

In Memory of Hank Leander



Hank Leander

Former company president and chairman of the board, Hank Leander, passed away on October 1, 2024. Hank was 94 years old.

Hank will be remembered for his strong support of local volunteer boards, private higher education, philanthropic organizations, and artistic endeavors. But to us, he will be remembered as a strong, thoughtful, and influential leader at Ford Meter Box. Joining the Ford sales team in 1959, Hank was promoted to Eastern Regional Manager and later to Sales Manager. In 1978, Hank became president and served until 1992, when he began a ten-year term as Chairman of the Board.

Architect of the company's transition during the '60s, and

'70s from direct sales to distributor partnerships, Hank also presided over the difficult recessionary years of the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as the 1982 acquisition of Superior Utility Products – now our Pipe Products Division in Alabama. He also took a huge interest in the company's health and retirement plans. At that time, 401(k) programs were gaining traction at the expense of traditional pensions, and our experience with self-insured medical coverage was proving favorable.

Many remember Hank as a gifted speaker and a prolific letter writer. In 1998, he coauthored a company history book with Pete Jones (long-time author of the Ford Calendar story) for Ford's centennial celebration.

A *Wabash Plain Dealer* (our local newspaper) editorial congratulated Hank on his Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Citizen honors in 1987, describing him as an "untiring volunteer" in many areas including education, industrial growth, and international understanding. Shortly thereafter, Hank would suggest establishing the Ford Meter Box Foundation, an organization that remains active 35 years later. Few individuals had more friends in the waterworks industry.



Hank Leander, Wilbur Ford, Holton Ford



Hank Leander, Richard V. Ford