**Donald Reichert**

Donald G. Reichert joined A-B-C Packaging Machine Corporation as a part time maintenance man and lathe operator. Later, he was transferred to the engineering department as a draftsman. In 1947, at just 20 years of age, he designed his first machine, called the “Seal-All." This revolutionary machine provided an automatic means for sealing corrugated cases using an air cylinder, which activated an automatic compression device.

During the next 20 years, Mr. Reichert designed and installed dozens of packaging machines, holding titles including designer, assembly foreman, senior engineer, and finally engineering manager. In this period, A-B-C built much of its strong reputation installing machinery in glass plants around the country. In the late 1960s, Mr. Reichert participated on the PMMI committee, which, along with the Fiber Box Association, promulgated the voluntary standards for corrugated boxes run on automatic packaging machinery. He also assisted in the development of the first edition of PMMI’s Packaging Machinery Handbook.

In May of 1967, Mr. Reichert was promoted to vice president of A-B-C and stressed a commitment to understanding customers’ needs and catering to their requirements. During the 1970s when the PET bottle was introduced, Mr. Reichert led the design team at A-B-C in engineering a complete corrugated packaging line for 2-liter PET bottles. Virtually every blow molder in the country was soon operating packaging lines built by A-B-C.

As a pioneer in adapting successful machinery innovation for American markets, Mr. Reichert negotiated an agreement in 1977 A-B-C and German machinery manufacturer Max Kettner GMBH. This agreement was among the first to bring proven European bottle handling technology to the US packaging market. Under Mr. Reichert’s leadership, the new KCM division of A-B-C was established in 1978 to provide engineering line design and installation service to bottlers across the country. Although the concept was ahead of its time for the US packaging market, many successful lines were installed utilizing Kettner and A-B-C Equipment. This began a trend in the industry that continues to this day.

In 1981, Mr. Reichert became executive vice president, focusing on sales and operational excellence. As the packaging industry consolidated during the ‘80s and ‘90s, A-B-C’s sales expanded into the Caribbean, Mexico, South America, Australia, the Pacific Rim and the Far East.

In 1991, Mr. Reichert was named president of A-B-C Packaging Machine Corporation. As president, he continued his quest for operational excellence while expanding A-B-C’s product line to over sixty-five machine models. Having retired as president in 1998 with nineteen patents for various mechanical packaging devices, Mr. Reichert sits on A-B-C’s Board of Directors and remains its director of Research and Development.

During his tenure as president of A-B-C, Mr. Reichert lobbied the Pinellas County School Board, stressing the importance of vocational skills at the high school level and the need for programs outside of the standard college preparatory courses. He took a personal interest in establishing a Technical Vocational Program at the local high school and established a scholarship program through A-B-C, whereby the company paid students to attend vocational technical school after graduation.

In 1996 Mr. Reichert, along with Glen Davis of PMMI, spearheaded a group to establish a partnership between the Pinellas Technical Education Center and PMMI. This partnership was an effort to establish vocational programs to provide training in the skills necessary to design, assemble, maintain and repair machinery common to the packaging industry.

Mr. Reichert’s leadership at A-B-C has been well recognized by his lifelong career advancement. For over sixty years, he has “lived” the packaging machinery industry.

Don Reichert’s career at A-B-C is a testament to the rewards of hard work, perseverance, loyalty, dedication, integrity and high ethical standards. His life’s work has also been both a reflection of and a great influence on the history of the packaging machinery industry.