



MICHIGAN
**FOREST
PRODUCTS**
COUNCIL

MFPC REMEMBERS JOHN BESSE, FOUNDER, BESSE FOREST PRODUCTS

AUGUST 1, 2013

LANSING, Mich.—The Michigan Forest Products Council, on behalf of its staff and membership, wishes commemorate the life of John Besse, founder of Besse Forest Products. On July 27, 2013 John passed away at his home in Gladstone Michigan.

In addition to 47 years of service to the forest products industry through the business he founded, John began with volunteered service in the Navy from 1944 to 1946. Following his separation from the Navy, John earned his undergraduate degree in forestry from the University of Minnesota followed by a Master of Science degree, also in forestry.

John and his wife Melissa started their own business in 1966 in Gladstone, Michigan under the name of Northern Michigan Spliced Veneer Company. Over the years the business grew into the Besse Forest Products Group and celebrated many milestones such as a peak employment of 1,200 and receiving the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Award in 2001 for its manufacturing in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.

MFPC commends John's lifelong service to the forest products industry in Michigan. Even as he entered retirement age, John continued to work with Besse Forest Products. Though he had found a capable successor in his son, Greg, John continued his work because, "I love forests. I love wood and making mills run well is something I enjoy doing."

Following in his father's footsteps, Greg, one of John and Melissa's three children, will follow in his father's footsteps and now serves as CEO/President and owner of Besse Forest Products Group.

"My dad was a great man," said Greg. "He was a good family man. He loved his children and his grandchildren dearly."

Not only was John a successful businessman and loving father, but he and his wife, Melissa, were active philanthropists. They were able to provide meaningful contributions to their community through their support to organizations such as OSF St. Francis Hospital, Bay de Noc Community College and Butternut School District.

The Mass of Christian burial will be held on Saturday, August 3rd at St. Anne's Church in Escanaba, Michigan, with a luncheon to follow in the church hall. Visitation will follow the luncheon at Crawford's Funeral Home from 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

At the request of the Besse family, donations can be made to the Delta County Cancer Alliance Inc. (419 Ludington St., Escanaba MI, 49829) in lieu of flowers.

MFPC offers its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of John Besse. His absence is felt and he will be missed by all.

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