

# Student Businessman Turns \$1000 Into Thriving Firm

A 23-year-old A&M graduate student has turned a \$1,000 loan into a fast-growing company.

Bennett Lee Hardeman, a May graduate who entered the College of Business Administration M.B.A. program this fall, is the founder and president of Orna-Metal Casting.

He started the firm in 1967 with a \$1,000 loan and currently heads a business housed in a 3,200 square foot building on FM 2818, 1 1/2 miles from the Bryan-College Station Industrial Park.

"With the new facilities I hope to expand into other markets and develop new products. Someday, hopefully, we will put up plants in other parts of the country," Hardeman declared.

The College Station native pointed out "our prices reflect skill, rather than production. We couldn't compete with most casting firms if our products were not quality."

It all started in 1967. Through an Industrial Distribution Club project, Hardeman met John Hopkins, executive vice president of the Texas Aggie Club. The club was selling cast metal name plates and Hardeman was the number one salesman.

Hopkins wanted the plaques made for outstanding club members. Hardeman said he could do it.

A local banker was enthusiastic, so with Hopkins' help Hardeman left that afternoon with \$1,000 and a project that led to a business.

Ben received technical and mechanical help from his father, L. B. Hardeman, an engineer with the Cyclotron Institute. They set up production at the family home on Turkey Creek Road near College Station and designed a pattern for casting 300 Aggie Club plaques.

During the fall of 1967 Hardeman found there was a market for metal products designed for A&M students, former students and staff members. He added one A&M student employe, Paul Rowe of College Station, who is still with the firm.

Demand for Hardeman's products boomed.

Since that time he has designed and cast desk and door name plates, A&M bookends, historical markers, plaques, chalk tray end plates, aluminum hammer handles, animal cage door crank handles and nine 75-pound bronze name plate castings for A&M dormitories.

In January he decided to look for a permanent location. Financing was a problem because he was to be commissioned in May and had a two-year Army commitment.

Hardeman incorporated to get the funds he needed.

His gross sales during 1968 were about \$10,000 and he expects 1969 sales to exceed \$25,000.

The hottest selling item at the present time is a large bronze

replica of the A&M ring crest.

It can be used as a paper weight, wall decoration or mounted as bookends.

First sales of the ring crest were at the annual Senior Ring Dance this spring, where Hardeman sold 120 that night.

He hand-carved the crest and explained that about 80 hours of meticulous work went into the

master pattern. He can now produce any year with the crest as it appeared during that year.

Hardeman notes the crests will be available at the Memorial Student Center Gift Shop starting today and A&M student Corbit Magby of 303 University Drive is sales manager for campus sales. The business address is Box 3322, Bryan.



EXHIBITS HIS WARES

Aggie graduate student Bennett Lee Hardeman shows some of the products of his OrnaMetal Casting firm, a student-run business that promises to gross \$25,000 in sales this year.

# A&M's Gen. Oscar Abbott, 78, Dies in San Antonio Hospital

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Retired Army Brig. Gen. Oscar B. Abbott, one of Texas A&M University's general officers during World War II, died Wednesday at a local hospital. He was 78.

The general began his military career in the Mexican border service of the 2nd Texas Infantry, serving from 1916 to 1917. He entered regular Army service as a second lieutenant in July 1917 and retired in 1950.

Texas A&M honored Gen. Abbott after World War II with an honorary doctor of law degree as one of the school's 12 general officers serving during the war. Earlier, in 1936, he earned a

doctor of law degree from the Washington College of Law.

During the war he served under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Army personnel division for the European Theater of Operations and afterward commanded Camp Beale, Calif.

He played football for A&M and the 2nd Texas Infantry and from 1913 to 1916 served as a civil engineer, participating in construction of Medina Lake dam.

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Friday.

Survivors include his widow, two sons, two daughters, a sister, 11 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

# Connevey Fund Started

A memorial fund in memory of Army 1st Lt. Layne H. Connevey, a '67 A&M graduate who was recently killed in Vietnam, has been established here.

Lt. Connevey was killed Sept. 4 in a helicopter crash in Vietnam. He was a member of the Rangers. While attending A&M, he was a member of the Corps of Cadets and the Ross Volunteers.

The fund has been set up by the employes of Goodpasture Inc., a grain chemical company in Galena Park. Connevey worked for Goodpasture during the summer while attending A&M.

Students wishing to contribute should make checks out to the

Layne Connevey Memorial Fund and take them to the Development Office on the third floor of the YMCA, room 306. Students are asked to include their name and address so that they can be recognized for having contributed to the fund.

Lt. Connevey was a graduate of Pasadena High School. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Hale Connevey and reside in Pasadena. His wife, Sylvia Estes Connevey, also resides there.

Benjamin Franklin once said that swimming is a "normalizer and reducer of fatty tissues."

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# CS Chest Workers Launch 1969 Drive

Volunteer workers for the College Station United Chest Wednesday afternoon launched their 1969 campaign to raise a record \$28,050 for 16 charitable and civic agencies.

Campaign kickoff speaker Dan Johnston of Austin reminded the estimated 100 volunteers that they are "salesmen" for the United Chest.

Johnston, service unit supervisor for the Salvation Army in Texas, urged the campaign workers to "have the proper enthusiasm, talk 'fair share' and encourage everyone to do his part."

"Only in a free land," he emphasized, "do we have the opportunity to call on our neighbors for support, and only in a free land do we have the opportunity to decide what we're going to do with our money."

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