

## Industrial Opportunities, Inc. 1985 - 1994

With 2024 being Industrial Opportunities, Inc.'s 50th year of serving Cherokee, Clay & Graham counties, the Quest newsletters this year will focus on the history of IOI. Each newsletter will cover a decade. Industrial Opportunities, Inc. would like to thank you for your continued support in serving our community.

**1985** - The Aluminum and Glass Division moved into the new 6,000 sq. ft. building. Percy B. Ferebee Endowment Fund awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,383.00 to purchase the McCarron-Dial Work Evaluation System. The system help determine the skills of clients entering the workshop so placements and goals will best benefit them IOI was awarded several grants which helped purchase new sewing machines (three of which were computerized), a pneumatic powered sealer and an IBM computer. Eleven job placements by IOI Vocational Evaluator and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. There were 77 clients and a budget of \$827,445.

**1986** - IOI installed silkscreen equipment for printing on t-shirts, suspenders, etc. The Moss Charity Trust awarded a grant for the screen-printing operations. A new van was received from the NC DOT. There was twelve placements on jobs. The budget were \$856,028.

**1987** - The Elastic Products Division had over 825 customers. The Elastic Products Division purchased a computer and printer for \$4,190.00. Local businesses and agencies donated enough funds to cover the cost of the computer system. A Vocational Rehabilitation Grant for \$1,800.00 was ap-



Marble Plant

proved to purchase a camera and video equipment to improve the facilities services to VR clients. The Board of Directors set the need of a new building to replace the present Independent Living Skills house as a short-term goal. IOI established a client computer class though the help of volunteers. The budget was \$989,089.

**1988** - The Moss Charity Trust awarded a grant of \$7,000 to purchase two Apple computers for the client computer class. Blueprints were drawn and presented to the Board for approval of a 6,500 sq. ft. building to take the place of the Independent Living Skills House. A building grant of \$50,000 was received from the NC Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Elastic Products Division and Storm Window Division celebrated the attainment of over \$1 million dollars in sales. Client wages were approximately \$81,000 per year. The budget was \$1,273,988.

**1989** - IOI acquired official recognition by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Client wages exceeded \$92,877. Fourteen clients were placed in competitive employment. The number of clients served reached 93.

**1990** - Twenty adults were placed in jobs in the community, exceeding the goal by 13. A job coach was hired, which was funded by JTPA, to enhance the job placement of IOI clients. A capital campaign of \$177,500 was achieved for the construction of the 7,500 square-foot building and \$18,279 in renovations to the main building. IOI is now housed in less than 23,500 square feet. Received a \$99,800 NC DOT grant to purchase four vans, also purchased one van with county funding. IOI exceeded the goal of 100 clients by twenty.

**1991** - An additional job coach was hired. Daily enrollment increased to 78 clients, with IOI providing services to 136

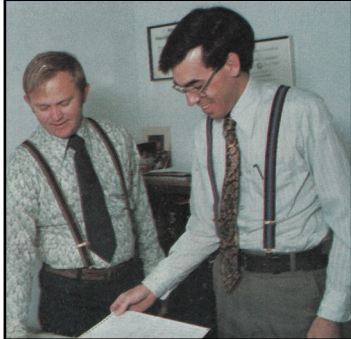
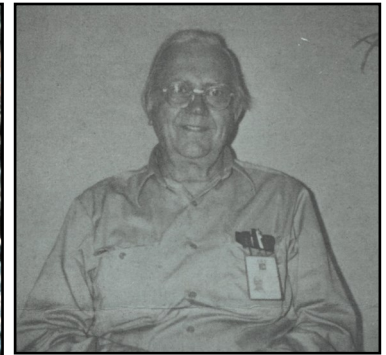
adults. Production revenue exceeded \$1,425,000. Client wages increased 29%. Annual budget was \$1.9 million.

**1992** - IOI was awarded a VR grant to purchase computerized sewing machines of \$35,850 and completed the second major order from Wal-Mart for suspenders for \$290,000. Daily enrollment increased to 81. Increased production revenue to \$1.6 million. Annual budget increased to \$2.2 million.

**1993** - A new lunchroom was completed at the cost of \$72,720.75 and completely paid for with foundation and VR monies. IOI received a \$247,118.57 contract from the Dept. of Defense for making multi-line loops. IOI received a \$15,000 start-up grant for a transition program to help reach students in the severely disabled population to help them better be prepared to go to work after school.

**1994** - IOI celebrated our 20th Anniversary. IOI received a \$42,170 to start a Supported Employment Program. Additional contracts from the Department of Defense for \$376,348 were received. Over \$1.5 million in product was shipped. Production wages paid to adults with disabilities exceeded \$250,000. Adults with disabilities served reached 137.

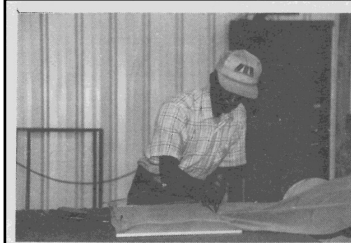




Joe Fishack removes protective paper from leg bands after they are heat sealed.



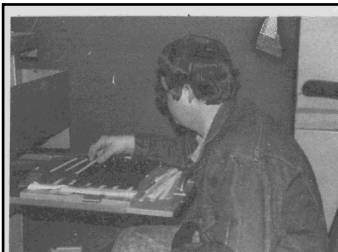
Tracy Dills prepares DeVant bags.



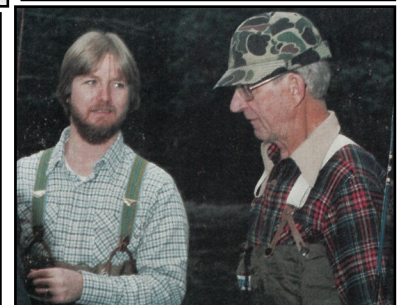
James Smith, IOI member, makes screen for Storm Window and Glass Division.



Ann Lemons works on project bags for Windsor Wood.



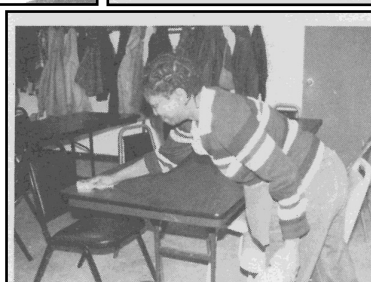
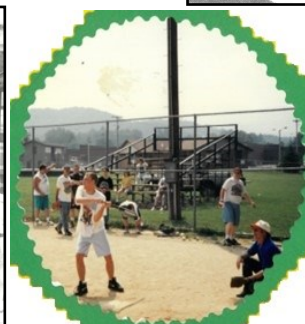
Brent McClure places reflective strips on leg bands before heat sealing.



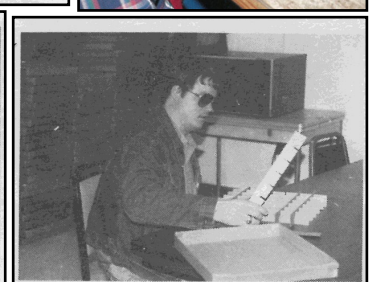
Here, Geneva is poly bagging finished suspenders.



Mary Ella Mauney works at the computer with our new head set.



Laura Blackwell, the IOI janitor.



Brent McClure assembles Clifton boxes.



## Mission Statement

We believe that individuals have a right to economic opportunity and personal development. The Board of Directors and staff actively incorporate the concept that through meaningful, satisfying work, people are able to live more independently, successfully, and productively. We believe that every individual has the right to respect, equal opportunity and gainful employment.

Visit our website  
[www.industrialopportunities.com](http://www.industrialopportunities.com)

## My Time at Industrial Opportunities, Inc.

In 1976, I was hired as the second Director of IOI. At that time, IOI was operating in the old Ogden Elementary in Clay County. There was not an operational heating system and the water system was marginal at best. Tom O'Brien and a small staff were there working with Clients. Eventually, we were able to raise the funds for electric heaters for selected rooms. Despite the working condition at Ogden, the Clients never missed a day of work unless they were sick. In 1980, I resigned to reenter the military service. Tom and I set several goals for IOI:

- Expand Clients served in the Tri County area:  
1976: 24 Clients/1980: over 40 Client. Client annual wages increased from over \$10,000.00 to over \$25,000.00.
- Find a suitable facility for the operation  
1980: Purchased property in Marble and built a 10,000 sq. ft. building to accommodate our production capability.
- Generate more revenue to expand IOI capabilities:  
Developed a grant writing program. This program was successful in very large part due to Deanne Manchester. These grants allowed IOI to purchase Transportation vans, tools and equipment to enhance production capability and to purchase Marble property and build a new building. Additionally, Deanne started

Quest, the IOI Newsletter and was instrumental in setting up the IOI Gift Shop in Andrews. Frank Norton developed our wood shop staffed by Clients by making lawn chairs, plant stands and bird feeders. Later aluminum storm windows were added to productions. Dixie Palmer expanded our Client involved sewing operation by making aprons and tote bags from denim donated by Levi-Strauss. The Mountain Emporium was opened in Andrews to sell IOI products made by Clients as well as items produced by local craft persons. Store was staffed by volunteers including my 8<sup>th</sup> grade daughter. In 1978 through a connection with Tom's family, D. Joseph O'Connor donated his entire elastics product business to IOI. We not only got his equipment and material inventory, but infusion of capital by getting all of his accounts receivables. We hired a trucking company and Tom

## Supporters

- James & Ellen O'Brien
- Kurt Raschi & Catherine Riordan
- Harry Baughn
- Frank & Opal Rose
- Fred & Karen Willes
- Dwight Dickinson
- Sherry Robertson

## Quest Fellowship

- In memory of William, Shirley & Dan O'Brien by Tom O'Brien
- In memory of Kathy Pruzinsky, Judy Sheridan & Kenny Isidor by Tom O'Brien
- In memory of Chris & Susan O'Brien by Tom O'Brien
- In memory of Cherry Jarrett by Beth Walton
- In memory of Chris O'Brien by Beth Walton
- In honor of Doug Earley by Charles & Judy Miller
- In memory of Jasper Lee by Tim & Annette Rasmussen
- In honor of Laura Hays by W. Arthur Hays
- In honor of Tom O'Brien by Barbara El-Khoury
- In honor & celebration of Doug Earley's birthday by Judy Annis
- In honor and celebration of Lisa Annis' birthday by Judy Annis



David Winterle pictured back left.

and I travelled to Mr. O'Connor's business in Connecticut. We loaded the equipment and material in the trailer with our new business and headed back to North Carolina. IOI Elastics Products was created. Harry Baughn was named to maintain existing accounts and develop new accounts. Elastics Products continued to grow. Dixie stepped up to integrate the new type of sewing operation with the current IOI sewing operation. We also had to hire qualified non-client sewing personnel to handle the increased production schedule.

- To achieve maximum success, IOI had to expand its presence beyond Western Carolina:  
The addition of Elastic Products allowed IOI to expand its presence beyond Western Carolina.
- To reduce dependence on State Vocational Rehabilitation and Mental Health government finding:

By 1980, meeting this goal was begun.

I told Tom that I was leaving IOI to continue my military career. I told him that I was recommending him as my replacement to the Board of Directors. And the rest is history. 46 years later, look at IOI under Tom's leadership:

1. Over 90% self sufficient
2. 108,000 sq ft. Facility
3. Expanded Production:
  - Elastic Products
  - Medical Products
  - Military Products.
4. Expanded Employment:
  - 50 clients and 125 non-clients
5. Expanded Budget
  - Over \$300,000 to over \$10,000,000

Unbelievable! A multi-million dollar organization with only three Directors/ Presidents over a 50 year period.

David Winterle

## Clients Serving IOI Since Second Decade



These seven clients have been dedicated to Industrial Opportunities, Inc. since the second decade of business. Left to right : David Gardner (30 years of service), Chad Phillips (39 years of service), Patricia Kirkland (31 years of service), Tony Burch (35 years of service), Michael Lovingood (35 years of service), Laura Hays (30 years of service), & Mika Palmer (31 years of service).



Harry Baughn has helped grow the business model from scratch to roughly a \$10 million dollar manufacturing facility. Under his leadership, he developed an excellent repertoire nationwide with companies including: Tactical Medical Solutions, The Leland Group, The Resource Center, Wal-Mart, Cabela's, Bass Pro Shops, Dick's Sporting Goods, Gander Mountain, and the Department of Defense. Harry retired in 2014 after serving for 37 years at IOI.

All Gifts are Tax Deductible - Industrial Opportunities, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

### I make this gift:

- ☐ In memory or honor of \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ To benefit the client activity fund / IOI Endowment fund.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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