



# Donald R. Shaffer

Shaffer Manufacturing Corp.

**H**all of Fame inductee Donald R. Shaffer began his career in the baking industry after returning from service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, where he served on an aircraft carrier, the USS Cowpens, in the Pacific. What began as a humble start as a draftsman at Peerless Food Equipment in 1948 turned into a remarkable career spanning more than 60 years. Mr. Shaffer found his professional home in the baking industry, working for manufacturers of commercial bakery mixers.

For 25 years, Mr. Shaffer held prominent positions at Peerless, moving from draftsman to engineer to executive vice-president and general manager, a position he held from 1961 to 1973. In 1973 he resigned from Peerless and organized a new manufacturing company, which he sold that same year to BE/W Mixer Division. After that sale he stayed on at BE/W as general manager until 1986, when the entrepreneurial bug bit and he and his sons launched Shaffer Manufacturing Corp.

"I have been designing dough mixers for the baking industry for approximately 35 years (for Peerless, A.M.F., and BE/W)," Mr. Shaffer wrote in a business plan for his new company back in the mid-1980s. "My design has always set the trend for faster mixing, better dough development, less energy requirements, confidence of absolute sanitation, dependability and durability. My designs have been the most copied in the industry. There are no patents or copyrights.

"We are designing a horizontal dough mixer using the basic mixer design along with added design features that will make our mixer outstanding and one that will compete with all others.

"We will manufacture a complete line of new dough





mixers in sizes that will compete with all sizes being offered by others.

"We will also remanufacture mixers, adding updated design features for better mixing and to meet sanitary requirements. We will also furnish repair parts and field service for all make mixers."

When Mr. Shaffer started his own company, a baker that he had helped out shortly after World War II by providing him with a mixer returned the favor. O.D. McKee placed an order for 10 mixers to help get Shaffer Manufacturing off the ground and eventually bought more than 35 Shaffer mixers.

While at Shaffer Manufacturing, Mr. Shaffer developed several new technologies that substantially improved bakery operations and was granted a patent for cooling jackets for high-capacity horizontal mixers. Mr. Shaffer also pioneered dual-drive, all-stainless and open-frame horizontal mixers. Among his inventions was the Shaffer Superbowl Open Frame High Speed Mixer, which was described by the company as "the best of Shaffer in one mixer for the wholesale baker."

Shaffer claimed the "Superbowl" mixer could achieve shorter mix times, colder doughs and faster dough development than other mixers. The company said the open frame construction allowed easier access during maintenance and improved sanitation. Additionally, the overall frame and drive assembly were manufactured from heavy duty materials for years of reliable, continuous production.

In 2007, Shaffer Manufacturing Corp. was sold to its current owner, Bundy Baking Solutions.

"Shaffer has established itself as a leader in horizontal mixers, serving the bread, roll, cookie, cracker, snack and confectionery and pet food markets," Russell T. Bundy, president and chief executive officer of Bundy Baking Solutions, said at the time of the acquisition. "As we move forward, the marketplace will see increased efforts in the development and implementation of new designs and technologies, as well as the introduction of entirely new products. Our goal is to build Shaffer into the most trusted and reliable supplier of horizontal mixers and processing equipment for the industry."

In recognizing Mr. Shaffer at the Baking Hall of Fame ceremony on March 3 in Chicago, Gary Brodsky, chairman of the H.O.F. Committee, said, "Don possessed an outgoing personality and trust. He had an ability to understand people's needs and attempted to satisfy their needs



through new equipment designs. He earned the title of mixer specialist by building mixers for the largest bakers in the country to the smallest.

"Don developed the dual-drive, all-stainless and open-frame horizontal mixers. His designs set the trend for faster mixing, better dough development, faster cooling, programmable controls, less energy requirements, confidence of absolute sanitation, dependability and durability."

Mr. Shaffer was a member of several baking industry organizations, including the American Society of Baking, AIB and BEMA.

Mr. Shaffer also led his community as a member of several local service and veterans organizations, including the VFW, American Legion, Rotary Club and Shelby County Chamber of Commerce.

But baking always remained close to his heart, his wife, Sarah, said in accepting the award on his behalf.

"With all this, his main interest during his lifetime was the baking industry and how he could help the baker," she said. "Even while on family vacations, we would always be visiting bakeries along the way, whether it was Collegedale, Tenn., or Battle Creek, Mich., or Buffalo, N.Y., or Orlando, Fla., there always seemed to be a bakery close by."

She noted that her husband would have been "humbled and honored" to have been able to accept the award.

Mr. Shaffer died on April 12, 2013, at the age of 87. He is survived by his wife, Sarah; three children; several grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and one sister.

"Let me assure you, Don is here with us in spirit," Ms. Shaffer said. MBN

