

## 2010 Baking Hall of Fame



**Sterrett "Red"  
Campbell**

**W**hen it comes to innovation, Sterrett "Red" Campbell stands at the forefront for his ability to design and manufacture unique equipment for the baking industry. The reason behind his induction into the 2010 Baking Hall of Fame class is clear: He is a pioneer in dough transport and an innovator in applying new materials, improved manufacturing techniques, and extrusion technology, developing equipment for pumping and dividing of dough for bread and buns, and many other important innovations.

Born in Detroit, Mr. Campbell attended the University of Florida, where he graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering. Shortly after, while working as a plant engineer for General Foods, Mr. Campbell was presented the opportunity to interview for a sales job at Kordite in New York. At the time, Kordite was looking to ramp up its presence in the baking industry, and Mr. Campbell was looking to try his hand at sales.

When Mr. Campbell joined Kordite, plastic bread and bun bags were in their infancy, and with his engineering background he helped the company specify the equipment needed to use them in commercial bakeries. He also worked on plastic films that were both less expensive and had better characteristics than the more often used cellophane wrapper for supermarket use.

He later moved to New York to take a corporate position with Kordite, and in the early 1960s started Pak-It Manufacturing, where he manufactured and sold various lines of packaging supplies and equipment, impacting both the supermarket and the baking industry. In the mid-1960s he moved his young company to Atlanta.

In 1980, Mr. Campbell developed the rotary, extrusion-style bread divider. The technology was a success and, in 1984, he sold Pak-It to a Fortune 500 company — AMF (Union Machinery Division). AMF successfully marketed the bread divider and in 1987 with Mr. Campbell's help began development of the rotary/extrusion bun divider. In the late 1980s, the first such system was installed at New Southwest Baking in Bryan, Texas, producing buns for McDonald's.

Mr. Campbell worked for AMF for a few years before retiring for the first time. As part of a contract that he signed

with AMF at the time of his retirement, he spent the first two years doing consulting for AMF. Subsequent to that, he started a construction company.

But calls for his baking industry expertise continued. Finally an A.S.B. member, Bob Maike, gave him an unsolicited order for an advanced extrusion bun divider that he couldn't refuse to build and once installed John Whidman, supported by Roger Hanson, ordered a second unit thus guaranteeing the successful launch in 1990 of Campbell Technologies.

Joined by his sons Glenn and Bruce, Mr. Campbell "officially"

came out of retirement with the establishment of Campbell Technologies. They then went on to develop a line of bun makeup and dough handling systems based on their newly patented single-screw pump. Today, hundreds of these pumps and dividers are in bakeries worldwide.

In 1997, AMF Bakeries called again and subsequently acquired CAMTECH. A few years later, Mr. Campbell retired once more but remained active in various research and development projects in the baking industry. After doing consulting work throughout the early 2000s, he and a group of former employees founded Atlanta-based



*Sterrett Campbell and sons Bruce, left, and Glenn, right.*

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Campbell Systems, Inc. late in 2008. CSI provides peel board equipment, dust collection systems, and custom bakery automation.

During his career in baking, Mr. Campbell was known for working tireless 24-hour days alongside bakers to make needed improvements to processing equipment, as well as for developing many process innovations that remain the standard in the baking industry day.

A few of his innovations include Plastic Rounder Bars, K head static body pistons, Polyslik Kmachine Rounder belts, SS K heads, Rotary Bread Dividers, Magnetic Pan Indexers, Twin Screw Dough Pumps, Rotary Timing Gates, UHMW Moulder Boards, Vertical dough conveyors, and the 8 Pocket High Speed Bun Dividers. More recent efforts at CSI are evidenced in the Dynamic Collection Pan and Dual Infeed Peel Board Stacker.



*Sterrett Campbell receives award from John Del Campo, A.S.B. Hall of Fame Committee member.*

According to the American Society of Baking, Mr. Campbell's secret was two three-letter words: "why" and "why not?"

"Thanks to the A.S.B., the chairman and the committee," Mr. Campbell said in accepting his award on March 1. "Thank you for giving me this incredible honor. The baking industry has been like a family to me, and it's also been very important to my family."

Mr. Campbell said both sons, Glenn and Bruce, remain active in baking. Bruce is vice-president of AMF. Glenn is president of Campbell Systems, Inc., Atlanta.

Reflecting on the early days of his company, Mr. Campbell during his speech reminisced on a day in which his wife, Janet, walked into his office. He said he was signing checks as fast as he could, without reading them, because he had a plane to catch.

"She grabbed the stack (of checks), walked into



accounting and told them I was never to see another check," he said. "Frankly, that's probably the reason we survived."

Mr. Campbell said he discovered early on in his career that if he did not find a baker committed to a project, the probability of failure went way up. So he had to get a baker that was committed.

He pointed to Jack Lewis Sr., another hall of fame inductee, as a baker who fit that criterion.

"One time Mr. Lewis tried a machine and it failed," Mr. Campbell said. "But after it failed, instead of throwing us

out, he allowed us to take it back and rework it."

It succeeded and the design became the industry standard.

Another time a baker said he would pay for the first vertical conveyor if it failed. If it worked, Mr. Campbell's company had to give it to the baker for free.

"He got it free, and we had a phenomenal new product," he said.

Concluding his speech, Mr. Campbell said, "While I appreciate this award based on my past contributions, I'm here to say hopefully I'm not done yet." MBN



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