

## Thermoformer of the Year:

# Roger Kipp

**T**he SPE Thermoforming Division has named Roger C. Kipp Thermoformer of the Year for 2010. Mr. Kipp is vice president of marketing & engineering at McClarin Plastics, Inc., a leader in heavy-gauge thermoforming and fiberglass molding located in Hanover, Pennsylvania, USA.

Mr. Kipp's contributions to the plastics industry include hands-on development of tooling innovation, processes, and procedures; furthering education initiatives; and developing successful business models.

While working at a foundry in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1967, Mr. Kipp saw an opportunity for it to become a one-stop source for plastic process tooling by combining pattern-making with foundry and machining skills. This laid the groundwork for him, a year later, to develop the first cast-to-form aluminum injection mold for a major toy manufacturer. The venture soon expanded to include tooling for thermoforming heavy-gauge sheet, rotational molding, compression molding, and numerous other processes.

From 1967 through 1983, Mr. Kipp partnered with his father and brother in their pattern and foundry business in Cincinnati; he eventually chose to narrow his focus to plastics, and in 1983 he spun off the plastics tooling division from the family foundry.

For over 25 years, Mr. Kipp focused on the construction of aluminum tooling. He developed innovative processes that improved heat transfer, developed techniques for forming undercuts, designed molded-in inserts, and improved overall cast-tooling quality.

As the industry evolved, so did Mr. Kipp's focus. Utilizing his tooling engineering expertise, he turned his attention to the expansion of large-part thermoforming applications and markets, with an emphasis on metal-to-plastic conversion.

In 1987, he directed the start-up of a vacuum-forming and rotational-molding facility in Sidney, Ohio. While he continued to oversee tooling construction, this position enabled Mr. Kipp's first foray into sales and marketing. He developed millions of dollars' worth of new plastics applications by introducing plastics innovation to numerous markets, including waste management, agricultural & construction equipment, sound systems, air handling, and playground equipment.

Seven years later, Mr. Kipp joined McClarin Plastics, where he has partnered with senior management to focus on value-added contract manufacturing featuring lean principles. He has also assisted in developing numerous industry-wide educational programs and a comprehensive in-house program at McClarin. The McClarin program offers its 200 employees some 40 classes on such topics as blueprint reading, lean certification, metrology, and economics.

Mr. Kipp became a board member of SPE's Thermoforming Division in 1992. He has served as Conference Chair (1996), Conference Treasurer, Division Treasurer (2000–02), Chair

(2003–06) and Past Chair (2006–08). He also served as a Division Director from 1997 to 2000 and is currently Division Councilor.

In 2002, the SPE Thermoforming Division honored Mr. Kipp with the Outstanding Achievement Award. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003 and was named an Honored Service Member in 2008.

In addition to his SPE activities, Mr. Kipp serves as a member of the Plastics Manufacturing Center's advisory board at the Pennsylvania College of Technology, an affiliate of Penn State University. He is active with the Pennsylvania Plastics Initiative and was instrumental in the conception and development of the Thermoforming Center of Excellence. Most recently, Mr. Kipp has joined the board of directors of MANTEC, a Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center. Shortly after receiving his BS in manufacturing engineering, he became a part-time associate professor, teaching manufacturing processes, at his alma mater, Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

