

## 2011 Wisconsin Family Business of the Year Award Winners

### **C.G. Schmidt, Inc., Milwaukee**

Grand Award – Large Company

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This ninety year old family business is influenced by their stated values of Caring, Innovation, Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and “No Surprises”.

It began in 1907 when nineteen year-old Charles Schmidt came to the United States from his home in Holland. As a maintenance worker for a local Milwaukee brewery, he learned the concrete, masonry and carpentry trades. In 1920 he started Charles Schmidt & Sons, beginning a tradition of excellence in the construction industry.

In 1929 Charles’ son, Charles G. Schmidt inherited the company and expanded through diversification. Charles G Schmidt’s son, Richard became Chairman in 1992, having taken the firm from ten million to one hundred thirty six million dollars. Now, the fourth generation is running the company, lead by Rick Schmidt, the great grandson of the founder. Family leaders in the business also include David Schmidt, Director of Corporate and Industrial Business Development, Eric, Senior Project Manager and Mark Schmidt, General Superintendant and Quality Control Manager.

Rick’s son, Ryan recently joined the firm after graduating from Marquette with a degree in Civil Engineering. Another of Rick’s sons, Brad, also attended Marquette and will have to work outside the company before joining the firm. A succession plan is in place to continue the Schmidt name.

There is a four-step process in the succession plans for those who want to earn a leadership position in the firm:

- Earn a relevant college degree and spend summers working in different departments
- Spend time working outside the company
- Demonstrate necessary capabilities and intention to stay
- Customized career paths are created for each individual

The Schmidt brothers view the employees as an extension of their family. To make sure every member of the corporate family has a voice, a management team of non-Schmidt family members contributes to the future and the direction of the firm.

The Schmidts are good corporate citizens. Every year, CG Schmidt sets aside 4% of earnings before bonuses and taxes for a philanthropic budget. Twice the

national average. This budget covers involvement with several charitable causes including well over one hundred different non-profit groups, as well as in-house initiatives that encourage employees and other companies to get involved in their community. The company provides HERO time to staff that allows them to volunteer during work hours with pay and without using their paid time off.

Last year the company called on all employees to brainstorm new business practices that could help the company stay competitive and evolve during the economic downturn. Several initiatives are now being implemented including LEAN practices, Energy Management services and Pre-Referendum services.

They are one of only two Wisconsin firms in the state to obtain OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program, a commitment to safety.

They employ 25 LEED accredited professionals and have built 11 LEED certifiable facilities.

In the last ten years CG Schmidt revenue has grown three hundred percent. They were ranked amongst the largest Milwaukee area construction firms, and they were ranked in Engineering News Records Top 100 Construction Managers in the nation.

## **Hellenbrand, Inc., Waunakee**

Grand Award – Medium Company

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The Grand Award Winner in the Medium company Category was established in 1967, and is truly built around people. Started by Jim and Florence Hellenbrand, Hellenbrand Incorporated of Waunakee was built on a foundation of family, hard work and ethics. The elements of this foundation have been passed on to their children and the employees who had an opportunity to work directly with Jim and Florence. That feeling of family continues to this day.

Hellenbrand is a leading manufacturer of Water treatment equipment in the country. They design residential, commercial and industrial water treatment systems and market them from Wisconsin. Their products include water softeners, their patented Iron Curtain Filtration System, Carbon filters, Drinking Water Systems, High Purity Water Systems and Brine Reclaim and Water Management Systems.

Hellenbrand is squarely focused on their employees. Happy events that occur in the life of an employee are celebrated with their work family. Whether it is a new grandchild, a special birthday, or a wedding. When a crisis occurs in the life of an employee, you see the family band together to do what needs to be done to help out.

Hellenbrand is a solid citizen of Waunakee. Over the last 43 years, Hellenbrand has contributed both openly and quietly behind the scenes to the Waunakee Fire Department, Waunakee Police Department, St John's Parish and School, Waunakee Community School District, and various families in times of need.

Since beginning in 1967, the company has added divisions and services to serve their expanding market. They now operate from multiple facilities in Waunakee. In the last six years, they expanded from operating primarily in the Midwest with 10 employees to nationwide with 61 employees and dealers in over 30 states.

Florence grew up in a family business. Jim grew up on the family farm. They instilled their work ethic, customer service, and pride in starting a business from scratch in their children. Their sons, Jeff and Paul are now co-owners of the business. The next generation is in the wings having obtained college degrees, and a mandatory 3-5 years of work experience outside the family business.

## **Botham Vineyards, Inc., Barneveld**

Grand Award – Small Company

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Starting a business completely from scratch is a daunting enough task. But, with a passion for the land, and a desire to keep family together, you start a vineyard... That is what Peter and Sarah Botham did in 1989 when they started Botham Vineyards.

In the nineteen sixties, seventies, and eighties the Botham family raised registered Hereford cattle on a farm in Barneveld. Peter developed a love for the land and farming, working there through high school. After graduating from the UW Madison with a degree in history, Peter moved to Maryland to attend the Maryland Institute of Art. It was while working at a vineyard and winery in northern Maryland that he learned grape-growing and wine making.

When Peter returned to Wisconsin in 1989, he blended his love for the land with his knowledge as a vintner. He transformed the then idle farm into a commercial vineyard and winery. The existing farm buildings were converted to serve the business. The barn was converted to the tasting room and a cattle shed became the winery.

Fifteen acres of vines were planted and nurtured. By 1992, with the help of friends and lots of extended family, the first crop was harvested, but the winery was not ready and the crop was sold to another area winery. The 1993 crop was harvested and wine was made and ready to serve in the tasting room in the 1994 season, starting them on the path to success that has included winning over three hundred medals in national and international competition for their wines.

In the early days, the business relied entirely on the good graces of family to operate. Sarah managed the packaging, marketing, media and public relations. Peter made the wine and ran the business, and, with the help of his father, managed the vineyard.

Peter and Sarah were married in the vineyard near the trellis where the very first vine was planted. Mills, their thirteen year old son, is a big part of the business, running tours, doing maintenance, and appearing in radio ads. Everything but pouring and selling wine.

Peter and Sarah structured their lives and the business so they could raise Mills at home, no day care – ever. The family lives in the original farmhouse on the vineyard grounds.

From the beginning they worked hard to embed Botham Vineyards as a business and a brand in the community, not only to foster goodwill but to have a positive economic impact as well. Their seasonal help has been comprised exclusively of local high school and college students and their tasting room staff is hired from

within a twenty mile radius. During the harvest, their employee ranks grow to approximately forty, and include UW Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences students and area day laborers.

As good citizens, they host, sponsor and provide product to countless charitable events each year. They have been recognized as a “Heart of Gold” sponsor for Saint Mary’s Hospital, having contributed in excess of eleven thousand dollars to the Infant Intensive Care Unit alone. Sarah holds board positions for the Barneveld Library and Common Cause Wisconsin.

Their business has grown from little to nothing in the first few years to over six hundred thousand dollars. As for succession, the only family member who could possibly succeed Peter and Sarah is their son, Mills. At thirteen, his life is an empty canvas. He has been involved in the business since he could talk and is learning the ropes.

## **The Fireside Dinner Theatre, Fort Atkinson**

### **Special Award - The Show Must Go On**

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The cover letter for this nomination reads “Each of us here is happy to be a part of something very special, every time we come to work.

In nineteen sixty four, Dick and Betty Kloplic's dream was to build a warm and friendly restaurant where people would feel welcome, and want to return. They wanted to raise their children in a small town. They settled in Fort Atkinson. Perhaps if they had known what a big success the Fireside Dinner Theatre would become, they would have built closer to a larger city.

To take a dream of owning your own restaurant and turn it into the number one year-round motor coach destination in Wisconsin is truly remarkable. They did it with hard work, happy employees, and solid values.

There philosophy is that people will come to where they have been invited, and will return to where they have been made to feel welcome. Their motto is “We sell memories”. They started in 1964 with 12 employees. Today it is 275 making it one of the largest employers in Fort Atkinson. They welcome over 100 professional performers into the community every year.

The facility in Fort Atkinson, which has had many additions and renovations includes a 652 seat theatre, four gift shops, and a lounge with dining for up to 1000 guests.

The Kloplic Family's Christian values are evident in how the business is run, as well as the product that is presented to the public. Shows are family-friendly. While dinner theatres were once plentiful throughout the United States, only a handful remain. The Fireside is among the most highly respected.

Dick and Betty retired, and Rick and his wife Jane took over running the business. They were joined by their son Ryan and his wife Kristi in 2009. Ryan has an MBA and experience running an exclusive resort, and Kristi has a degree in Human Resources Management. The next generation is ready to step in when the time is right.

For those who had the privilege of of working for Dick Kloplic, seeing the company into third generation in 2009 helped ease the pain of losing their beloved founder in 2010. Dick and Betty's dream is alive and well.

## **Hunzinger Construction, Milwaukee**

### Special Award - Community Star

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This nomination starts out saying “We have tradition looking over our shoulder and can rest easily at night knowing that the heart of our Mission Statement...”Do the Right Thing” has served us well in the past and will continue to guide us into the future.

It further states: Where Hunzinger Construction is concerned, plan to apply the Family Company designation with a trowel... generously.

Started in 1907 when four brothers, John, Frank, Fred and Charles Hunzinger decided to quit farming and formed JH Hunzinger and Company in Iowa and began building one-room schoolhouses and homes.

In 1928, Frank and Fred struck out for Milwaukee and started Hunzinger Construction Company, first building schools and churches, and later office buildings and manufacturing plants.

Now in the third generation, the company is lead by John and Jim Hunzinger and their brother in law Kevin O’Toole.

With annual revenue exceeding one hundred million dollars, the company consistently ranks among the nation’s top 100 construction management firms.

This one hundred and four year old company is currently preparing the fourth generation of family members to eventually take over.

Hunzinger is a place where people want to work. They boast a lengthy roster of employees whose family members have worked for them for two and three generations. They have a field crew of over two hundred and a professional staff of over 50 construction professionals.

The Hunzinger family has had a strong impact on their communities, and within their industry. They have established scholarships at Marquette and the Milwaukee School of Engineering, and the UW Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning. They have been supporting our troops for more than four years with their Troop Care Package Program and have sent more than thirteen tons of care packages to our troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. And Kevin O’Toole, is currently serving on the National Make-A-Wish Foundation Board of Directors. The company has granted over 90 wishes to date in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

It is with these things in mind that the Judges gave this Special Award to Hunzinger Construction of Milwaukee titled “Community Star”.

## **Rockweiler Insulation, Inc., Waunakee**

Special Award - Hometown Hero

Our first Special Award winner runs on the values of Integrity, Humility, Honesty, Long term Vision, and a Positive Attitude. This is a true small business success story. It is a marriage of quality work, and ethical business practices.

For many years... Gary Rockweiler was a laborer in the insulation industry. In many instances, he was told to sacrifice his personal values of honesty and integrity so his employer would benefit from increased profits. "It wasn't right!"

Gary founded Rockweiler Insulation in 1983 with a promise to always treat customers with respect, and run an honest business. These values, combined with a strong work ethic, have made Rockweiler Insulation one of the largest and most respected insulation contractors in the Greater Madison Area.

Family involvement has always been a big part of the operation. Gary's wife, Jackie, was involved in the business for the first fifteen years in daily operations including accounting, billing and customer service.

While in high school, Gary's two daughters, Renee Wilson and Danielle Larson, have also been involved in the business. Both girls spent hours unloading semis full of insulation. Renee was involved with the company throughout college, and is actively involved in the daily activities of the company as Vice President of Operations. In addition, Pat Harrington, Gary's brother-in-law is a Sales Representative, and Son-in-law, Rich Wilson performs IT consulting and special projects.

Renee is being groomed to take over the family business and there is an impressive program of leadership building and educational opportunities meant to prepare her to not only lead the company, but to continue the legacy of community service.

Rockweiler Insulation has been actively involved in their hometown of Verona, including The Fitchrona EMS, Habitat for Habitat, St Andrews Catholic Church Council, Verona Area Chamber of Commerce, Verona Jaycees, and the Verona Public Library.

## **Standard Process, Inc., Palmyra**

### Special Award - Setting the Gold Standard

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Located in the heart of the Kettle Moraine is a unique family business that was started in 1929. Standard Process, located in Palmyra makes nutritional whole food supplements using many ingredients grown on its 420 acre certified organic farm.

During its eighty-two year history, Standard Process has faced and overcome challenges which include starting the company at the time of a stock market crash and the Great Depression, to struggles with the government over product claims.

Started by Wisconsin native, Dr. Royal Lee, Standard Process Company began in Milwaukee as the Vitamin Products Company. The brand is built on the whole food philosophy and the principles of Dr Lee. The company employs 282 people in the small community of Palmyra. As one of the areas largest employers, they have helped raise the standard of living by continuing to provide good stable jobs.

The family gives generously, and often. Donations are made to area food pantries and other charities. The family matches employee contributions. A few years back they raised funds so the Palmyra Police department could add a narcotics dog to its force.

Over the last few years, as companies faced difficult decisions, the family kept making choices in the employees favor. They had no layoffs, cutbacks, wage freezes, or furlough days throughout the recent recession. The family continues investing in the employees by maintaining employee benefits including annual raises and year-end bonuses, a generous profit-sharing and pension plan, comprehensive medical and dental insurance, subsidized onsite childcare and tuition reimbursement.

The company is lead Charles Dubois, Dr Lee's grand nephew. Charles sister, Mary Dubois-Wisniewski serves as Vice President of Administration, and their mother, Sylvia DuBois serves as Vice President.

As for future leaders emerging from the family, there are nine children in the DuBois and Wisniewski families who are still in the teenage years learning about the family business.