

Denny Hellesvig was born in Minnesota, moved with his family to Eugene in 1948, and has been here ever since. His interest in architecture dates to the 9th grade, led to a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1960 and an Oregon license in 1964. He practiced until 1991 when he moved to the Building and Permit Services of the City of Eugene. Along the way Denny and his wife, Lynne, moved to South Eugene in 1979 and have lived within four blocks of the Masonic Cemetery since then.

As Eugene's Building Official, he worked with the city's historic planner, Ken Guzowski, who was an early cemetery board member. Upon retirement in 1991, Denny was invited by Ken to join the EMCA board where he served for 17 years.

Though he held titles on the board as archivist, treasurer and vice president, it was his role as project manager that deeply involved him in restoration projects throughout the cemetery. His first major project was leading the restoration of all seventy-seven stained glass windows in Hope Abbey over a fourteen-year period. His leadership and talent as an architect led to other major projects such as designing the Garden Cottage, an historically appropriate Hope Abbey entrance porch with wheelchair ramps, and efforts at restoring and cleaning tombstones. Denny discusses this and many other items in his oral interview.