

A Message from the President

By Nancy Speed

I was awed and somewhat intimidated when I attended my first convention as a delegate in 1995. I knew I wanted to be more involved and later found the courage to write Robert Berry (then president) and list ways I thought I could be of service. It is now my responsibility as your newly inducted president to inspire each of you to become more involved.

How can we be certain we will have a future in aviculture? I believe we must have a passion for the future and must have the courage to reach out and share it with others. Since its inception in 1974, AFA has courageously shared that passion through education, conservation and legislative awareness.

One way members can contribute is to tell others about AFA and encourage them to join us. Share our mission statement and the methods by which we strive to touch every aspect of aviculture. As an individual member, you have more power and ability to contribute than

you may realize. You have a wealth of contacts—your friends, your clients, your veterinarian's office, employees at your pet store and fellow bird lovers attending bird-related events.

Your contacts could also include those involved in rehoming and sanctuary, where the ultimate goal is to place birds in situations that will fit the birds' needs, including homes or breeding situations.

Our membership numbers could double in a very short time. There is genuine strength in numbers when there is a strong and strategic alliance among the membership. AFA also serves the avian community in areas of disaster relief. We are at the forefront when natural disasters occur, assisting when emergencies arise that may escalate to endanger the safety and well being of our birds.

We have a real challenge ahead of us. If you believe in our mission statement and what we seek to accomplish, join us—For a Future With Birds!

In Memory of Rolf C. Hagen

Rolf C. Hagen, founder and chairman of Rolf C. Hagen Inc., passed away suddenly yet peacefully at his home in Montreal surrounded by his loving wife, Marianne, and grandson, Justin, on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2011.

Rolf C. Hagen was born in 1932, the third of 10 children, in a small seaside town in northern Germany.

In 1955, inspired by a simple idea, he came to Canada and sowed the seeds of Rolf C. Hagen Inc., which blossomed to become one of the world's largest family-owned manufacturers and distributors of pet care products. He started by acquiring bird seeds from the Canadian prairies and exporting them back to Germany. His small export business eventually flourished and branched out into a well-respected pet supplies business that today spans many continents.

Soon after setting up his business in Montreal, his focus turned to the most significant import of his life: a beautiful young woman named Marianne Koch, whom he met in Hamburg and married in Montreal in 1959.

His brothers, Dieter and Horst,

subsequently joined the company, both of them bringing new energy and innovation to the company, taking it to new heights of success. The trio formed the first generation of an internationally successful family-based company that is now managed by Rolf C. Hagen's three beloved sons, Mark, Tom and Rolf Jr.

Mr. Hagen was a tireless force who was actively involved as Chairman of Rolf C. Hagen Inc. right up until the day before his sudden passing. Those who did business with him were often inspired by his simple and ethical approach to commerce, often sealing business deals with his firm handshake and honoring them with his word, which was as good as gold.

Mr. Hagen was honored with many awards in the pet products industry. In June 1999, he was inducted into the American Pet Products Association Hall of Fame, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon an individual in the pet industry. In March 2004, he was given the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pet Industry Distributors Association in recognition for innovative design of pet products and for his generous support of

organizations and individuals dedicated to improving the lives of pets and people. He is the only person in the pet products industry who is a recipient of both awards.

In 1996, he received The First Cross of the Federal Order of Merit from Germany (Bundesverdienstkreuz der 1. Klasse). In 2005, he was awarded The Highest Order of Merit (Grosses Bundesverdienstkreuz am Band) from the president of the Federal Republic of Germany, the highest honor Germany can bestow upon a civilian.

Even with his business successes and accolades, Mr. Hagen remained a humble and altruistic man. Though he soared in business, he was deeply grounded in his love for humanity and pets, giving away much of what he amassed to individuals, schools, hospitals, churches and charitable organizations in Canada as well as all over the world.

Helen Keller wrote that it is better to walk with a friend in the dark than alone in the light. In addition to being an icon in the pet products industry, Rolf C. Hagen will also be remembered for being a true friend who was always there for those who walked in the dark.

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