

**CRAFT**  
**AGENCY**  
**INSURANCE**  
**2533 Spring Arbor Road**  
**P.O. Box 1187**  
**Jackson MI 49204-1187**

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**CRAFT**  
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# Craft Connections

*"Our Family Serving Yours Since 1923"*

**SUMMER  
 2010**

**Volume 1  
 Issue 17**



*Bob loved music and he loved to sing, especially "Mack the Knife".  
 Everyone that knew him, had heard him sing that song at least once.*

## *In Memory of Robert D. Craft*

**March 20, 1931 - February 18, 2010**



*Our summer issue of Craft Connections is being dedicated to the memory of Robert D. Craft, our father, boss, friend and Chairman of the Board of The Craft Agency, Inc., who passed away on February 18, 2010.*

*Bob joined the Agency in 1955 after graduating from Hillsdale College and serving in the United States Army during the Korean War. Bob became President and Co-Owner of the Agency upon the retirement of his father, Merrill G. Craft in 1957. Bob turned over the reins of the Agency to Robert M., Richard M. and David W. Craft in 1999, but never really "retired". He enjoyed coming into the office everyday and keeping a close eye on the Agency operation by opening the mail. He felt opening the mail was a very important part of his job because it kept him informed as to what was going on within the Agency. Bob also continued to handle some of his long time accounts who have become like family.*

*Bob was very proud of the Agency and it is because of him that we are as strong and well respected, as we are today. Your business truly meant a lot to him and he appreciated the opportunity to be of service to all our customers. We would like to extend our appreciation for the love and support extended to all of us during this very difficult time.*

**The Craft Family and the staff at The Craft Agency, Inc.**

## *In Memory of Robert D. Craft*

*Bob will certainly be missed. He had been a loyal and fun customer over my entire career of 35 plus years. My self, my wife and my staff will always remember you, Bob.*

**Phil & Sandra  
 Dupuis**



*Going to miss his nice little toasts at our Christmas Parties every year...he was so proud of this place! And his festive Christmas Pants :-)*

**Carrie I. Cole  
 Customer Service Agent**

*I remember feeling sad when we were told that Bob was retiring a few years ago, however, he never really retired. He was in the office almost every day. He opened and delivered the mail and visited with employees to discuss current customers (a good share of which he knew personally) as well as new opportunities. Bob made you feel comfortable from the moment you met him and you soon found out that family was important to him and he made a point of letting you know that your family comes first and then work! He always said thank you when you did something nice for him and (having lost both of my parents) it meant a great deal to me when he would say "your parents brought you up right" which he said to me several times over the years. Bob (aka The Big Cheese) was a character, he was all business when it was time to be all business, but he had a big heart when it came to family, friends and the community.*

**Karen M. Cyrocki  
 Commercial Lines Manager**



**CRAFT**

# In Memory of Robert D. Craft

## A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT D. CRAFT (ALIAS "THE BIG CHEESE")

Back in the early 1980's I was a young underwriter working for the Aetna. I had heard legends about the great Bob Craft from my coworkers but had not had the pleasure of working with him yet. I met him around 1982 when Rick came to work at the Aetna. But I still was not assigned to work with the agency so it was more on a social level. But that all changed in 1984.

When he called up ranting and raving about one of my underwriting decisions, I would politely tell him I would think about it and hang up. About a half hour later I would call him back and politely again say no. Usually he would just grumble and say OK. His bark was definitely worse than his bite.

Actually I considered it a privilege to be on the end of his ranting and raving as that meant he viewed me as an equal. That was compliment.

After 2 great years when The Craft Agency wrote over a million dollars of business with the Aetna, Bob was very appreciative of our efforts and sent a \$100 Jacobson gift card to both Ted and me. Aetna had a policy that we could not accept gifts from our agents. He was sneaky enough to even send them to our home address and not our office address. I took it to my manager who politely called Bob to thank him for his generosity but explained the company philosophy. Of course that went on deaf ears. We mailed the gift certificate back to him with a note of thanks. Of course they came back. Again they were mailed back. Well you can certainly guess what occurred next. We ended up being allowed to keep the gift certificates. I purchased a very nice dress with mine and always called it my Bob Craft dress when I wore it. I still have the gift card with his personal message on it. I also have the sympathy card he sent when my mother died.

Most company people working with the agency in recent years have seen very little of Bob as he turned over the reins to three of his sons. They have only heard the stories, but I am the lucky one for knowing this very special man who always made me feel like family instead of a business associate.

**Leslee Hardebeck**

**Travelers/Aetna Insurance Companies**

The thing I remember most is how Bob took great pleasure in contacting competitors when he received mailers promising that they could save him hundreds of dollars off his current auto insurance. After calling them he would come into my office and proudly say that they couldn't beat the price that he was paying at The Craft Agency. He took pride in knowing that we continued to have a competitive edge.

**Caleb J. Allen**

**Personal Lines Manager**

Several girls in the office make an annual trip to Soaring Eagle Casino for some gambling fun. Bob Craft had a love for the casinos and always seemed to be lucky. A few of us would go down to his office prior to our trip and have him give our cash some "lucky rubbing" so that maybe his luck would rub off on us.

**Marcy B. Ashe**

**Select Business Account Executive**

**One day while trying to assist us with account negotiations, he wasn't very happy with one of the Insurance Companies and while trying to make a phone call, he was pounding on the calculator (thinking it was the telephone) and couldn't understand why the call wouldn't go through. When he realized what he was doing, he simply moved to the telephone and began dialing the phone number again. We knew better than to laugh, but it took a great deal to keep our composure. Nothing was ever mentioned after that...**



My lifelong recollection of RDC is his statement "Although we have an agency relationship with our insurance carriers, always do the right thing for your client and the rest will take care of itself" In traveling both locally and abroad with RDC and Sandra, he was always a gentleman who loved his God, his country, his wife and family and was the utmost loyal to his clients no matter what the situation. His character will always be part of my character.

**Ted M. Wray**  
**Senior Vice-President**

When my beloved aunt and godmother who lived in Nevada passed away I took a few days off to attend the funeral. When Bob found out about it, he came up to me to tell me how sorry he was about her passing. He started to tear up and had me crying, too. Not everyone is so fortunate to share moments like that with their boss. It just shows what a wonderful, caring, and compassionate man he was. I worked for him for over 23 years and he left such an impression on my heart. I can't believe he is gone. I still hear him in the halls and expect to see him come around the corner and say "How ya doin', Alice?"

**Dawn M. Fisher**  
**Senior Customer Service Agent**

I have worked for The Craft Agency, Inc. for more than half my life and I attribute much of the accomplishment to Robert D. Craft. I remember the day I interviewed for the job like it was yesterday. I was working in Detroit for a large insurance broker and relocating to the Jackson area in 1979. When visiting

Jackson at that time, and working in a 47 story building, I thought it would be cool to work in an old mansion on Michigan Avenue. And so the story begins. . . I walked in the back door and it immediately felt like "home". I was welcomed to the family immediately and the only question I remember was "when do you want to start"? I was hired to be Bob's "right hand man" working in the Commercial Lines Department.

Through the years, I have grown with the Company, from 14 employees in 1979 to 36 in 2010. Not many people can say they love their jobs after 30+ years, but I can and again I attribute it to Robert D. Craft.

The success of the Agency is a result of Bob's hard work, his dedication to the customers, support of the community and compassion towards his employees, who he never treated like employees, but family.

When Bob turned over the Company to three of his sons, I thought it would change dramatically. The "boys" as I call them, continue to operate the business using Bob's "family" approach and the tradition continues, successfully, under the direction of the third generation.

Bob was especially proud of the Agency, his family and his lifelong accomplishments. Some people say he was gruff, but to that I say - they didn't really know him. He was actually, a big teddy bear with a huge soft heart.

To me, Bob was a man I respected and admired dearly. I miss him walking past my office every morning saying "hi boss" or "see you tomorrow", as he did on February 18, 2010. I never thought the day would come when he wouldn't be here. . . unfortunately it has and I miss him very much.

The corner office is dark but his memory will live in my heart forever.

**Deborah L. Shelley**  
**Operations & Finance Manager**

**He believed that by opening the mail everyday at the office, he would be kept apprised of what was going on within the Agency. One day, instead of using the date stamp marked "Received" he stamped everything "For Deposit Only" to which his response was "it has a date on it, doesn't it."**