



Jerry Henry, Midwest Pipe & Steel, Inc.

Jerry Henry believes “everything is cumulative,” and that’s certainly demonstrated in the way his multiple business ventures and investments build upon each other – some like interconnected blocks, others like offshoots from the same tree.

“I’ve been working since my paper route when I was 10 years old. Then, at 18 I bought a 1956 Chevy pickup and started hauling trash and selling black dirt,” Jerry says. “Through that I learned to recycle, then I bought and sold scrap steel, built an inventory, and set up a scrap yard.”

As the steel accumulated, so did the need for space. Jerry moved the inventory to a facility on Winter Street, and “with the jump-start of a \$1,000 three-month note from Fort Wayne National Bank, I opened a bank account and went to work growing my business.”

Today, that company, Midwest Pipe & Steel, Inc., along with numerous other manufacturing facilities, employs approximately 1,500 people and posts \$250 million in annual revenue.

“I’ve always had an ability to buy and sell,” Jerry says. “I also took risks, like buying the GE facility because I saw opportunity and elbow room for my growing business.”

As opportunities arose, Jerry stepped forward, whether to create jobs or invigorate a struggling business. He has an overflowing list of ideas for new products, too, and is willing to take risks with those ideas.

“I have tried to go broke several times, and I’ve made some mistakes,” Jerry says with a laugh. “But I am disciplined and believe that when opportunity arises, you have to show up, pull the trigger, and work hard.”

A self-defined “serial entrepreneur,” Jerry says he always wanted to work for himself. He would, he says, be willing to “dig ditches, but ultimately I would want to own the shovel.”

Jerry says he is driven by “the thrill of the hunt. I knew as a young man I could either go broke or go to work, so I went to work. I like to work and it gives me purpose.”



As the owner of or investor in more than 40 businesses, Jerry remains focused on keeping his word. He says, “It has taken me a lifetime to build my reputation, and it’s the most important thing we each have.”

Jerry says he has taken many calculated risks over the years, and he is quick to acknowledge the partners and bankers who believed in him and his business ideas.

“Sometimes it’s hard to get a new business or investment going, so I weather the storm. As a result, today many of the businesses I own have become top producers,” Jerry says. “I am convinced I have been able to create successful commerce because I am fair, honest, and do good work for others.”

In doing good for others, Jerry is proud to say, “we’ve never had a layoff. In tough times, we put employees to work on other projects, including painting houses for those in need or building for Habitat for Humanity, for example.”

Jerry is committed to giving back to his community. “My parents were the first to volunteer when asked, and they taught us 17 kids to give of ourselves,” he says.

His charitable trust provides funding to a number of organizations, including United Way of Allen County, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Indiana, and Turnstone Center, to name only a few.

“I believe if you can, you should, whether that’s working hard in business or generously giving back through charity to others,” Jerry says.

