

Frank J. Semcer, Sr., '65, to be Honored on Founder's Day

As Stevens Institute of Technology marks its 140th birthday, it is a time to look back and consider the people and ideas that have trail-blazed the path for innovation. The university founded by America's "first family of inventors" is committed to continuing their legacy, perpetuating and advancing an agenda that educates and inspires the creation of new knowledge to solve complex problems and build new enterprises. What better way to help commemorate Stevens' tradition of innovation than to bestow an award to an alumnus and entrepreneur who epitomizes the very spirit that hallmarks a Stevens education? For that reason, Frank J. Semcer, Sr. '65 will be honored with the Award for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Stevens' Founder's Day celebration on February 10, 2010.



Most simply defined, innovation is the act of introducing something new. For Semcer, however, it's more than that: innovation embodies a "next step." He says, "Innovation is foreseeing solutions for things that haven't even happened yet. It's constantly improving essential products." Some of it is intuition, he says – some is research and reading, and seeking out problems that need answers, then finding out how you can add value.

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Using this approach to manufacturing is what has made Semcer, Chairman of the Micro Stamping Group of Companies, successful throughout his career. Originally founded by Semcer's father in 1945, Micro Stamping Corporation became a publicly-owned conglomerate in the 1960's. Semcer bought the company back in 1977, and began his own innovation agenda, expanding in areas where he could either discern or create opportunity. Currently, there are four companies that operate under the Micro Stamping

umbrella, including Micro Medical Technologies and Micro Star Innovations.

"We've learned disciplines in our work for the automotive industry that have served us well in medical technologies," explains Semcer. "Similarly, we've taken our stamping background and brought it into a new field in plastics." Seizing these opportunities to innovate thought into products, taking a technical foundation and finding multiple ways to apply it, is what has helped Semcer thrive.

"When we look at things that are gray, we cut through the gray and see them as black and white," says Semcer. It is this ability that keeps him and his companies ahead of the curve. Micro Stamping president Jim McClintock gives all the credit to Semcer when it comes to the progress they are making in the industry. "Micro Stamping has a tremendous history of looking at the marketplace to see what is needed. [Semcer] has always had a keen eye to see what customers and markets need. He has a tremendous ability to look for problems in the marketplace, then look for solutions, and bring them together for synergy."

More keys to Semcer's success? A desire and willingness to act, as well as a constant reinvestment in technology is the answer. "It's what makes us better, faster, and more cost effective in our business practices," Semcer says. "Innovation is a holistic term if you're going to deliver solutions over a long period of time."

This spirit embodies the most fundamental principles that Stevens seeks to impart upon all of the students, faculty, and partners that come into contact with the institution. President Harold Raveche believes that as the world evolves from a knowledge economy to an innovation economy, Stevens is well poised to lead that transition. "Stevens does things differently," he says. "We are innovators. Innovation is an action and an application – knowledge needs to be harvested in order for its full potential to be realized."

This is exactly what Micro Stamping does so well. McClintock explains: "Where we are right now is ensuring that we take our products and services from concept to realization." Semcer credits his Stevens education with helping provide the foundation for his success. "The discipline and diversification of the education I received taught me how to innovate and always look for new solutions," he says.

For Semcer, receiving the Award for Innovation and Leadership is "very exciting." He says, "I believe in this school, and I am thrilled to be recognized my alma mater." Semcer will be presented the award at the Founder's Day celebration event on February 10, 2010.