

Four Buffalo-area firms to receive Galanis Awards

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BUFFALO, NY -- Alfred University will present four firms from Western New York with Galanis Awards for Excellence in Family Business. Corfu Machine, EGW Personnel Staffing, The Synergy Group, and TM Montante Development will receive awards during a banquet celebration Tuesday, Sept. 24, at noon at The Adam&s Mark Hotel in Buffalo.

The awards, now in their 13th year, are made possible by a gift to Alfred University from the families of Terry Galanis Sr. and Terry Galanis Jr.

Galanis Sr. is a 1940 graduate of Alfred University and founder of Sealing Devices, Inc., of Lancaster. Galanis Jr. is the president of Sealing Devices and a member of the AU Board of Trustees. Winners of Galanis Awards, presented since 2000, are judged on a number of criteria that the Galanises and Alfred University consider hallmarks of successful family enterprises: commitment to employees and the local community; innovation and foresight; and growth and stability.

Sealing Devices was founded in 1963 by Terry Galanis Sr. in the Buffalo suburb of Alden. The company, which manufactures and distributes o-rings, gaskets and seals, has enjoyed tremendous growth over the years and is now located in a state-of-the-art facility in nearby Lancaster.

Galanis Sr. still serves as company chairman, while his granddaughter, Elizabeth Miller (Terry Galanis Jr.&s daughter), is territory manager. Galanis Jr. said it is important that family firms be noted for the important role they play in the region&s economy.

“Small businesses represent the backbone of our country, but they don&t always get much recognition,” Galanis Jr. said. “Family business owners are responsible for the livelihood of so many people and are such a visible part of their communities. They&re looked up to, so it&s important that people see the good that they&re doing.”

Founded in 1978 by Dave and Elaine Johnson at their Corfu family home, Corfu Machine is now housed in multiple buildings on a 4.5 acre site in Corfu. Three generations of the Johnson family are involved in Corfu Machine, which manufactures and services hydraulic cylinders and services hydraulic pumps, motors and valves. The company&s customer base include local and state governments, the U.S. government and military and the transportation and oil and gas industries.

Corfu Machine employs 20 full-time and seven part-time workers. Four generations of the Johnson family have worked there, with three generations involved in the company today. Dave Johnson is company president and Elaine Johnson is corporate secretary. Their sons, Troy and Timothy, are supervisors and Troy&s wife, Tamie, is office manager. Three grandsons work in building and grounds maintenance.

The Johnson family and Corfu Machine support a number of local charitable and civic organizations, including the United Fund/Veterans of Foreign Wars, Pembroke Youth Association, Boy Scouts, and numerous volunteer fire departments and church youth groups.

Founded in 1969 by Eugene G. Wach as a full-service staffing and professional search firm, EGW has provided hiring services to the region&s employers for nearly 45 years, helping thousands find employment. The company provides contract, temp-to-hire and direct hire services for businesses in the professional, information technology, technical and industrial fields.

The firm employs a full-time staff of 16. EGW&s weekly payroll for contract employees is typically between 300 and 400, although there have been times when as many as 1,500 have been on the firm&s payroll. EGW is a two-

generation family business. Gene Wach serves as chairman of the Board of Directors. His four sons Thomas, Jeffrey, Tim and Don have all been involved in the business over the years and are in ownership positions today. Thomas is president and chief executive officer and Jeffrey is chief operating officer. Tim and Don are active members of the Board of Directors.

The company is actively involved with several Buffalo-area community organizations and charitable endeavors, including Harvest House, Christos Foundation, Alzheimer Association and Relay for Life. The family is also active on the boards of directors of numerous civic organizations in the area, including Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Junior Achievement, BEAM and the Academy of Finance.

A desire to create a work environment attentive to the needs of families inspired Angie Kleeh to found The Synergy Group in 1990. The company has grown into two businesses that support the needs of working families and their employers.

Today, two generations of the Kleeh family are involved in the company. The Synergy Group manages the Just for Kids program, run under the Childcare Network of the Niagara Frontier, Inc. The Just for Kids program provides before and after school programs as well as summer camps for more than 1,200 children in Hamburg, Orchard Park, Cheektowaga, Williamsville and Grand Island. TripleTrack HR Partners provides outsourced human resource management. Its market includes businesses, schools, colleges and universities. The Synergy Group employs 126 people. Angie Kleeh is CEO and her son, Matthew, is network administrator. Matthew's wife, Kristina, is vice president.

The firm supports several community-oriented initiatives, including Work Life Jam Session, a professional conference held at four locations in the Buffalo area, which focused on developing employer tools that support work/life balance. Angie Kleeh and business partner Lisa Stefanie have served on numerous board and committees aimed at creating better opportunities for Western New York workers, employers and their families.

TM Montante Development's roots trace to 1935, when the Montante family opened Broad Elm Tire, a tire service and repair shop. Over the years, the company has evolved into a leading real estate development firm. Today, TM Montante is a full-service developer of commercial and residential real estate, providing services that include architectural design, construction, property management, financing, and consulting. The company entered the solar market in 2008, with the establishment of Montante Solar, a full-service installer of commercial and residential solar energy projects.

TM Montante has 15 full-time employees, one part-time worker, and five interns. Four generations of the Montante family have been involved in the firm since its founding. Tom Montante is CEO and his sons, Daniel, Matthew and Kevin, are members of the senior management team.

The firm supports local charitable and civic initiatives, none more visible than People's Park, the public green space Tom Montante helped develop in Buffalo. The park opened in 1995, originally as a place where members of the community could cultivate flower and vegetable gardens. Today, People's Park is the setting for children's reading, arts and science programs; has an amphitheater which serves as a venue for small concerts and other social events; and is used by local schools for science and art classes.

More than 60 family firms have received Galanis Awards since 2000. Galanis Jr. said he's not surprised with the quality of family businesses in the region, many of which have won or been nominated for Galanis Awards.

"As usual, this program keeps getting better and better and this year is no different. We had a great group to choose from," he said, noting that 16 firms were nominated for awards this year. "What we have is a very diverse group that covers manufacturing, construction and support services. We have a very good mix."