, influences the contemporary California urban landscape. Its services include historical renovation; Venetian, Japanese and synthetic finishes; acoustical plaster systems; structural fireproofing; in-house casting; metal stud framing; and documentation services. The firm's employees vary in number from approximately 50 to 75, depending upon how complicated the current projects are and how many projects are being carried out simultaneously. Jim Ruane Jr., Malachy's grandson, follows the family tradition of working in the business as senior estimator and project manager.

50 United Nations Plaza, San Francisco, California.

"With our experience, we're noted as experts in the plaster field," Jim Ruane Sr. said.

"We believe that challenges bring opportunities. Many people don't understand the complexity of plaster materials and waterproofing details, but that's where we come in. Patrick J. Ruane, Inc. has an experienced, long-term crew and staff that's very hands-on. We handle our own estimating and project management from onset to completion," he added.

Those skills can be seen in Yosemite National Park's Ahwahnee Hotel, as one example. The interiors of the luxury destination hotel and national historic landmark required the contractor to research the original materials used and to formulate and manufacture the base coat and finish materials in-house to duplicate the original textures. Work was performed in numerous guest rooms, hallways, meeting rooms and large public places. Every detail required considerable skill to refinish this building.

Today, more than 30 landmark and award-winning structures have been brought to life by the efforts of Patrick J. Ruane, Inc. The firm's leadership and personnel continue to reach for new horizons, just as their founders did before them. Among the firm's wall and ceiling accomplishments are the interfaith Stanford Memorial Church in the South Bay and various projects in Southern California, such as the glamorous Regent Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills. The firm's proven ability to use both traditional methods and the latest techniques has helped the company extend beyond the boundaries of the Golden State.

"For the Iolani Palace in Honolulu (another national historic landmark, originally built in 1879 and the only royal palace in the United States), the San Francisco Heritage highly recommended us for this project. So did renowned architects in the area. We flew to the palace and met with facility managers and architects. It didn't take them long to realize they had the right contractor," Ruane Sr. explained.

The company, however, hasn't forgotten its roots with its expansion outside of California. One of its more recent projects is 350 Bush Street in San Francisco, at the site of an old mining exchange and original stock exchange dating from 1923. Work on the project began in October 2014 and has an estimated completion date within the

Porziuncola replica, San Francisco, California.

next several months. "This intricate project involves the documentation, removal and reinstallation of the original entry and trading room cast plaster ceilings as well as new in-house castings of the originals that are too delicate to be reinstalled. The original architect for this structure was Timothy Pflueger, who just happened to be a neighbor of my Uncle Patrick," Ruane Sr. said.

He added, "Another project of which we are extremely proud is the replica of the Porziuncola adjacent to St. Francis of Assisi church in San Francisco's North Beach. This project prompted a trip to Assisi, Italy, to measure and document the original structure built in 1209. We worked closely with the general contractor and other subcontractors in the replication of the original run, cast and surface texture plasters."

In discussing the company's strengths, Ruane Sr. summarized the value of being a WACA member: "It's afforded us expanding opportunities with technical issues and compliance. Being a WACA member has given us a much broader and deeper influence in labor negotiations and trust management. And we've received industry recognition through the association. We accepted WACA's 2014 Construction Excellence Award (CEA) for Historical Restoration for our work on the UN Plaza, and the 2014 CEA for Project of the Year – Interior Over $500,000 for the same project. Another CEA we received was in 2011 for Commercial Exterior, for updating the original 1850s façade of the Casa Grande Museum in Santa Clara County."

WACA, in turn, appreciates the advantage of having Jim Ruane Sr. on board — literally. Ruane was one of the original board directors to create the Wall And Ceiling Alliance and now serves as vice president. His varied board experiences in the industry have contributed to the successful steering and shaping of WACA's labor negotiation committees, among other leading services.

Ruane Jr. added, "I am proud to be part of a family business that has helped build San Francisco. Our employees take great pride in preserving unique and historic structures for future generations."

This year, Patrick J. Ruane, Inc. celebrates its 75th anniversary. And chances are, Patrick and Malachy would be smiling if they could see how far their family business has expanded now.

# 2015 WALL & CEILING EXPO

## July 31, 2015, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton

### *Free admission!*

**Registration required.** To register, visit the event calendar page on our website, www.wallandceilingalliance.org, and find this event.

- **Can't-miss exhibits**
- **Live demonstrations**
- **Product showcases**
- **Informative seminars**

The Wall & Ceiling Expo is one of the few regional programs intended for the wall and ceiling community. The expo is designed to build connections in a face-to-face environment and get the most up-to-date information available in our industry.

***Who Should Attend?*** Architects, designers, building officials, contractors, general contractors, suppliers and dealers, manufacturers, specifiers, industry professionals, and field craftsmen, along with construction management students and anyone interested in this field.

If you are part of our Northern California community, you need to attend!

***Exhibitor and Sponsorship Opportunities Available.*** Get your company recognized; booth space is available to demonstrate your products and/or services. This venue is a great opportunity to reach out to people in the wall and ceiling industry. To participate, download an exhibitor and sponsorship registration form by visiting our website at www.wallandceilingalliance.com and find this event on the event calendar page.

If you're interested in partnering with us or would like more event information, email our technical representatives, Ben Duterte at ben@wcbureau.org or Mike Nonn at mike@wcbureau.org, or call (925) 600-0475.