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MSI Celebrates 40 Years and Honors Founder, Carlos Black

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GREENSBORO, N.C. - Shockingly, nine out of 10 new businesses fail within their first three years. With a combination of smarts, perseverance, and good luck, Machine Specialties, Inc. (MSI) has beaten the odds, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

On Wednesday, June 10, MSI hosted an all-staff breakfast celebration not just of 40 years in business, but also of MSI founder Carlos Black's contributions and career. Rob Simmons, MSI's president, presented Black with the Golden Eagle Award, which symbolizes strength, power, and leadership.

Simmons, along with Lenny Meyers, VP of Human Resources, led the tribute to Black. They were joined enthusiastically by long-time MSI employees Scott Hilton, Dean Crayton, Ted Otis, and Barry Jones; as well as relative newcomers Brandon Szyminski, Josh Whelan, Chris Cranford, and Joe Warner.



MSI FOUNDER CARLOS BLACK (LEFT),
PICTURED WITH ROB SIMMONS

Then, Wendell Cox, the company's longest-time employee gave his kudos to Black, who first hired him in 1974. At that time, MSI was a 12' x 40' shop. As Black remembers it, "I had a drill press and a Bridgeport milling machine - and no customers."

By borrowing a dial indicator, surface plate, and other equipment from a friend at Paramount Textiles - as well as an employee - Black scored the company's first large-scale customer, AMP, Inc. (now part of Tyco). Starting with an initial order for machining on 1,000 parts, AMP provided much of MSI's revenue until 1974. Since that time, MSI has grown by leaps and bounds, with projected revenues of \$23 million for 2009.

As employees shared their memories of MSI's early days under Carlos Black's leadership, several things became clear about MSI's founder:

- He instilled great pride in people, showing by example how hard, quality work paid off. Scott Hilton (hired 1984) said, "Carlos was the first guy I'd worked for who was hands-on. He was on the floor every day."
- He was - and is - almost fanatic about keeping the plant floor clean. Ted Otis (hired 1988) recalled, "I'd worked in a number of shops prior to MSI. Most were dirty; there wasn't time spent cleaning up. I was amazed when I saw how clean MSI was and what great equipment we were working with."
- He has a strong "we won't settle for less" attitude. Dean Crayton (hired in 1985) noted that when he started work at MSI, "Everyone was diligent, concentrating hard. When people walk in today, I know they see the same thing."

All of these traits are strongly evident at today's MSI, which is the proud recipient of a spot on the Business Journal's 2008 "Fast 50" list, as well as a "Best Place to Work." Today, the company is a trusted supplier to government agencies and private enterprise nationwide in a diverse range of industries.

In 2005, Carlos Black turned leadership of MSI over to Rob Simmons, who had grown with the company since 1980. Of Simmons, Black says, "A good part of the credit for MSI goes to Rob, who has three times the business sense I do."

But Simmons is quick to credit Black - no doubt about it - saying, "I've worked with Carlos since 1980. He's prepared me for everything I've faced since."

The combined efforts of Black, Simmons, and all of MSI's past and present employees have built a strong, smart company dedicated to providing the highest quality machine services to its many loyal customers.

To find out more about MSI's capabilities visit www.machspec.com or contact us at 336.852.1919.