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# Press Release

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**HEADLINE:** **WEINERT HONORED BY WISCONSIN FAMILY BUSINESS FORUM**

**FOR RELEASE:** Immediately

Steve Weinert, President, Crafts, Inc., Manitowoc, has been inducted as a Fellow by the Wisconsin Family Business Forum (WFBF). The award, which was a surprise to Weinert, was announced at the Forum's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration in May, 2016.

The Wisconsin Family Business Forum (WFBF), founded in 1996, exists for the sole purpose of fostering healthy family businesses. WFBF is a partnership of family businesses (including owners, family members and non-family employees), professional service organizations and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, College of Business.

Each year since 2004, the WFBF has recognized an individual member or sponsor who has made a significant contribution to the growth and development of the Forum. The Forum was extremely pleased to induct Weinert into the Forum Fellows as a way to congratulate him on his business accomplishments and also thank him for all of his contributions to the WFBF.

Weinert, the third-generation family leadership at Crafts, Inc. returned to the roofing industry at Crafts, Inc. after serving in US Army Counterintelligence. Weinert gained hands on business leadership experience in Europe managing a large group of footwear production plants. During this time, he also completed his undergraduate degrees, earned an MBA in production management, and earned several professional certifications. The broad range of education and practical experiences were crucial to his work as the WFBF Board Chairman and WFBF Executive Committee Chairman 2012-2015 for which Weinert was recognized.

A lifelong, deep personal interest in troubleshooting, problem solving and coaching others to achieve more than they first imagined they could accomplish has served Weinert well. Weinert used these skills in his US Army Counterintelligence role in West Germany at the height of the Cold War, in his educational pursuit and in his work reorganizing troubled factories across

England. Weinert has applied these same skills to the challenges at Crafts, Inc. building a formidable team of roofing professionals.

When the Wisconsin Family Business Forum found itself in need of a strong change-agent to recover from leadership retirements, a struggling successor leadership team, and membership/sponsorship challenges from the area's slow local business recovery, forum members, sponsors and staff asked Weinert to help shepherd in the needed changes.

By the time of the WFBF's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities, the successful outcome of the change process the team Weinert had led was evident. The team had brought onboard dynamic new WFBF staff, recruited an energetic new Executive Director, brought the economic, membership and sponsorship trends into the sustainable positive, allowed the WFBF to award record numbers and sizes of student scholarships, and revitalized the Family Business Education and other event programs, all making the whole WFBF experience both productive and fun. When awarded the Fellowship, Weinert told the audience, "It was my privilege to help the Wisconsin Family Business Forum relearn that the people who participate in the Forum always had the skills, abilities, talent and character to make the WFBF a roaring success. That success is theirs, as my role was more to help them remember that it was up to them to be successful."

The WFBF inducts and recognizes significant contributors to Family Business and the WFBF through a selection process lead by their elite small group of Fellows. For 2016 the WFBF selected Weinert along with Dr. Dale Feinauer the WFBF's long-term faculty liaison and tireless Family Business champion. It was Dr. Feinauer with several WFBF Fellows who served as Interim Management in the change process Weinert was privileged to lead.

When asked about receiving the award Weinert commented "It is humbling to be recognized for being a coach and cheerleader to a fantastic organization. I have the Fellow award in my office to remind me that encouragement can make a difference and that I need to be certain to apply the lessons I've learned to help others when I can."

In addition to remaining a WFBF Board member, Weinert works to give back to area organizations serving on other business boards of directors, serving with local area public service organizations in board member and trustee roles, and by volunteering at the University of Wisconsin Manitowoc Center.

Crafts, Inc. is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> year in business as a leading innovator in commercial and industrial roofing systems. There are over 75 roofing and sheet metal professionals currently employed at Crafts, Inc. Continuing education, like Weinert's involvement in WFBF, is the basis for leadership development at Crafts, Inc. as they prepare for the next 70 years.