



ABOVE: (L/R) Blaine Jackson and his son Tony in the Kannegiesser booth at the 2013 Clean Show in New Orleans.

‘MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT!’— REMEMBERING BLAINE JACKSON



WILLIAM BLAINE JACKSON, 74, New Orleans, a longtime industry supplier executive and active TRSA volunteer over 43 years, passed away on May 9 after a lengthy illness.

Operators and colleagues of Jackson, who retired in 2015 from Kannegiesser ETECH, praised his knowledge, dedication, friendship and drive for continuous improvement in everything he did. Phil Hart, president of Kannegiesser ETECH, Minneapolis, said Jackson had played a key role the company's growth. "Blaine Jackson was a very early contributor to the building of Kannegiesser USA in North America," Hart said. "He joined the company with an extensive knowledge of the industry. During his time with the company, he was a driver of many innovative projects and led with a spirit of partnership with colleagues and customers alike."

P.J. Dempsey, president of Dempsey Uniform & Linen Supply, Jessup, PA, cited Jackson as a key contributor to the growth of Dempsey Uniform and the industry at large. "Blaine was a knowledgeable laundry professional who loved to push equipment manufacturers to the limits of both quality and productivity," Dempsey said. "He was instrumental in the advances we made in automation and efficiency, which has helped us grow our business in some of the most competitive markets in the Northeast." Dempsey added that Jackson was a partner and friend who always put customers' needs first. "He was a gentleman and a giver—always trying to help, whether it meant a sale or not. Finally, he was a great friend who made me feel special. Whether at an industry reception or a Clean Show, he

gave me his full attention, regardless of who else might be over my shoulder with 10 times as many plants. I will miss him, but I am grateful to have been his friend."

Another operator, Jim Curiale, director of engineering for Unitex, Elmsford, NY, commended Jackson's can-do spirit and sound input on laundry-equipment issues, as well as his friendship. "We are saddened by the passing of our good friend Blaine Jackson," Curiale said. "For many years, he was a good friend and business partner, and he will be dearly missed. His consistently positive outlook, a dedication to both his craft and his customers; and his sound advice were always an inspiration. He will leave big shoes to fill."

Jackson's son Tony proudly followed in his father's footsteps in the laundry supply industry, starting in 2010. He currently serves as a regional sales manager for Kannegiesser ETECH in Hamilton, OH. Tony recalled his father as a mentor and an industry expert, who was "Always wanting to serve others." Tony added that, "The laundry industry has known Blaine as a generous, kind and overall great guy to be around. You always gained some sort of detailed technical knowledge while around him." In 2015, TRSA recognized Blaine's contributions with the TRSA Maglin Biggie Lifetime Achievement Award."

Following service in the U.S. Army, Blaine started in the laundry business with JENSEN USA in the 1980s. By 1996, he'd advanced to vice president of sales for Pellerin Milnor Corp. Blaine joined Kannegiesser in 2002.

In addition to Tony (Angela), survivors include Blaine's wife Pat, daughter Mia Neckel (Tim), Monica Commins (Kenyon); a son-in-law Steve Risola (Blaine was predeceased by his daughter Michele); brothers Don (Jeri), Larry (Vicki); sister-in-law Kathy (Blaine was predeceased by his brother Dave), Debi Rideman (Ron); brother-in-law Doug Prevost (Blaine was predeceased by his sister Judy), former wife Beverly Redmond-Jackson; eight grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Blaine summed up his outlook on life in a "legacy book" he wrote, remarking that "Everyone is granted only a specific number of days in their lives; it is important that we live each day to the fullest extent. Make every day count." It appears that Jackson followed his own advice. He survived four-plus years after a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer—far exceeding his doctors' expectations for life expectancy. A celebration of Blaine's life is planned for June 25 in Cincinnati. In lieu of flowers, the family would welcome donations c/o the Kemba Credit Union, Harrison, OH, for a scholarship fund in the name of Blaine and Michele Risola. Contact Tony Jackson at tony.jackson@kannegiesser-etech.com for details. **TS**