

THE WHOLESALER®

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution

PVF Hall of Fame celebrates seventh year

BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS
PVF and economic analyst

It's with great pride that we unveil the seventh consecutive year of the PVF Hall of Fame. The high standards of distinction achieved in previous years have been maintained by current entries—manufacturer Legend Valve and distributors National Oilwell Varco and Consumers Pipe & Supply. The selection committee of *The Wholesaler* publisher Tom Brown, editorial director Mary Jo Martin, valve industry expert Don Caffee, with myself as chairman, enthusiastically welcome the new entrants.

They now include 14 manufacturers, two association icons and 21 gilt-edged distributor groups. The only unfortunate digression from these otherwise distinguished PVF distributors is US Flow, comprised of four outstanding individual entities that fell prey to the corporate mismanagement, which attempted to take this combined group public and failed. That group totally misunderstood what had made the PE Georgia Group, Mutual Manufacturing & Supply, Plotkin Brothers and Bertsch & Company so successful over the years.

The greatest tribute to the success of all the others is that six of them have been acquired and two others have been in discussion regarding acquisition possibilities. It's no coincidence that



The 2008 inductees into our annual PVF Hall of Fame are (clockwise from top): Michael Abeling, president of Consumers Pipe & Supply; Robert Workman, general manager of National Oilwell Varco; and David Hickman, owner of Legend Valve. Morris R. Beschloss introduces the inductees, each of whom tells his company's story.

Ferguson acquired Frischkorn, Liberty Equipment and Davidson Pipe after they had been inducted in to the Hall of Fame. Or that both McJunkin and Red Man Pipe, charter entries in 2003, were taken over primarily by premier Wall Street investment banker Goldman Sachs. A part of the Red Man Pipe purchase—which ran a close second to McJunkin in PVF sector revenues—was Bear Tubular, which had been considered as a prospect for induction at the time Red Man acquired them, after both they and Ferguson had considered them favorably.

Among the charter manufacturer entries,

we are especially proud of the success of Weldbend, under the seamless control of Jim Coulas Jr. He took over from my dear and close friend, Jimmy's father, James Sr., who died the afternoon of July 4 last year.

Also notable is the success of another wonderful colleague, John Leone, who has recently branched into a full line of cast steel valves. Bill O'Hagan who, we hope, will soon recover from his indisposition, can stand proud over the way he steered Mueller Industries out of bankruptcy after it had been acquired by the Quantum Mutual Fund.

Such famous brand names as premier

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For the first time, people most closely associated with the PVF Hall of Fame inductee companies will tell their own stories. Here *The Wholesaler* presents David Hickman of Legend Valve, Robert Workman of National Oilwell Varco and Michael Abeling of Consumers Pipe and Supply.

Past PVF Hall of Fame Inductees

Manufacturers

Company	Inductee	Year
Bonney Forge	John Leone	2002
Conbraco	Carl Mosack	2002
Crane	Shel Evans	2004
Fisher Controls	Terry Buzbee	2007
Jamesbury	Howard Freeman	2002
Keystone	Galen Brown	2002
Legend Valve	David Hickman	2008
Milwaukee Valve	Herschel Seder	2002
Mueller Industries	Bill O'Hagan	2005
Nibco Inc.	Lee Martin	2002
PVF Roundtable	Sidney Westbrook	2006
VMA	Morris Beschloss	2002
Velan Inc.	Karel Velan	2002
Victaulic	Gary Moore	2007
Watts Industries	Tim Horne	2004
Weldbend	James Coulas Sr.	2002

Distributors

Company	Inductee	Year
Affiliated Distributors	William Weisberg	2006
All-Tex Pipe & Supply	Jill Brock Hurd	2007
Bergen Industrial Supply	James LaPorte	2003
Chicago Tube & Iron	Donald R. McNeeley	2003
Columbia Pipe & Supply	William Arenberg	2005
Consumers Pipe & Supply	Michael Abeling	2008
Davidson Pipe Supply	Peter Davidson	2003
Ferguson		
Commercial & Industrial	Rob Braig	2006
Frischkorn	Jack Clark	2003
F. W. Webb	John Pope	2005
Independent Pipe & Supply	Ed Nierman	2003
Kelly Pipe Co. LLC	Earle Cohen	2003
Liberty Equipment	Larry Senescu	2003
Macomb Pipe & Supply	Bill McGivern	2004
McJunkin	Bernie Wehrle	2003
National Oilwell Varco	Robert Workman	2008
Piping & Equipment Inc.	Gary Cartright	2003
Porter Pipe & Supply	James Porter	2007
Red Man Pipe & Supply	Lew Ketchum	2003
USFlow	Rick Waters	2003
Wilson Supply	Jim Owsley	2004

inductees Conbraco, Crane, Jamesbury, Nibco, Milwaukee, Velan and Watts continue to distinguish themselves as industry leaders.

We are particularly happy with the three newcomers whom we have brought under the magnificent umbrella of the Hall of Fame. They are:

- **Legend Valve** — This is the first full-line global manufacturer of brand-name valves that offers a quality line of overseas products, but meets the highest standards of quality and service, according to the testimony of its distributors and end use customers. Its approvals by contractors and architect/engineers have accelerated; and they are the recipients of substantially additional revenues, provided by their acquired new business, combine with the current PVF sector momentum.

Owner/CEO David Hickman expounds on the unique nature of this “platform” company in the profile on page 3.

- **National Oilwell Varco** — This publicly listed super manufacturing/ refining/distribution concern has joined Wilson Supply as only the second distribution organization among the upstream Hall of Fame entries. It's a segment

that will be more actively focused on in the future, since its involvement in the oil patch, through drilling, refining, transmission and maintenance is becoming increasingly important to the industrial sector. With \$7 billion in distribution revenue generated, it's becoming readily apparent that not paying closer attention to this indispensable subsector has been a PVF industry oversight. General manager Robert Workman's story on page 4 is a gratifying revelation of National Oilwell and its business.

- **Consumer Pipe & Supply** — This Los Angeles-based distributor is an uplifting example of how a family business has grown into a major factor within its Southern California and greater Las Vegas locations. Under the leadership of Michael Abeling, an industry activist, this multi-generational, multi-branch distributor has greatly increased its business and profitability in recent years. It's certainly riding the crest of the wave of increased business in a highly competitive, geographically diverse market area. Mike's well-crafted article on page 6 provides insight into this highly regarded West Coast concern. ■

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Legend Valve

Defining its unique legendary status

BY DAVID HICKMAN
Special to *THE WHOLESALER*

Many times we have been asked why we named the company Legend Valve & Fitting. The answer is simple: the name personified the passion of the founders to create something extraordinary that would long endure the test of time. Founded by entrepreneurial spirits — the late J. Robb Baubie and myself (now the CEO) — a company named “Legend” had already set the bar; it had better live up to the expectations.

Legend recognized that change was in the air. For the first time in our industry, world-class manufacturing was emerging from an unlikely source, outside of

Legend guarantees that our customers' orders will ship 100% complete in 24 hours or we will automatically grant 5% off.

America. Automated casting, forging and assembly processes were being developed in lower cost countries with an eye on the U.S. market. Legend knew that this trend would only accelerate and had the potential to change the face of manufacturing forever.

However, what they were lacking was knowledge-based American ingenuity. Legend knew that if it could integrate its knowledge with these quality processes, and deliver these products to the wholesale market with the shortest lead-time possible and the highest fill-rate achievable, our customers would see the value and they themselves could realize lower costs and greater profitability. So began the quest for gaining greater control of the supply chain.

Legend Valve decided not to follow the lead of others, but to find a way to be different. Instead of becoming simply an “importer,” we decided that we could

actually improve the products by investing in tooling, equipment, engineering and design capabilities. Legend has degreed engineers supported by a team of technicians, including licensed master plumbers. Legend already has several patents and a myriad of newly designed products and ideas we believe will be patentable. Product development and design are geared towards specific market segments including the commercial, industrial and residential markets. Legend strives to be a leader in each of these categories

As domestic manufacturers are moving more of their own operations to lesser developed countries — resulting in some of the products becoming more pseudo domestic today — Legend is increasing our presence on the factory floor by committing its own human resources to guarantee the quality of our products. We do not rely on trading companies to do this job for us as others do. That simply isn't good enough to ensure the level of quality Legend demands.

Consequently, Legend has evolved into a hybrid of sorts. Not simply an importer and not necessarily a manufacturer in the traditional sense. Today, a name has been given to this type of company as described by authors Charles and Louis-Vincent Gave and Anatole Kalesky in their book *Our Brave New World*. The authors refer to these companies as “Platform Companies.” Platform companies are those that have their own product engineering staff that designs new products and improves existing ones. They have patents and tooling but they outsource all the manufacturing. The finished product is then marketed, sold and warranted under the platform company's name. In *Our Brave New World*, Dell Computer is used as an example of a platform company.

Legend believes that this business model allows us to be more responsive to



**Legend Valve
owner/CEO David
Hickman**

changing market conditions, regardless of where the change occurs. However, quality products are only part of the story. Legend guarantees our products like most others do, although our warranty is more comprehensive than most. However, Legend was the first, and — as far as we know — the only company in our industry that guarantees performance. Legend guarantees that our customers' orders will ship 100% complete in 24 hours or we will automatically grant 5% off. We guarantee that our customers' transactions will be 100% accurate or we discount the error. We even guarantee the sale of our products or they can be returned for any reason at any time with no re-stocking fee. We call this focus on the needs of our customers Downstream Thinking®. We promise that you will not find another company as easy to do business with as Legend Valve.

So it began, and we are proud to report that Legend has set the benchmark for performance in the industry. While many may consider statements such as; “Our goal is customer astonishment,” or “Every request is a special request” platitudes, at Legend Valve it's an attitude! This company is truly unique. Every legend employee is outwardly focused on exceeding the needs of our customers; every policy is geared towards making it easy for our customers to do business with us. Every initiative is designed to make our downstream partners more successful. This is a company that truly understands the needs of its customers. The culture that has been created and maintained here is unlike anything in our industry. That is the real key to our success. Without them, we are just, well, ordinary. ■

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National Oilwell Varco

A trusted partner for the oil and gas industry

BY ROBERT WORKMAN
Special to *THE WHOLESALER*

From yesterday's "boomtown" supply shops to today's 600+ locations worldwide, National Oilwell Varco has established itself as the trusted partner of every player in the upstream oil and gas industry. Whether it's a single drilling rig, the nuts and bolts to keep it running, or a custom integrated supply chain solution, National Oilwell Varco is the industry's "one stop shop" for every oilfield need.

The National Oilwell Varco history is a product of 150+ companies whose knowledge and technologies have been combined to create a single synergistic enterprise focused on innovative solutions and complete customer satisfaction. Each merger and acquisition fits in directly with National Oilwell Varco's strategy — to constantly develop and acquire new technologies and offerings to better serve current and future customer requirements.

Early history

While the company's roots can be traced back to 1843 when BLM, a jacking



National Oilwell Varco is a leading equipment and solution provider for the upstream oil and gas industry worldwide. A single-source provider for rig equipment, integrated systems, down-hole tools and supply chain solutions, National Oilwell Varco provides everything from a spare part to a comprehensive drilling system, a generic valve to a fully integrated supply chain solution.

system provider, opened shop in France to support the shipbuilding industry, National Oilwell Varco's history in the oilfield begins a short while later with the founding of Oil Well.

Oilwell opened its doors in 1862 as National Oilwell Varco's original supply store. The early store serviced the Oil City area, right in the heart of the historic Titusville oil boom in Pennsylvania. Between Oilwell and National Supply Company, which was formed via a merger between National Supply and Buckeye Supply in 1896, early National Oilwell Varco stores became a staple in boomtowns across America.

Although simple in design, the first supply stores were the main hub in many of the fledgling oil towns. Customers relied on the stores as a lifeline to keep the local rigs up and running and to provide products critical to producing the wells. The stores, which remained staffed 24 hours, began to resemble today's theme of a "one stop shop," often doubling as post offices, shelters, employment centers, and medical facilities for the local oilmen.

As Oil Well Supply and National Supply Company grew, the scope of their operations began to transform. Beginning as oilfield supply companies — providing gloves, pipe, valves and other maintenance equipment — they slowly merged into oilfield equipment providers, developing the tools, machinery and services needed to add value to the evolving oil industry. The acquisition of Union Tool Company enabled National Supply Com-



National Oilwell Varco general manager Robert Workman

pany to provide rotary drilling capabilities while the addition of Spang, Chalfant and Company revolutionized National Supply Company's tubular supply offering. These early acquisitions foreshadow National Oilwell Varco's customer centric expansion strategy.

Becoming today's NOV

In the mid-1900s, Oilwell and National Supply Company merged with United States Steel and Armco, respectively. The move was logical for all sides balancing the upswings and downswings in the highly volatile steel and oil industries. Business remained strong as the North American rig count skyrocketed in the 1970s. Many of those rigs were built and serviced by Oilwell and National Supply Company. In the 1980s, low oil prices and reduced exploration in North America led to tough times in the oilfield equipment services industry causing many supply companies to leave the business. In 1987, to keep Oilwell and National Supply Company afloat, Armco and USS combined their respective oilfield manufacturing and services businesses to form a partnership, creating National Oilwell.

During the first few years, business for the joint venture remained stagnant. USS and Armco continued to swallow losses forcing them to begin liquidation of National Oilwell. But, as business segments were sold off, management began to recognize the opportunity for profitability in certain National Oilwell businesses.

The management team established a strategy and secured the capital needed to perform a leveraged buyout of National Oilwell in January 1996. Less than a year

National Oilwell Varco

later, as the oil industry hit a major upswing, National Oilwell went public on the NYSE in October 1996. National Oilwell, with its strategy renewed, immediately began to turn a profit, and looked to supplement its service offering with strategic acquisitions.

As oil companies and drilling contractors began to consolidate in the 1990s — Exxon and Mobil, BP and Amoco, Transocean and Sedco, Noble and Chiles, etc. — National Oilwell recognized an opportunity in the market. Oil majors and contractors needed a financially reliable partner large enough to service the industry's oilfield needs. National Oilwell's mission was to offer its oilfield customers a complete suite of equipment, supplies, and services.

In developing its equipment and service offerings, National Oilwell involved itself in the following mergers and acquisitions:

- Ross Hill brought DC and AC electric motor control systems and additional capabilities in computerized equipment controls

- Dreco, manufacturer of drilling rig equipment and well servicing tools-enhanced National Oilwell's structural offerings and expanded its expertise in arctic, desert and offshore drilling rig designs

- Continental Emsco, manufacturer of gear-driven drawworks and service rigs, let us offer more advanced technology in drawworks design and penetrate the well service and workover rig market

- Hitec ASA, a Norwegian company with expertise in man/machine control interfaces, helped evolve National Oilwell's integrated control systems together with the development of the Cyberbase operator system and Activeheave Drilling System

- Hydralift, a Norwegian manufacturer with expertise in pipe handling, pipe racking, cranes, compensating equipment and iron roughnecks, helped initiate our European expansion.

- IRI International, manufacturer of mobile rig equipment and down hole tools, expanded National Oilwell's capabilities in mobile rig manufacturing and

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rental tool offerings.

Since that time, we have continued to expand our offering to customers through new product development and multiple acquisitions. In 2005, National Oilwell solidified its commitment to being a "one stop shop" via its merger with Varco. The merger, creating National Oilwell Varco, further adds value to National Oilwell's service offerings by moving us into the BOP market and enhancing our capabilities in the pipe handling and top drive technologies. The merger moved National Oilwell Varco into the top tier of oilfield service companies, and we became one of the few companies capable of building a complete rig from the ground up and providing the parts and service to keep the rig running reliably.

National Oilwell Varco today

National Oilwell Varco is a leading equipment and solution provider for the upstream oil and gas industry worldwide and is a single source provider for rig equipment, integrated systems, downhole tools, and supply chain solutions. From a spare part to a comprehensive drilling system, and from a generic valve to a fully integrated supply chain solution, National Oilwell Varco is committed to delivering unlimited customer solutions.

The company organized into three segments: Rig Technology, Petroleum Services and Supply, and Distribution Services. The Rig Technology segment designs, manufactures, sells and services complete systems for the drilling, completion and servicing of oil and gas wells. The Petroleum Services and Supplies segment provides a variety of consumable goods and services used to drill, complete, remediate and work over oil and gas wells, service pipelines, flow lines and other oilfield tubular goods. The Distribution Services segment provides maintenance, repair and operating supplies, and spare parts.

Through these three business segments, revolutionary technology and strong acquisitions, our core focus is to provide the industry with the highest-quality oil-

field products and services. We supply customer-focused solutions that best meet the quality, productivity, and environmental requirements of the energy industry.

National Oilwell Varco Distribution Services

National Oilwell Varco's Distribution Services has a rich history as a supply company tracing its roots back to 1862 as well. Distribution Services has experienced



National Oilwell Varco's core focus is to provide the industry with high-quality oilfield products and services, to supply customer-focused solutions to meet the quality, productivity and environmental requirements of the energy industry.

tremendous growth expanding operations into 18 countries that are now located in every major production area in the world. It provides maintenance, repair and operating supplies and spare parts from its network of 200+ Distribution Service Centers to drill sites, production locations, and offshore contractors worldwide. Each distribution point generally offers a large line of oilfield products, including valves, fittings, flanges, spare parts for oilfield equipment and miscellaneous expendable items. The Distribution Services Group also offers a wide range of Applied Products and Services that includes meter runs, progressive cavity pumps, valves and automation services, and artificial lift products.

Distribution Services has achieved success in producing significant savings for its customers by leveraging its expertise in supply chain management. Distribution Services helps customers address the challenge to reduce total cost of ownership with integrated supply chain solutions, which encompass inventory and

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warehouse management, logistics and performance, procurement, business process, and information solutions. Distribution Services also continues to pursue a path of innovation.

National Oilwell Varco is taking a revolutionary step forward in the oil and gas industry by taking the supply store offshore. By taking our supply chain solutions to many offshore installations, we are creating core business efficiencies and increasing profitability for the customer. Benefits for the client include:

- Improved product availability



The Distribution Services division of National Oilwell Varco is literally putting its supply stores on the rig with the innovative RigStore.

- Minimized total cost through improved inventory management
- Maximized return on investment by transferring the burden of offshore inventory to National Oilwell Varco
- Vendor consolidation leveraged through our purchasing power
- Elimination of duplicate processes.

NOV RigStore

In keeping with our commitment to continuously add value to our customers, National Oilwell Varco has developed RigStore, the most innovative supply chain solution on the market. Our Distribution Services division is literally putting its supply stores on the rig. The RigStore is owned by and staffed by National Oilwell Varco, and is stocked with our inventory. As a result, the customer is more effectively utilizing its resources. All of their resources are now focused on their core drilling competencies, without having to worry about whether the necessary products are on the rig and ready to go when needed. Customers can now leverage our supply chain expertise — ensuring that the right

National Oilwell Varco

products make it to the rig in tact, on time and on budget.

National Oilwell Varco has employed this forward-thinking approach, using its core competencies to manage its customers' supply chain, while enabling the customer to focus on drilling. Noticeable benefits to the customer's balance sheet are a direct result of allowing the customer to focus exclusively on its own core competency. Through RigStore, customers clear their books of all inventory on the rig. This frees up millions of dollars per rig to invest back into the drilling process. Additionally, the RigStore eliminates the accounting and auditing headaches that often accompany the management of MRO inventory.

National Oilwell Varco's award-winning technology, outstanding customer service, broad product offering and global footprint ensure that whether our customer needs a single valve or an innovative supply solution, National Oilwell Varco is a premier supplier that can provide you with what you need, when you need it, where you need it. ■

Consumers Pipe & Supply

Third generation and growing

BY MICHAEL ABELING
Special to *THE WHOLESALER*

Founded in 1965 by Joe Abeling and his son Bill, the company began as a small local supplier providing PVF products to the ever-growing oilfield and utility trade in the Los Angeles market. This modest, yet proven two-man PVF team was soon joined by another family member, daughter Donna. The foundation was secure for what would become the current Consumers Pipe & Supply.

In addition to this author as president and CEO, the company management team includes industry veterans sales manager Ray Gonzales, operations manager Dale Nuterangelo and controller Eric Ruano.

The company is headquartered in Los Angeles and operates five stocking locations throughout Southern California and Nevada. We also operate a fleet of 20 company trucks and employ nearly 60 associates.

Founder Joe Abeling retired in 1970 and the business was taken over by Bill Abeling. During the early 1970s the company grew at a rather modest rate while adding to its customer and vendor bases. The market in the 70s was one of growth in most areas in Los Angeles and Orange County, with steadily growing PVF sales annually in the utility, steel and MRO markets. It was in the late 1970s that Consumers Pipe had an opportunity to impact PVF sales on the national and global level.



Michael Abeling,
president,
Consumers
Pipe & Supply

In 1976, valve expert Allan Bachelder joined the sales team. With a new focus on valve sales the company grew from the 1970s through the 1980s. Bachelder's background with Stockham Valves and Consolidated Pipe helped us begin providing PVF to many high-profile projects

Consumers Pipe & Supply

both domestically and globally. The global projects list included oilfield, refinery, power generation and geothermal projects in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Chile, to name a few. The new customer base included such names as Brown & Root, Fluor, Santa Fe Energy, Parsons, Chevron and Shell Oil. The domestic work included major projects in refining, water, oil and gas transmission, underground utilities and the Alaskan Pipeline project.

The second major milestone was in 1980 when the company opened the second of our current five locations — a branch 60 miles east of Los Angeles in Fontana, Calif. This move allowed a strong PVF stocking location in the then-mostly unknown inland empire. The Riverside and San Bernardino County MRO customer base was now afforded local access to the ever growing list of products. Consumers Pipe carried a product line including Apollo, Capitol, Crane, ITT Valves, RP&C, Stockham and Trecice, to name a few.

Bill Abeling led the sales growth in the 70s and 80s and was the architect in setting a base for the company to expand into the inland empire and Nevada markets. Bill and his wife Mary Jane retired in 1994 and his youngest son — this author — was named president. I learned early on the same principals that have been applied to the company's growth. At the ripe old age of 5 my older brother Tony and I formed A & A Plug Cleaners, a company that cleaned and packed cast iron pipe plugs for a local OEM account. I began my PVF training at a relatively young age as a part-time warehouseman and then driver before leaving for college.

Upon returning from college in Colorado, I was placed on a path that would carry me through the organization that ultimately would allow me practical training at all levels and in all departments. The lessons would prove to be invaluable.

The 1980s was not the best of time for PVF in Southern California. However, with my brother Tony as operations manager, we continued to grow sales and profits by utilizing best practices and becoming

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local product specialists in steam utilization and high-performance valve sales.

The company would need to improve on its internal process to keep up with the competition firmly in place in the Southern California market. We chose to invest in a new computer system. The company also added a few more manufacturers to the Consumers Pipe family of products: Jamesbury, Durabla and Spirax Sarco, as well as quarter-turn pneumatic and electric valve actuation as an in house process.

Another key year for us was 1990, when we opened our Las Vegas branch. This branch was set up to provide a local sales effort on core PVF product in the growing Vegas area market. This new

Consumers Pipe & Supply now maintains five state-of-the-art warehouses totaling more than 90,000 square feet of inventory space, and stocking over 30,000 inventory items in Southern California and Southern Nevada.

local distributor support led to new sales with mechanical and HVAC contractors on project work at many of the current high-rise hotels and casinos on Las Vegas strip.

The year 2000 was one we will all remember. Y2K, gas at \$1.25 a gallon, and Shaquille O'Neal was a Laker cager. In 2000 the company continued on plan and opened a stocking location in the San Diego market. The San Diego market and customer base had been supported with a local sales team with material shipped in daily on Consumers Pipe trucks from the Fontana location approximately 100 miles north. The acquisition of a long-standing local San



The Consumers Pipe & Supply team (l-r) is: Eric Ruano, controller; Mike Abeling, president/CEO; Dale Nuterangelo, operations mgr.; Ray Gonzales, sales manager.

Diego supplier, and combining the Consumers Pipe products afforded the move quickly and fulfilled a needed logistical site into a growing mechanical market.

In 2002 this author became a member of the ASA Industrial Piping Division. Then, as Tim Arenberg retired from leadership of the IPD, I was asked to become chairman. I didn't even know all the members' names at the time, but it was a great group of very dedicated individuals that made the job enjoyable. I hope that in those years as IPD chairman we made a difference in the industry. I also continued on the ASA executive board for another two years.

I owe a lot to my Dad for the work ethic and leadership skills he instilled in me. Ethics in business is a cornerstone for everything we do at Consumers Pipe & Supply Company. My Dad always said, "Treat the employees like family, and make the customers and vendors your best friends." Today, together with sales manager Ray Gonzales, operations manager Dale Nuterangelo and 60 other very valuable associates, we strive to make Consumers Pipe the best supply house in the West.

A few of our recent projects include Disneyland California Adventure, Children's Hospital Orange County, Las Vegas City Center, McCarran Airport, ARCO BP Tower, San Jose Bridge Project, Palazzo Hotel & Casino, Ontario Airport

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Consumers Pipe & Supply

and Nestle Water Plants.

We hold our relationships with our vendor partners very valuable. Their products are core to the industrial PVF and commercial construction industries that we support. Spirax Sarco, Metso Automation, Apollo, Anvil International, HO Trerice, OC Keckley, Nibco, Crane, Spears and SSP are our growing list of brand names.

Through this growth, Consumers Pipe & Supply now maintains five state-of-the-art warehouses totaling more than 90,000 square feet of inventory space, and stocking over 30,000 inventory items in Southern California and Southern

Nevada, servicing customers throughout the Western U.S., Central and South America, and the Pacific Rim. The company benefits from its association with Affiliated Distributors and supplyFORCE. I have been serving on the operations committee at A-D and the PVF Steering committee at supplyFORCE.

Finally, supporting all of this is an experienced sales force backed by a technology base that includes a powerful Solar Eclipse computer system and Cisco telephone network, GPS and radio dispatched delivery trucks, real-time inventory, and instant communications.

In 2007, Consumers Pipe launched its *SupplyLine* online catalog, one of the first online catalogs of its kind for the PVF industry. Featuring over 75,000 industrial PVF products and giving Consumers Pipe's customers 24/7/365 online access to account information, open order and bid status, order history and reprints of invoices, product specification and submittal sheets.

With such a combination of capabilities, we look forward to maximum future growth. Consumers Pipe & Supply Co. — our goal is making your job easier. ■

Don Caffee, 1935-2008

Tribute to a PVF industry veteran

BY MORRIS
R. BESCHLOSS
PVF and
economic analyst



The PVF industry was saddened and shocked by the sudden and untimely death of one of its long-term stalwarts, Don Caffee.

As John Leone, owner/CEO of Bonney Forge eulogized, "When they cast him, they threw away the mold." What a fitting requiem for one who devoted his whole life to the industry he loved and to which contributed so mightily.

A native of Birmingham, Ala., Caffee graduated from his beloved University of Alabama in 1957. After early stops in the manufacturing center that included Stockham Valve and several cast iron pipe manufacturers, the pipe, valve and fitting sector was in his blood. Following short stints at Xomox and Dresser Industries, Caffee joined Magnitrol, a privately-held company in the Chicago area in the early 1960s and distinguished himself in greatly broadening that flow control specialist's revenues and market position.

Don and I developed a lifetime business bond within our mutually adored industry, transcending individual companies and adhering to the PVF sector's interest first and foremost. As chairman of Lunkenheimer Company, I brought Don on board as vice president-marketing in 1973. I soon learned that Don had the smarts, diligence and passion to be an entrepreneurial success. When I needed to develop a separate manufacturing, marketing and engineering facility to concentrate on ball valves, I chose Don to lead a team of specialists to set up a "greenfield" operation in his hometown of Birmingham. Not only was Quartrol a profitable success from the outset, but Don's round-the-clock efforts paid off in a fast-growth, stand-alone valve company.

Only the great valve depression of the early 1980s put an end to Conval Corporation, the parent company of Lunkenheimer, Hammond, OIC, Conval International, etc.

This led to Caffee's setting up the PVF's outstanding personnel and merger/acquisition operation, ValPers, which was on the way to enjoying its most successful year ever, after a 25-year span.

When the PVF Roundtable needed a

new secretary-treasurer after the death of Tom Cameron, Caffee was offered and embraced his new assignment with gusto. The same vitality with which he approached his previous endeavors resulted in a vigorous forward thrust that the Roundtable is now enjoying.

Don and I took another step in our long-standing relationship when I successfully recommended him as the PVF industry liaison for TMB Publishing Company's three magazines, *The Wholesaler*, *PHC News* and *Plumbing Engineer*.

To crown his industry commitments with justifiable honor, we are proud to announce that "For his unique lifetime achievements, on behalf of a grateful industry, Don Caffee is joining the 2008 Hall of Fame selectees as an honorary member."

It is fitting that this announcement be made concurrently with this issue's introduction of the PVF Hall of Fame's new inductees. ■



Don Caffee