

JOE EARWOOD, OF NAPOLEON/LYNX, DIES AT 65

“A BIG GARAGE DOOR MAN WITH AN EVEN BIGGER HEART”

Editor’s note: Joe Earwood was well known and well liked in the industry, to which he gave a great deal of time and effort throughout his nearly 50-year career. The following tribute captures some of the key milestones of his journey.

Joseph Alan Earwood was born on August 25, 1956, in Rome, Georgia, and grew up in Florida where he also attended college. Early in life, Joe had an interest in engineering and how things worked. He also had a love for people and anything mechanical, including fast, flashy cars, motorcycles, and even fancy watches.

A techie at heart

In 1975, Earwood began his professional career in the garage door industry, combining his passion for people and anything mechanical. In 1977, he worked as an engineer at Crawford Door in Century, Florida, and was quickly promoted to manufacturing supervisor, then plant manager, and eventually, insides sales manager.

With his newfound sales experience, Earwood transitioned to Wayne-Dalton

as their regional sales manager. He also served as a corporate technical advisor to the product engineering and product liability departments.

Distinguished career

Over the years, Earwood worked for several other notable companies, including Clopay as their engineering manager, Overhead Door as their plant manager, and OMI Industries as their vice president of sales and marketing. In early 2004, Napoleon/Lynx hired Earwood as their national sales and marketing manager—a position he held until his death.

Active industry participation

In the early 1990s, Earwood was a member of the Technical Committee of NAGDM (National Association of Garage Door Manufacturers), serving as the committee’s first chair in 1996. When the committee became DASMA’s Commercial & Residential Garage Door Technical Committee, Earwood continued to stay involved. He participated as the “judge” during DASMA’s first mock trial in 1999, and he served as chair of the Product Liability & Safety Committee until he stepped down in 2003.

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Earwood at the 2020 IDAExpo in Salt Lake City, Utah. (From left to right: Robert Schram, Russ Reed, Jose Morales, Carl Limberg, Travis Whitman, Joe Earwood, Todd Steltzer, Josh Timbrook.)



Earwood had a big heart and was a huge supporter of those in the military. Pictured here with two of his three sons who are in the Navy—Drue and Derek.



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During Earwood's professional tenure, he served in many different facets of the garage door industry. Along with DASMA, Earwood served on the IDA board of directors from 1998-2003 and again from 2008-2013. He was IDA's vice president in 2000, 2001, 2009, and 2011.

Earwood was also a member of DODA, a representative for IDEA from 2014-2017, and served on the GarageWowNow committee—the industry's first national PR campaign to enhance the marketing of garage doors.

Setting the bar high

In the garage door industry, Earwood was a friend to many. He had a knack for conversation, fun, and comradery. "He was the kindest person with an even bigger heart. He would do anything, for anyone, at any time," said Deborah Nagele of Torsion Group.

He set a high standard for what it means to be a "Garage Door Man." A myriad of people met Earwood during his near 50-year career in the industry, and several fortunate individuals had the opportunity to become closer friends with the "big garage door man with an even bigger heart. ■

REMEMBERING JOE EARWOOD

"The industry has a countless number of folks from all walks of life, but the kind hearts like Joe's make the industry different and unique."

—Evan Dietsch, Napoleon/Lynx

"Joe was highly dedicated to his sons [Drue, Derek, and Dallas], his customers, and his love of country. He was always the life of the party, and he never met a stranger."

—Candice Lee, Haas Door

"Joe was a dear friend and a true ambassador in the industry. We shared a great relationship both personally and professionally. He will be greatly missed. Rest in peace my friend."

—John T. Schram, Napoleon/Lynx

"It's so much more than just making the sale ... it's about meeting people and making a difference in the lives of those you meet. You don't go out onto the road to sell a product; you go out to start a relationship and offer an opportunity ... a chance to make the lives better of those you talk to. If you're lucky, you will make a sale; but even better than that, you'll make some friends along the way."

—Joe Earwood



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