

# 2009 Volunteer of the Year

## Jerry Jones

By Rebecca Patrick



**J**erry Jones walks the talk. Whether he's decision-making in the office, coaching track or giving of his time to various non-profits, it's all about "doing the right thing."

On the professional side, this guiding principle became evident early on and led him down his current path – one that today places him at the helm of the family-owned printing business he started with his father, Richard, in the mid-1970s.

"I taught at the Holy Spirit Catholic grade school and was going to go to law school, but my father really wanted me to try this new business with him, so I did," Jones explains.

"We started in the family garage selling carbon paper and ribbons. Things certainly were not as sophisticated as today, but that was imaging and printing then, and really for (much of) the 1980s."

Things were moving along, but only a few years after the business got started, Jerry's father died of a heart attack (in 1978) at the age of 53. The tragedy served as "a call to action" for Jerry.

"It was a dream of my father's that the name of the business be Cannon IV and to have all four of his sons work in the business. Over the years, I've successfully recruited my three younger brothers, and that's gone extremely well. We have a wonderful working relationship and are a very close-knit family," Jones offers.

"I know Dad would be very, very proud of the way the four of us have worked together and carried on the business."

### Adapting and adjusting

Along the way, the company has undergone some difficult, but needed changes in its more than 30 years in existence. The biggest challenge came earlier this decade: When others in the imaging business were downsizing to stay competitive, Indianapolis-based Cannon IV instead opted to dramatically alter its approach.

At the time, Cannon IV was what Jones describes as a transaction-oriented company, with the company having a 9-to-1 ratio of products to services.

"Someone would call up and say, 'I need a printer.' You say, 'Okay, let me give you a price on a printer.' So we were primarily in consumables and while we had a huge company list, we believed the best decision was to move to become more of a solutions provider (for printing), which is where we are now," he describes.

"The market was evolving and that's the vision we had to match it. Hewlett-Packard led with hardware and put us in a service contract."

In 2006, Cannon IV was named the Indiana Chamber's Small Business of the Year for this successful re-engineering of its company focus.

Today, Cannon IV is a Hewlett-Packard partner and its current facility, built some nine years ago, has given the company "a chance to really have more of a national presence," Jones surmises.

"We've invested dollars to have high-level solutions, and that has really started to pay off. We're also getting national recognition."

Jones traces the company's success back to the "good people working here. Good people are what you want to cultivate and help create a strong culture. We developed a value statement – the Cannon IV way – which is doing the right things, hiring good people and empowering people. This leads to making good decisions."

### Giving of his time and knowledge

Jones' sense of responsibility and purposeful actions also

Jerry Jones offers his sales insights to Tim Brewer (left) and Brett Carrington of the Indiana Chamber membership team.





**The four Jones brothers (from left: Jerry, Jim, John and Jeff) in the Cannon IV warehouse.**

direct him outside the Cannon IV walls.

“I feel people have a certain responsibility to be good stewards ... and that’s what I try to do. I try to keep a balance between family, church and my civic-based activities,” Jones shares.

He’s on the board of visitors at Butler University and also works with Noble of Indiana (which assists Hoosiers with developmental disabilities) and Dance Kaleidoscope, among others.

In 1998, he founded the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School’s cross country team, a program in which kids could simply participate. Jones values the benefits running has afforded him in his own life and wanted to provide fitness lessons for youngsters. Last year’s team, consisting of students in grades 4-8, had more than 100 runners.

For Jones’ continued efforts, Indiana’s senior U.S. senator, Richard Lugar, presented him with the Dick Lugar Health and Fitness Award in mid-September.

“Utterly upbeat, positive even when he has something tough to say, able to find the good news in any difficult situation and a model of good sportsmanship and ethics, Jones teaches life skills to every member and coach on the team, while teaching

a sport they can pursue their whole lives,” offered Lugar in his statement about the award.

Jones also has been a member of the Indiana Chamber board of directors since 2007 and currently sits on the organization’s nominating committee.

## **Advising the team**

Early this year, the Indiana Chamber membership department sought assistance on refining its sales message amid the changing and challenging economy. Jones heeded the call, offering training sessions and basically became a sounding board for the five individuals.

“Just like when you’re a coach, it’s easier to coach when you have good athletes. I gave them advice and asked questions about how they would like to be called on. I pushed them to decide what sounds right to them. You need to talk from the heart and evoke conversation,” Jones explains.

“I also tried to reinforce with the group the great value I’ve had with the Chamber. It’s pretty easy to get a return on the investment and it comes down to communicating that message to the business owners. I feel these were very productive sessions.”

Tim Brewer, the Chamber’s director of membership, agrees.

“Jerry helped crystallize for us the importance of being clear and concise with what companies receive for their Chamber membership. Sometimes, it’s easy to fall into the trap of telling everything you know and that can get in the way.

“He taught us how to walk that fine line of telling companies how the Chamber is different and what we can do for you, but without overwhelming them and, instead, focusing on that key benefit – the return on investment,” he states.

“Since these meetings, I’ve also called Jerry with specific questions and he’s always more than willing to help; he’s been a great resource for us.”

For Jones, it’s all about seeing the big picture. “Some people are so focused on doing business that they don’t see life. You can apply the same philosophies to both, and be successful and enjoy both.”

Jones is proof of that.