



Peter Platzer

May 29, 2005

Platzer, Peter John - The angels took Peter home on May 24, 2005, after a gallant battle with lung cancer. Mr. Platzer, a highly respected graduate of Dunwoody Institute in 1937 and a very humble world-renowned industrialist and international icon in the manufacturing industry, founded Midwestern Machinery Company in 1947, specializing in the buying, selling, and liquidation of manufacturing machine tools. Midwestern Machinery Company was headquartered in Minneapolis with branch offices in Detroit and Chicago. He was perhaps the most significant contributor to the development of the manufacturing industry in America. He had a passion to see people succeed and his generosity was unequalled. He often gifted start up companies the basic manufacturing equipment or machines to launch their business. This help was frequently important to a company's success. He not only provided them with equipment at affordable prices, but also shared his vast knowledge of manufacturing to newcomers. He was a good Samaritan who gave more than his heart to those that needed assistance - customers, employees, friends and family. He had a thirst for helping people, as it was his passion to work on projects and to look after people. Until the decline in American manufacturing, he was the largest machine tool dealer in North America. Mr. Platzer was a major factor to the tremendous growth of the Twin Cities, as it became a computer and manufacturing center. Additionally, Mr. Platzer was also responsible for the growth of precision manufacturing in Minnesota. He supplied the equipment for development of the very earliest computers, which

were produced by Engineering Research Associates (ERA), used for breaking enemy codes during World War II (WW II). The government at the St. Paul airport carried out this operation. Later on, William Norris led a group of key engineers from ERA and formed Univac, which started early attempts to compute electronically. In 1957 Norris and other engineers split off from Univac and formed Control Data. From there, Seymour Cray, formed Cray Computer Corporation which designed and built super computers. Out of that background came medical device companies that now predominate in the Minneapolis area. Mr. Platzer did more for manufacturing and this country's economy than can be measured. He liquidated scores of plants for large manufacturers such as GM and Rockwell International. He used to reminisce about how he liquidated the SST program after congress killed it. The cost to the taxpayers, he felt, would have been far less if the government had accepted delivery of the two prototype aircraft than the cost incurred ending the contract. Midwestern Machinery Company supplied manufacturing equipment to both large and small companies including 3M, IBM, Boeing, Ford, Chrysler, Polaris, Honeywell and many companies in the tool & die industry. His reputation in this industry was so solid that the intricate transactions were often done on a handshake. When Mr. Platzer was not busy tending to the needs of Midwestern Machinery Company, he fired off letters to the President, Senators, CEOs, and others, educating them on the importance of maintaining a strong manufacturing base in America. More recently, he would send them boxes of liquidation brochures for manufacturing plants that were being closed or relocated overseas. He was adamant about this country not losing the manufacturing and apprentice talent and abilities that helped make this country so great. It was the machinists and industrial pioneers who built this country. Their strength helped America win two world wars. Mr. Platzer understood that if the work were not here, eventually the talent would be lost, perhaps forever. It would take decades to reestablish the talent. Machinists add significant value; they take a metal blank and shape it into something such as an aircraft wing or engine. Mr. Platzer echoed daily that

Americans must strive to buy American made products. It was the tragedy of his life to watch our manufacturing base be given to foreign countries. Through his experience, he always said our economy would never have the same strength and growth that it had prior to the mass shutdown of manufacturing plants. He also stated that with the loss of the manufacturing base in America, we are losing something that we'll probably never regain and won't realize the effects of the loss of the manufacturing base until years later when it is too late to change. Everything Mr. Platzer stood for was right. America is losing the things that made our country great, such as, our manufacturing talent and our inventiveness. We may never recover from the loss. We won't know the effects until much later. Mr. Platzer professed that the world is changing, but you shouldn't change your values. He was a strong man that stood behind his words and didn't change his values. He always saw the good side in every situation and the good side of every person. Mr. Platzer was well known for hosting a weekly Saturday morning pancake breakfast as a manufacturing forum where he played Santa Claus. Those that attended regularly were often the recipients of the 'red hat specials' of small machines and parts. He was a loving husband, extraordinary father and grandfather, wonderful brother, and great friend and inspiration to many. His wife, as well as his children and grandchildren will dearly miss him. He was a loving, giving, gentle, creative person who truly added to many individuals lives on this planet. He had a passion for his work, kept his company going until his passing and never retired. He was a very strong, courageous man with great dignity. He is survived by his puppy and best friend, Miss Baby; wife, Mary; two sons, Steve Platzer (Sun Valley, ID) and David McNutt (Pamela, Lakeville, MN.); five daughters, Janet Johnson (James, Bloomington, MN), Joan Pierce (Darrel, Harpers Ferry, WV), Sandra Thomas (Michael, Challis, ID), Mary Griffin (John, Winnetka, IL) and Christina McNutt (Chicago, IL). Surviving sisters, all residing in the metro area; Gardie Peterson, Helen LaValle, Charlotte Stasik, and Agnes Johnson. Many grandchildren, nieces and

nephews. A special thank you and deep gratitude to the staff of Methodist Hospital and North Memorial Residential Hospice. They were wonderful and did a fabulous job caring for Mr. Platzer and his family. The family and friends are deeply grateful and very appreciative. Visitation: Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapel, 5000 West 50th Street & Highway 100, Edina, MN 55436 (952) 920-3996. Tuesday, May 31, 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Prayer service at 7:30 p.m. Funeral: Mass of Christian Burial, Wednesday, June 1, 2005, 11:30 AM, Basilica of St. Mary, 88 North 17 Street, Minneapolis, MN. (612) 333-1381. In Lieu of flowers please send donations to: Peter Platzer Memorial Twin Cities Hope Lodge American Cancer Society 2520 Pilot Knob Road Suite 150 Mendota Heights, Minnesota 55120 (651) 255-8123.