

# LAUREL STEEL

SEPTEMBER 2017

CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS

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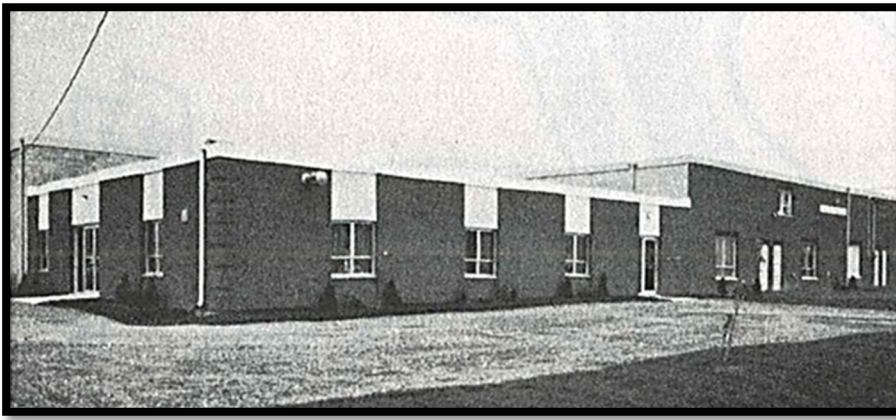


**LaurelSteel**

A DIVISION OF HARRIS STEEL ULC

1967-2017





**LAUREL PRODUCTS LIMITED—STONEY CREEK**

## **LAUREL: THE FIRST 25 YEARS**

### *Our Start: 1967*

Milton E. Harris and his company J. Harris and Sons acquired a company called Saunders Form Hardware in the 1960's. A service organization that specialized in concrete formers, selling anchor bolts, bar ties, whaler rods, snap ties and other assorted items. These products fit well with what Harris Rebar already offered.

Milt Harris was approached by a salesman named Mike Wilkens. Mike was a partner in a shop that made some of the same items that Saunders Form Hardware was selling. Wilkens persuaded Milt to buy that shop, which was located just north of Orangeville in a little hamlet called, Laurel. That shop's name? Laurel Steel Products.

### *Stoney Creek Relocation*

Shortly after Milt purchased Laurel Steel Products the company relocated to Stoney Creek, adding to the major rebar and fabricating facility of Harris. This was also the home of the Harris corporate office.

### *Early Days: 1968*

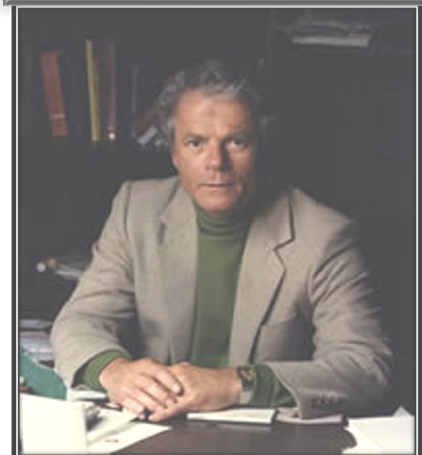
In 1968, a man named Horst Felber approached Glenn Riddell with a proposition. Horst proposed a single wire drawing machine that would change the face of Laurel. We went from a small supplier, selling odds and ends to the concrete industry, to a supplier that was now sending out truckloads of wire to customers.

## **OUR FOUNDER**

Milton E. Harris was a Canadian businessman and founder of Harris Steel Group. Born in Detroit, he moved to London, Ontario when he was a few months old. Harris attended St. George's School and Central Collegiate Institute before receiving a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Toronto in 1949.

Milt established his name in the rebar circles in the 1950's. He was ambitious. Growing a business from the ground up or acquiring a new business was his desire. His recipe was simple; buy cheap and then make something out of it.

His philosophy was to give opportunities to his managers and let them run with it. Milt preferred to keep his distance but where he helped out was on the purchasing side of things and managing money. He maintained a financial foundation under all of his businesses that would help them in the good times but more importantly, in the bad times.



**MILTON E. HARRIS**



**GLENN RIDDELL**

## OUR 1ST PRESIDENT

Glenn Riddell was discovered by Milt Harris when he was part of the Steel Company of Canada. This was where Glenn began his career in steel. Little did he know that there were much greater things in store for him as part of Harris Steel.

Before he knew it, Glenn was up to his neck in rebar. He was running the Stoney Creek shop that included the little sideline they had setup as Laurel.

We often think of old steel guys as grumpy and rough around the edges. But anyone who knew Glenn knew he was not your typical “old steel guy.” Glenn was a gentle man, the fatherly type, not given to the ways of the brusque pushy men we often think of as typical steel guys.

He was also a pioneer in management style. He was a servant leader before the concept was known within business leadership circles.

## *Early Research & Development*

In the early days, not everyone could sell mechanically descaled wire to the auto industry. While our competition was drawing wire through soap, the secret to our success was drawing the wire through grease. That grease was developed by a friend of the company, Bill Chesterfield.

## *Mesh Production: 1973*

In 1973, a used Robinson Mesh machine was added to the mix. This machine clunked away day after day right up until almost the year 2000! The construction market was good, and this complemented the wire drawing side of Laurel. We understood the construction business, so this move only made sense.

## *Continuing Our Growth: 1978*

In 1978, 2 new faces joined Laurel Steel. Barry Herring came in to lead our sales efforts on the Cold Finished front, with a strong focus on the customer and what they needed. On the manufacturing side of things, the man brought in to get us moving was Ed Lee.

Nothing seemed more logical than taking wire and cutting it into straight bars...Cold Finished was born at Laurel!

## *Burlington Relocation: 1979*

Things were getting cramped in the Stoney Creek location. It was at this time Glenn began looking for a new place for Laurel to call home.

A wholesale hardware firm called Crest Hardware folded leaving behind a 90,000 sq. ft. plant, along with 12.9 acres of land. That plant and plot of land was located exactly where we reside today in Burlington, Ontario.



**LAUREL STEEL PRODUCTS LTD. – BURLINGTON**



LAUREL'S EARLY LOGO



LAUREL'S 25TH LOGO

**B**  
**L**  
**U**  
**E**  
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**T**  
**A**  
**R**



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LAUREL'S CURRENT LOGO

## *Starting In Burlington*

One of the first things added in the new location was the Pickle House. That addition took our steel from purely mechanically descaled, to cleaned using acid and chemical processes. This gave us some of the best looking product on the market!

Laurel's move to Burlington was more than just a physical move. Although it was still part of Harris, Laurel became much more of a stand alone entity. With the move, we saw new market opportunities that would allow us to grow and no longer rely heavily on the construction industry.

## *Second Location*

Growing was not something we were shy about. In 1984, a second location was added in Michigan, which we outgrew and moved to a larger facility in 1987. The Michigan location helped with US Customs issues we had in the late 80's.

In the end, duplicating the success of Burlington was difficult. The decision to close the Michigan facility came in October of 1990, bringing the work back to the Burlington location.

## *BLUESTAR*

In the early 90's, Laurel jumped into High Performance Manufacturing with a heavy emphasis on teamwork. Ideas were allowed to flow up from the production floor to create improvements in safety, throughput, efficiencies, quality and cost.

BLUESTAR was born—Building Laurel Using Employee Strengths To Achieve Results. Although the name is seldom used today, the philosophy lives on!

## *Our 25th Anniversary*

We celebrated our 25th Anniversary on September 12th, 1992 with an Open House event in Burlington.



*AERIAL VIEW OF LAUREL—EARLY 80's*



*AERIAL VIEW OF LAUREL—PRESENT DAY*



*LAUREL STEEL—PRESENT DAY*

# THE PAST 25 YEARS

## *Bursting At The Seams*

We flexed our muscles and had some very busy and profitable years in the 90's. With the addition of Machine 123, and the 20 ton drawbench, we were able to produce and ship more steel than ever.

Laurel began running 3 shifts on most lines and even had to add weekend shifts to support the demand. Things got so busy at one point that we had to buy finished product from competitors just to meet the demand. If there was one thing that we did and have continued to do well, it is taking care of our customers!

## *Growing Our Small Bars*

In the late 90's the industry was looking for small round steel bars that they could grind without it bowing. Our traditional methods with a block and arbor caused the bar to hold memory once it was ground.

We felt that switching to a small drawbench would be the answer, so we purchased Machine 124 from EJP. That machine has been in full service ever since!

## *Big Plans*

If you're serious about taking care of your customer, getting their product to them on time is critical. We made plans to add both a 30 ton and 5 ton drawing line. This was a great plan in theory, but without doing something about our lack of storage space, we had no space in the plant to put those new lines. We had to figure out how to utilize our cubic feet, not just our square footage. This is where KASTO came in.

## *KASTO*

The installation of our KASTO storage system would allow us to ship faster, have greater inventory accuracy and most importantly, free up floor space to install the much needed equipment.

KASTO was a huge investment! It required building an addition onto our existing plant. This however was not just any addition. It had to be a 95-foot high structure and the foundation had to support up to 18,000 tons of steel. Over 8-foot deep of high density concrete was needed to support the load where the cube is located.



## 1967

What do all of these things have in common with Laurel Steel?

- *Rolling Stone Magazine*
- *The Big Mac*
- *Hyundai Motor Company*
- *1st Handheld Calculator*
- *Hakim Optical*
- *Ralph Lauren Co.*
- *Perry Ellis International*
- *The world's first ATM*
- *Southwest Airlines Co.*
- *Warner Music Canada*
- *Countertop Microwave*
- *Novotel Hotel Group*
- *Ding Dongs & Ho Hos*
- *Expo 67 in Montreal*
- *Paramount Television*
- *Battleship Board game*
- *Slurpee from 7-Eleven*

They all got their start in 1967!!!

## *KASTO Completion*

The period of 2000 to 2001 were 2 years for major investment with the installation of KASTO and the 2 drawing lines. Working around these 3 projects while we remained very busy created many challenges.

Attempting to load products while building an addition right where the trucks go in and out just complicated issues more. Thank goodness we had a great team that was able to navigate all obstacles that arose.

With the addition of the new lines and Kasto, Laurel was well positioned to take even better care of our customers. Laurel Steel has earned a reputation of providing the highest quality product and service and it's what has kept our customers coming back.



## **KASTO STORAGE SYSTEM**

At the heart of Laurel Steel's commitment to Just-In-Time delivery is the remarkable KASTO Storage System. At 85 feet tall, containing 2,300 storage cassettes and a load capacity of 18,000 tons, it's the largest of its kind in the world.

The KASTO system, housed on the Laurel Steel site in a specially-designed 95-ft high building, features two gantry cranes and an automated inventory control system. Workers load bundled product into a steel cassette from one of the system's several commissioning stations. The fully automated retrieval system uses 2 simultaneously working gantry cranes, located on either side of the tower.

The system employs a random storage location principle that increases overall speed. The system's unique design minimizes floor space needed for storage, and improves overall productivity. Pick times are reduced to just 40 seconds from five to ten minutes in the old system.

## *Investing In Mesh*

In 2003, Laurel invested in a new EVG Mesh line to support the business that we had in Canadian mining and construction. Like the Cold Finished business, it was important to us to have the right equipment in order to provide our customers with the highest quality and service. The new EVG line would run at more than double the speed of our old line.



**EVG MESH LINE**

## *Growing Our Small Bars*

In 2005, we were investing again in Cold Finish. This time it was a new 10 ton line to replace our 10 ton Miyazaki that was old and worn out. Our focus here was on the shapes business that Laurel had always been strong in.

## *Losing Someone Special*

March 26, 2005 marked the end of an era. After a brave fight, Milton Harris succumbed to his battle with stomach cancer. He will forever be remembered as a pioneer in the Canadian Steel industry. In spite of this loss, the reins of the entire Harris Steel Group were left in the good hands of John Harris, Milt's nephew.

## *A Year Of Change*

The year 2007 marked a year of significant change. First, Laurel purchased LEC Steel, a wire and mesh producer located in Brantford, Ontario.

Immediately following that deal, Harris Steel announced that they had been acquired by Nucor Corp. Harris and Nucor had been working together for a number of years on the Rebar front. This deal would also positively affect Laurel Steel and Fisher Ludlow, a grating manufacturer also located in Burlington.

## *Becoming A Part Of Nucor*

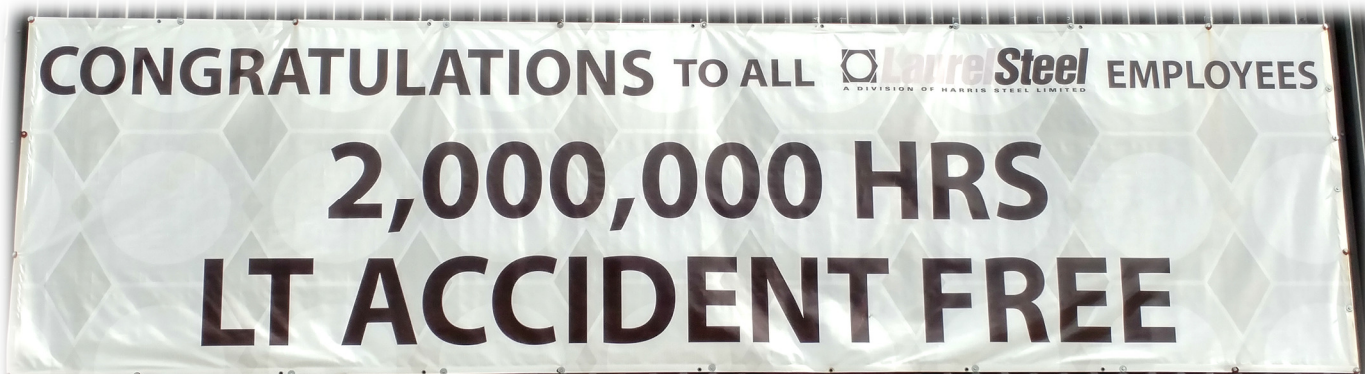
In the days after being acquired by Nucor one of the things that became clear was their attitude about safety. It was well known across Nucor that the first responsibility of every GM was to take care of their team. That meant creating a workplace that every teammate could feel safe coming to everyday.



## *Focus on Safety*

Laurel was already great in many ways but Nucor taught us what it meant to be world class. With the guidance of Dave Camozzi, our President at the time, Laurel went from being a place where injuries would occur to a place where they are few and far between.

Laurel didn't just talk about being safe, we embraced it. Nothing is more important than safety; ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. At one point we went 6 years without a lost time accident and 2 years without recordable's/medical aids, no small feat for a steel company!



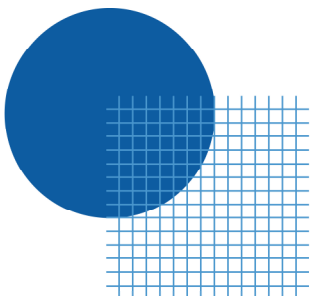


## Surviving The 2008 Recession

Fortunately for companies like Nucor, their strong balance sheets and history of fiscal responsibility allowed us to weather the 2008 recession. In spite of that, there was no question that the playing field changed. Growth slowed and imports became a real threat to the North American steel industry. Harris, Laurel and Nucor all had the same philosophy of using downturns to get better and capitalize on the good times.

### *Closure of LEC Brantford*

While things were slowly getting better out in the market, Laurel always looked at what we could do to make us stronger. In 2014, we made the decision to close LEC in Brantford and consolidate operations in Burlington. This created a lot of work for our team, having to decommission equipment in Brantford and have it installed in Burlington. During this time of change, it was paramount that our customers didn't feel any negative effects.



**Laurel-LEC Steel**  
A DIVISION OF HARRIS STEEL LIMITED

While the changes took some time to take effect, we soon started to realize the benefits of bringing everything under one roof. The teammates that came over from LEC helped us improve and helped provide the market knowledge and industry leadership we needed to be successful.

### *KASTO Upgrade*

With the largest stage being completed over 2 weeks in July, our team had to manage around two other 1-week outages with the KASTO system upgrade. The Laurel team did a phenomenal job working around these challenges. After some organizing with customers, we managed to do this massive upgrade in one of our busiest years in some time. The Laurel team always rises to the challenge!

### *The Future*

The future continues to look bright for Laurel. We have positioned ourselves well, with our investments in the operation, growing a solid team that is willing to adapt as the needs present themselves.

Being part of Nucor has helped Laurel improve and we will continue to do so. Being part of a great company where we can accomplish great things and help one another improve is a part of a successful format.

## OUR SAFETY STANDARDS

At Laurel Steel nothing is more important than safety; ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. Our safety policy is "Safety we demand, prevention in our plan."

Safety is not a number, or a banner, safety is in each of us. We all have something that we look forward to outside of the workplace, that's why we work safe. We work safe for our families, our friends, our teammates and ourselves.

At Laurel Steel we respect that our workers expect to go home safe everyday. That's why there is absolutely nothing is more important than safety; ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.

Laurel has many teams working on safety. We are much stronger as a team than any one individual. Whether it's one of our monthly teams, the Big Safety Team or the Joint Health & Safety Team, we work together to be innovative on safety, keep things fresh and to prevent the next accident.

From 2010 to 2015, Laurel was awarded with Nucor's Presidents Safety Award for Excellence in Safety. That is well above industry average and we are on target to earn this award in 2017. Thanks to everyone for making safety a priority over the past 50 years!



## ***A Team To Be Proud Of***

Laurel Steel is not just a business; it's a family. Caring about one another is part of what has made us great over the years.

A leader in safety, quality and service make Laurel Steel a place that our team is very proud of! Laurel is now seeing a transformation taking place to be ready for the next 50 years. We all knew the day would come when some of our seasoned teammates would start to retire and new ones would come into the fold to carry the flag for years to come.

As grateful as we are for those teammates that set us on the path to success, we also look forward to what the next generation brings.

# ***THANK YOU***

**TO OUR CUSTOMERS**

**TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS**

**TO THE COMMUNITY OF BURLINGTON**

**TO OUR TEAM**