

Iowans honored for their innovation

Vermeer Corporation Founder Gary Vermeer was inducted into the Iowa Inventor's Hall of Fame at the Iowa Intellectual Property Law Association's annual banquet held October 23-24, 2009. The Iowa Inventors Hall of Fame Award is presented to an individual with an entrepreneurial spirit, for his or her contribution to a particular area of research, discovery and invention, which has enhanced people's lives. Chairman Bob Vermeer, his wife Lois Vermeer, and Vermeer Vice President Bob Smith were present to accept the award on Gary Vermeer's behalf.

Gary Vermeer was working his farm in the early 1940s, when, due to a shortage of workers, he developed a wagon hoist that would allow him greater ease and efficiency. Soon after, as word spread among other farmers in the community, he was answering multiple orders for his wagon hoist. Vermeer Corporation opened for business in 1948.

Today, more than 60 years later, the family-owned and operated business holds more than 200 patents on a variety of equipment including the first round hay baler in 1972. Mr. Vermeer retired in 1989, leaving his son and daughter, Robert and Mary, to run the operation. Today, the third generation of Vermeer family members have joined the business. For more information on Vermeer Corporation, please visit www.vermeer.com

"Gary's efforts over his lifetime as an inventor and innovator are truly quite remarkable," said Smith. While well known for his pioneering efforts with the large round hay baler in the early 1970s, his innovation had begun much earlier than that and continued long after that. His legacy toward invention and innovation are not fully measured by the number of patents that list him as an inventor. Rather, his legacy is best measured by the culture and spirit of innovation that he built, nurtured, and sustained at Vermeer Corporation – which continues to this day," he said.

The Iowa Inventor of the Year Award and Iowa Inventors Hall of Fame Award were founded by the Iowa Intellectual Property Law Association in 1978. Others who have been inducted into this Hall of Fame include George Washington Carver for his agricultural innovations, John Atanasoff for his computer invention, Walter Shaeffer, founder and inventor of Shaeffer Pens, and pioneering Astrophysicist, James Van Allen.