

Customers and Vendors:



It is with deepest regret that we announce the loss of former Earnest Machine President John Zehnder. John succumbed to his fight against cancer on April 6, 2015.

Earnest Machine was started by John's father, Paul, in 1948. It did not take long for John to become a part of the family business. John started working at Earnest in his teens. He attended Concordia Teachers College in River Forest, Illinois, and taught high school in Chicago for several years, returning to Cleveland in 1967 to work for Earnest. Over the next 30 years, he wore many hats in the company and became president in 1974. John retired from Earnest Machine in 2011 where he passed on presidency to his son, Kirk Zehnder.

Longtime Earnest employee Joanie Chorba said John was especially known for his concern, care and respect for all employees.

"As a Christian, he was always there to help and support you in all facets of life, personal and business," Joanie said. She began her career with Earnest Machine in 1973. "John was very well-known for his dedication to Earnest, and to his fellow business associates of the fastener world."

Employees also reflect on John's perpetual energy and zest.

"John was always ready to sing a tune or act out a scene or two from a favorite play or movie, which always put a smile on your face," Joanie said.

John's love of music and theater prompted him to direct plays at his church, St. Paul Lutheran Church in Westlake, Ohio, form and conduct a Lutheran High School West alumni orchestra, and teach music lessons to elementary school students in the Lutheran school system.

Heroic, respectful, caring, dedicated and enthusiastic are just a few adjectives employees used to describe Earnest's former President.