

As the Kawasaki Sales Person of the Year, the winner of the 2007 Bill Gibbs Award is...

Tom Richard, G.W. Van Keppel

“ We are very pleased to announce that Kawasaki has presented the coveted ‘Bill Gibbs’ award for outstanding salesmanship and commitment to Kawasaki to Tom Richard. ”

– Gary Bell, Vice-President, General Manager, Kawasaki

“We are very pleased to announce that Kawasaki has presented the coveted ‘Bill Gibbs’ award for outstanding salesmanship and commitment to Kawasaki to Tom Richard of G.W. Van Keppel in Arkansas,” announced Gary S. Bell, Vice President, General Manager, Kawasaki Construction Machinery. The award was presented to Tom at the recently held Kawasaki Sales Council Meeting in Las Vegas.

Tom is currently the General Manager — Arkansas for Van Keppel, a Kawasaki dealer in Arkansas and St. Louis. He has been with the company and its predecessor, Mitchell Machinery, for 12 years. Tom, however, didn’t start his career in equipment sales until relatively recently. His father had been in the quarry business and he grew up around heavy equipment. But initially he had youthful ambitions of becoming a lawyer. And in 1995, when G.W. Van Keppel advertised for a territory salesman after the purchase of Mitchell Machinery, Tom was owner of a furniture store. “I saw a better opportunity for myself and my family when the territory sales job came open,” said Tom. “They hired me and I worked the Arkansas territory till 2001

when they made me a Branch Manager. Several years later I became General Manager for Arkansas, responsible for the Little Rock and Van Buren stores.

“The award was a complete surprise to me,” continued Tom. “I am very honored. But I had a lot of help from the support staff, parts, and service. To be successful takes a total team effort.”

“Tom represents the characteristics that Kawasaki looks for in awarding the Bill Gibbs,” said Gary. “We don’t necessarily select the top volume salesman every year. Rather we select a salesman that exhibits professionalism and skill. Tom is not only professional but is committed to Kawasaki loaders. He believes in the product and our company philosophy of customer satisfaction. He is also committed to his customers and has built strong relationships that have paid off in consistent volume and market share. Tom is a great representative of Kawasaki and we are proud to present him with this recognition.”

Congratulations, Tom!

BACKGROUND ON THE BILL GIBBS AWARD

The award was established by Kawasaki as a memorial to the late Bill Gibbs, Sales Representative, GS Equipment, Inc. of Tampa, Florida, who was the number one Kawasaki Wheel Loader salesman in North America for over ten years. He was known for his professionalism and his attitude. He always represented himself, his distributorship, and his manufacturers in the most ethical manner. Gibbs passed away in February 1999. The first Bill Gibbs Award was presented for the 2000 Sales Person of the Year.



(L to R) John Roseberry, National Accounts Manager, Kawasaki Construction Machinery; 2007 Bill Gibbs’ Award winner Tom Richard, The G.W. Van Keppel Company; Aaron Reicherts, Regional Sales Manager, Kawasaki Construction Machinery; Gary S. Bell, Vice President, General Manager, Kawasaki Construction Machinery.