

# IMPACT AND LEGACY

Everyone has a Don Walker story.

Some of them focus on his engineer's eye for dealing with management challenges; others on his reputation as a credible and experienced leader known for keeping high standards and a relentless focus on the future.

All of the stories, from the shop floor to the C-suite, paint a picture of a visionary CEO who has set the stage for Magna's long-term success.

## MORE TO DISCOVER ...

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It's an honor that Don Walker has visited Muncie three times since 2007, given the hundreds of divisions in the company. It's unusual that a CEO would visit one location that many times, even though Muncie is the largest Magna Powertrain location in the U.S. I know that he was flying over Indiana once and said, "Let's drop in on Muncie!"



I would pick him up at the county airport and it was clear he was always interested in getting a sense of the community – its language, values and the culture. He wanted to tour the area, and I would drive him to places like Ball State University and we'd take a little tour of the campus. Then we'd go by the old Chevrolet Muncie transmission plant and the old Borg Warner plant. He wanted to understand where the strengths and opportunities are in a place. It was his way of putting everything in perspective.

## REJENAR WHITFIELD

Employee Advocate Magna Mirrors Holland, Michigan



### EMPATHY AND INSIGHT

As an employee advocate, I've always admired Don for his willingness to connect with us. He trusts what we have to say, and makes us feel engaged. He realizes that employee advocates are important because not everyone has a strong voice. Some employees may need another person they can trust to bring issues forward. Don makes us feel comfortable when we talk to him because he has empathy for what we experience day-to-day. We can always count on him to give us insight into any situation. By reaching out to employee advocates, safety, quality and other team members, Don has made Magna a better place to work.

## DAVID MEIER

General Manager Magna Drive Automotive  
Piedmont, South Carolina



Despite running a large and complex organization, Don Walker had his hands right on the pulse of the divisions. He never lost touch with the day-to-day workings of the company. He would always take the time to call and simply say, "thank you," or to walk the shop floor and listen to employees. He made Magna a world-class company.

## JOANNE HORIBE

Vice-President, Ethics & Chief Compliance Officer

### RIISING TO ALL CHALLENGES

I'm taken by Don's loyalty and his commitment to employees.

A good example is the Ice Bucket Challenge that involved the



dumping of a bucket of ice over a person's head to promote awareness of the disease ALS. My late boss David Benson, the longtime EVP and General Counsel of Decoma/Magna Exteriors, died of ALS. I asked Don if we could do the Ice Bucket Challenge at Magna in David's honor and he wholeheartedly said yes. Don's wife Joan came and dumped the ice on Don, and 40 other people from Magna also participated.

I've also been struck by how much Don listens and seeks the opinions of others. As the CEO of Magna, he still takes time to say, "What do you think of that?" It always leaves me with the impression my view matters and it is important to him.

Soliciting the opinions of others has also been evident in Don's role as the Executive Sponsor of Magna's Global Diversity and Inclusion Council. He's always been very supportive and open to listening to the experiences of Magna's female employees and those with diverse backgrounds and cultures. Don is somebody who cares and is open to all viewpoints.

## TRACY FUERST

Magna Vice President Corporate Communications and Public Relations



### GREAT COMMUNICATOR

When the Toronto Raptors won the NBA championship in 2019, I was fortunate enough to watch the game with Don Walker and a few other executives, as we were getting ready for a China Town Hall. We talked about the game, players and significance of what was happening. I was the only woman in the room and the only one able to talk about the finer points of the game given my many years as a basketball player and coach. I often reflect on that moment because, just as Don intensely listened to me that night, in the same way he has always accepted my input and guidance on Magna communications over the years.

Throughout his tenure, Don has always been a great communicator, a true testament to his leadership style. That's one reason why he has connected with so many Magna employees and people outside our company. Working closely with him the last 15 years advancing Magna's communications both internally and externally has been a highlight of my career.

## DAVID GRAY



We won a Toyota launch award and we were having a presentation at the plant. We had special red shirts for everyone in the plant to wear. I asked Don, “Do you want to put on a red shirt?” Next thing I know, he took off his shirt and tie and put on the red shirt to be part of the team, even though the president of Toyota Canada was there in business attire. The employees thought he was a pretty cool CEO to come out looking like all of us.

He also has an ability to trust the team and empower it – and the ability to ask the right questions. During the Great Recession in 2008, we had all of our plans in place in terms of program management and budget. But that wasn’t quite good enough for Don. He called me. He wanted to hear a voice and the conviction. He asked a simple question: “Can you and your team do it?” He was challenging and motivating, compassionate and tough. He said, “If you think you can do it, I’m behind you.” The easy response was, “We won’t let you down.”

## SENKA DONCHES

Manager of Energy Efficiencies for the Americas



### A ROLE MODEL FOR HEALTHY LIVING

I am an advocate for work-life balance, and I admire the way Don Walker takes his health – and the health of his employees – so seriously. Because of his influence, there have been great Magna initiatives to maintain better health and wellness, such as the eight-week challenge to get rid of sugar in your diet. We have the Magna health and wellness magazine. There are virtual sessions during lunch that focus on things like yoga and meditation. Don is health-conscious, and he encourages that in everyone.

I also admire Don’s love of his family, something that’s also important to me. Every conversation with him in the company cafeteria or at Christmas parties is about family.

On a professional level, I admire that he is so approachable. I’ll always appreciate his belief in me. One memorable moment came after I spoke at a world-class manufacturing conference in China. Don came up after I spoke and said, ‘great presentation.’ That, to me, was an inspiration. It showed me he had confidence in me and in what I am doing.

**JOSE MELO**  
General Manager Magna Pullmatic Markham, Ontario



When I was the general manager of the MSM divisions in Woodbridge, Ontario, Don Walker came to present us with the Magna Manufacturing Excellence for Quality award in 2019. I remember him shaking everyone's hand at both plants. They still talk about that day. They loved the way Don acted. Very informal. Very approachable. Don is always down-to-earth. He made everyone happy. And people will remember that.

## **JEFFREY S. GARY**

General Manager Magna Electronics Technology  
President and General Manager Magna  
Rohinni Automotive Holly, Michigan



Five years ago, in the course of several days, my father George died of a heart attack, then my mother Marilyn died of cancer, followed by my 33-year-old daughter Heather, a kidney patient who died of a heart condition. Don Walker took the time to call me and express condolences. It said a lot about what kind of person he is that he would take the time to give me a call. He thought of me as a person, not an employee. I always knew he was a good person. That counts more than if someone is good at their job. It tells me more than any speech he could make.

You say to yourself, "I don't want to disappoint that guy." People try harder, work harder and want to succeed because of people like Don Walker.

## **KIM MCGOEY**

Assistant General Manager Dortec Industries  
Newmarket, Ontario



### **ECHOING THE FRANK STRONACH MESSAGE**

When you talk to Don, hourly people and his concern for them always comes into the conversation. He has a great sense for the plant and the morale. He's so much like the original message of our founder Frank Stronach. He lives and breathes the philosophy that "our people make us." If our people on the floor aren't happy, they won't build good parts and they won't stay. They are the foundation of our reputation.

Two years ago, he filmed his yearly video in our facility. Before the cameras rolled, we walked around the plant, talking about our new technology and some of the labour reduction initiatives we were working on. His first question was "how are you protecting our long term employees with these reductions?" Earlier this year, he asked me about the morale on the plant

floor. My answer was, "not 100% because we're going through a lot of significant changes that not everyone is happy about." I felt comfortable saying that because I never had to sugarcoat it with Don. I never felt intimidated because he was the CEO. He has his pulse on the issues. Back in December 2004, Don chaired a small focus group called Women of Intier. Someone had pointed out the lack of females in leadership roles within our company and he wanted to understand women's perspective. Within a month, he and Mike Sinnaeve met with the group of about 10 women from our organization. Don truly wanted to address the concerns of women within the organization. That's pretty awesome.

**LEFT TO RIGHT,** Mui Ngoc, Ruby Riffat, Kim McGoey and Muy Chheng Ung with MML Best Launch Award for their electronic control module business.

## BENSON WANG

Magna Vice President Mechatronics & Mirrors Asia



### SKIPPING LUNCH, ASKING KEY QUESTIONS

When Magna was starting to set up operations in China, Don Walker came for a whirlwind tour of the greater Shanghai area to find good locations.

I was asked to go because I was the first Magna employee of a wholly owned company business in China. On the second day, I asked Don if he'd like to stop for lunch and relax a bit. He said, "No, let's continue moving!" He wanted to see everything and he had lots of questions that went beyond business. He wanted to know how the Chinese people would play in the global business environment. He asked about our culture and what we eat. He observed that we are very disciplined on the shop floor.

I was young and just had earned my MBA. He asked me: "What is your business philosophy?" I responded: "My background is in quality. I love quality. That would be the No. 1 thing to give us a competitive edge." He said, "That is right." Then he asked me my thoughts on return on investment. He wanted to know how a general manager in China thinks on a daily basis.

When we finally stopped to eat dinner, Don was open to sampling various Chinese dishes. "I can try everything, but don't order too much," he said. "I don't like waste." Of course, that same rule applies to everything we do.

## RHONDA MCNALLY

Magna Vice President Marketing

### DON WALKER'S LEGACY

Magna experienced tremendous growth during Don Walker's tenure. A lot of companies lose their values as they grow. But not in Magna's case.



Don's legacy is that he was able to build Magna into a leadership position as a strong brand presence with core values that we never let go of. We've maintained our traditional values, such as an entrepreneurial, decentralized structure, while we've become a unified brand and continue to move forward. His leadership has enabled us to straddle those two unique elements. From a marketing perspective, we had to do both.

A pivotal moment came in 2010, when we started to redefine the positioning and priorities of the company. That year stands out because that's when Don became the only CEO. He rolled out the three priorities and our corporate mission. It set the tone for moving toward the one Magna logo and brand identity. It got everyone on the same page and made the company stronger. The last 10 years shaped the perception of Magna in the marketplace.

Simply put, Don embodies who we are as a company.

### ▲ HY LY



#### INSTILLING PRIDE, HONORING TRADITIONS

We celebrate lots of ethnic traditions at the plant, including the Laotian New Year. During that celebration, participants pour water on each other's shoulders for good luck. Don was game for that and even wore a traditional Laotian shirt, lei and bracelet.

More importantly, I'm impressed that he knows my facility and knows the people. The last conversation we had was about our brand-new liftgate launch and how it was going. It was a huge undertaking for us, with state-of-the-art equipment and robotics. It was great talking to him because he understands the products from each division. He said, "If you ever need anything, just ask."

Don has a positive effect on the mood of the employees. People have more pride in their work and more pride toward Magna as a whole. They understand they are appreciated and the effort they put in is appreciated. Even afterward, I can hear people on the shop floor talking about how Don actually took the time to come down, see their work and have a chat with them on a personal level.

### LINA BUCCI

Magna Vice President Quality



#### "HE'S ONE OF THE BEST"

We had our first Women's Day event at Magna in November. I've been with Magna for 27 years. Ten years ago, I would have never thought anything like this would be possible. But Don Walker has been following through on the importance of diversity and inclusion, knowing that the world is changing, and we need to grow and adapt to that change. He made it a priority, which makes it everyone's priority.

By pushing the need for D&I from the top down, it's taken root. What I loved the most is that Don didn't just say we'll have a D&I council, he

took part in events so he could hear what people had to say. He made the time. He's one of the best. I've watched him at conferences and events and I noticed you would never see him sitting with other executives. He would talk to everybody. He'd make his way around the room and find an empty spot at a table. He was listening and he made you feel like you were being heard. I thought, "I want to be like that. I want to make sure I'm grounded, humble and putting my people first." It set the foundation for my leadership goals.

## ERIC WILDS



### HE WAS ONE OF THE TEAM

I remember participating in sales conferences in the 1990s that included team-building exercises to improve communications and build camaraderie. Some of them involved themed activities designed to break down barriers, complete with costumes and skits.

I was a new salesperson at the time, and what struck me as unique is that Don fully participated in the events. He wasn't aloof. He was an executive, but he was one of the team. He engaged, right down to putting on the costume.

His actions showed we're in this together, regardless of the challenge. We may have been doing silly things at those conferences, but we were also very focused on achieving business objectives. For Don, it was not just work, not just fun, and not just a cameo appearance at a sales conference. He participated in all aspects. It showed his commitment to the whole organization.

## DON WALKER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Don Walker has been a leader and mentor and one of the ways his legacy will live on is through a program that supports post-secondary school education for the children of Magna employees. In January 2021, the Magna Family Scholarship Program will be renamed the Don Walker Scholarship Fund. The program will be expanded geographically and in scope to include all STEM-related career paths – something Don has been very passionate about and something that ultimately helps Magna and our industry.









