

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Phil Knutson, philipk@nwmf.org

Christian Brothers, Inc. owners to be inducted into IDEA Hall of Fame

BEMIDJI MN – April 6, 2017 – Bill Christian will be inducted into the IDEA Hall of Fame on April 25 at the IDEA Competition Awards Banquet, to be held at Bemidji State University. His business partners, Roger Christian and Hal Bakke will be inducted posthumously. The three business principals started Christian Brothers, Inc. in 1964.

The IDEA Hall of Fame was instituted in 2009 to recognize and honor the accomplishments of the region's legacy innovators—those within the region who have inspired others with their entrepreneurial vision, leadership and achievement. The Christian brothers and Bakke will be added to a distinguished list of past honorees, including: Andy Wells of Wells Technology; Edgar Hetteen, founder of Polaris and Arctic Cat; Glen and Dennis Brazier, brothers who founded MATTRACKS and Central Boiler, respectively; William S. (Bill) Marvin, Marvin Window and Doors; Mark Larson, COO and President of Digi-Key; Ron Stordahl, Founder and CEO of Digi-Key, and Don Ricke, founder of TEAM Industries.

In early 1964 plans were underway for the new Christian Brothers' hockey stick plant in Warroad within the newly refurbished old Milner building on Highway 11 West in Warroad. Hal Bakke was named president, Bill Christian as vice president and Roger Christian, the corporation treasurer. The men each kept their other jobs and they worked on the plant at night and on the weekends.

The company flourished after the first year in business. Hal Bakke, known as the enterpriser among the three, sold stock which netted returns to expand and purchase much needed equipment. His idea, "Hockey Sticks Made by Hockey Players," was taking root.

In 1980, Bill's son Dave and 19 other players on the U.S. Olympic team defeated the Soviet squad in the "Miracle on Ice." In the wake of the triumph, Christian Brothers' sales increased by 40%, according to a CNN report. The company producing about 350,000 sticks a year, jumped to 500,000 – thanks largely to the free publicity.

Bill Christian's daughter will be accepting the Hall of Fame award at the ninth annual IDEA Competition Banquet, to be held April 25, 5:00-8:30 p.m. at Bemidji State University, Beaux Arts Ballroom. Early registration is highly recommended, as space is limited. For more information about the banquet, or to register, go to www.ideacompetition.org.

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