

Celebrating the Legacy of Kundinger CEO Tom J. Kundinger



The life of Tom J. Kundinger is a masterclass in building a foundation that supports family, future and industry. Tom passed away in June 2025, leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire our organization. Now, we honor the hardworking man who helped shape Kundinger, Inc. into what it is today and taught us all the values of leadership and generosity.

A Foundation in Hard Work and Family

Tom's career with Kundinger started long before he became the leader we all knew. From a young age, he held a role in the family business.

"I was 12 years old. My job, at that point in time, was when the phone would ring, I'd have to run down and shut the washer and dryer off so that it didn't interfere with the phone call to the customer," Tom said during Kundinger's 60th anniversary in 2021.

Those humble beginnings shaped Tom's work ethic early on. He learned what it meant to start at the ground level, to work as a team and to build a legacy you could share with those you loved. That perspective guided him as he worked his way through the organization over the years.

Carving a New Path in Wisconsin

Tom moved his family to Wisconsin in 1980 to oversee a new Kundinger operation, expecting it to be a temporary assignment. However, over time, they fell in love with the state and chose to plant roots there.

In that time, Tom rolled up his sleeves and worked side by side with his team, earning trust, understanding Kundinger's customers and learning what made the community unique.



Tom in the 1960's in a three-piece suit; Fenton, Michigan.

“And just to give you a little story,” Tom shared in his 2021 interview, “Back in the early 70s, if I went to an automotive customer, I had to wear a three-piece suit and a tie. That was mandatory in Michigan. I’d be in foundries, engine plants and other places in the automotive industry where they needed hydraulics and pneumatics. But I’d still be dressed in a three-piece suit.

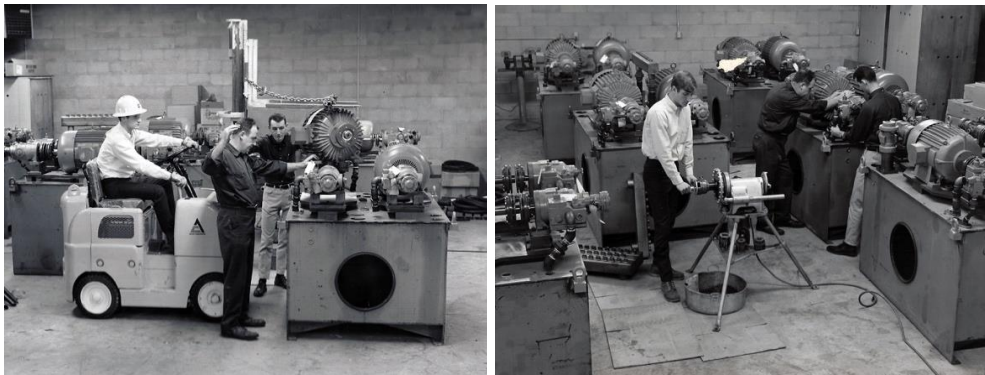
So, I came over to Wisconsin, working with the guys here, I was still used to wearing a three-piece suit. I’d go into these little manufacturing facilities up in Wisconsin, and everybody would kind of look at me when I walked in with a three-piece suit.

Finally, one guy stopped me on the way out and said, ‘Tommy, I really love you, but I’m going to tell you right now—don’t you ever come back here wearing a suit and tie. If you do, we won’t let you in.’

That was the kind of thing that really endeared me to Wisconsin.”

Tom became a second-generation leader of Kundinger Inc., succeeding his father, Thomas A. Kundinger, and guiding the company into a new era of growth.

What began as a small operation in Wisconsin, with two locations, flourished under Tom’s leadership, eventually expanding to seven Wisconsin locations. He amplified Kundinger’s offerings, growing into manufacturing, service and repair and other areas and industries where customers needed innovative solutions.



Tom operating a forklift (left) and a power unit (right).

Industry and Community

Tom’s future-forward approach to leadership and mentorship reflected his genuine care for people and his passion for advancing the fluid power and automation industries.

Early on, he recognized the need to spark interest and attract young talent to the field. Tom focused his efforts into his involvement with the [Fluid Power Distributors Association](#) (FPDA). One of Tom's key contributions was helping to launch the FPDA Young Executives group, a platform to mentor and involve the next generation of industry professionals. This platform laid the foundation for FPDA's [Future Leaders in Motion](#) (FLM) program, a 13-month mentorship and training program that equips emerging leaders in the fields of fluid power and automation with the tools, knowledge and connections they need to advance.

This commitment to supporting future leaders inspired the Kunderinger family to establish the [Thomas J. Kunderinger Foundation](#), which will help FLM program participants access this valuable educational experience. For Tom, cultivating the potential in young talent and creating opportunities was central to his vision. Through his foundation, his legacy will continue to shape the future of the industry he cared for so deeply.

A Legacy of Showing Up

While there's no doubt he had success in business, Tom's proudest accomplishment was his family. He found his greatest joy in spending time with his wife, Joanne, and their children. He was the proud father of five sons and grandfather to nine grandchildren. Tom especially cherished the time they spent together in Mexico where he made memories while deep sea fishing – something he truly enjoyed doing.



To Tom, being a family man meant always showing up. His sons fondly remember him as the sideline coach, the cheerleader and the generous sponsor of their countless youth sports teams over the years.

Together with Joanne, Tom held a firm belief that all individuals should be given the opportunity to feel accomplished in their endeavors supported causes that gave individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in the workplace.

If you knew Tom, he wasn't about standing still. He was about being present, working hard and giving back to support his community and his family. He carried that same determination into the next generation, with three of his sons who now lead Kundinger with strength, grace and the same passion for their work and community. At Kundinger, Inc., we strive to honor Tom's legacy by continuing Kundinger's tradition of service and embodying the generosity and dedication that defined his life.

In honor of Tom, donations can be made to the [Thomas J. Kundinger Foundation](#) to continue supporting the causes they cared deeply about.



Appleton firm moves operation to Neenah

By Megan Mulholland
PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF KANE

NEENAH — Kundinger Fluid Power has moved to its new office, warehouse and training center at 244 Progress Court in Neenah's South Industrial Park.

The 22,000-square-foot facility, which includes state-of-the-art computer-controlled warehouse equipment, cost more than \$1.5 million. The structure doubled the office space, added customer training and equipment assembly areas and increased warehouse space to accommodate the firm's rapid growth.

Previously, Kundinger Fluid Power was located at 1818 S. Van Dyke Road, Appleton, and its High-Tech Systems Division, which designs and builds hydraulic and pneumatic systems, was at 3457 Progress Court, Neenah.

"Hydra-Tech, as a manufacturing facility, uses a lot of the company's space, so we had to move them out and this area was free, saving space for all the other stuff," Kundinger says.

The Kundinger Fluid division was founded in 1964 and moved to its new building in the South Industrial Park about a year ago in November. It is a 22,000-square-foot building, Kundinger says. "We're definitely going to add some equipment."

The firm recently promoted three employees: Ken Van Lierne to vice president-elect and

