



2014 Walks of Life Honoree

Jack Kahl

Jack Kahl often recalls the day back in the mid-1970s when he was sitting in the lobby of Wal-Mart's corporate headquarters when Sam Walton, the company's founder, happened by and noticed Kahl was reading one of Peter Drucker's books on management. Walton asked Kahl about the book.

Kahl told Walton about Drucker's theories of management and promised to send him the book after he finished reading it. The two men continued to exchange books and ideas until Walton's death in 1992. As a result of this close relationship, Kahl was one of only four people outside Walton's family and Wal-Mart associates

invited to Walton's funeral.

Kahl grew up in Cleveland and attended St. Edward High School. After graduating from John Carroll University in 1962 with a degree in business management, he took a job selling insurance. On one of his sales calls, a potential client was so impressed by Kahl that he offered him a job as the first employee of Melvin A. Anderson Co. The company had sales of \$82,000 that year. By 1971, sales had grown to more than \$800,000 and Kahl offered to buy the company, by then called Manco, a maker of adhesive tapes. As the down payment, Kahl used \$10,000 that he had set aside for carpeting and furniture for a new house he was building.

Under Kahl's leadership, the company became nationally known for its Duck® brand duct tape and Manco became the first company to receive three Wal-Mart "Vendor of the Year" awards in a single year. When Kahl retired from the company in 2000, sales topped \$300 million.

He continues to provide leadership advice and expertise to a variety of companies and nonprofit organizations. He served eight years as chairman of Cleveland Clinic's Fundraising Development Committee, helping to raise nearly \$1 billion. John Carroll University established a "Kahl Chair in Entrepreneurship" in 1998 and two years later St. Edward High dedicated its new student center the "Jack Kahl Student Life & Leadership Center."

He is the former chairman of Students in Free Enterprise, an organization that reaches more the 800,000 college students. In 1999 SIFE dedicated a wing of its new world headquarters the "Jack Kahl Entrepreneurship Center."

Kahl, a resident of Avon Lake, has five children and 14 grandchildren.