

CONKLIN® ROOFING SYSTEMS



**IN THE COMPANY OF
CHAMPIONS**

for 45 years!



Charles W. Herbster, 1992

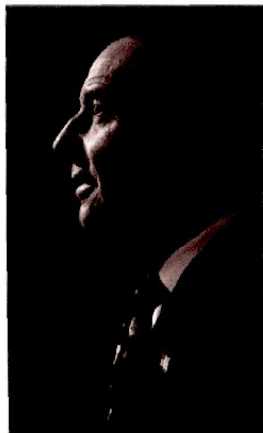
A message from the owner

Conklin's pursuit to make quality, American-made products has provided self-reliance, determination, and the reward of independence for countless business owners. These key business-building opportunities and lessons have been instrumental in developing brighter futures for generations of Conklin Distributors.

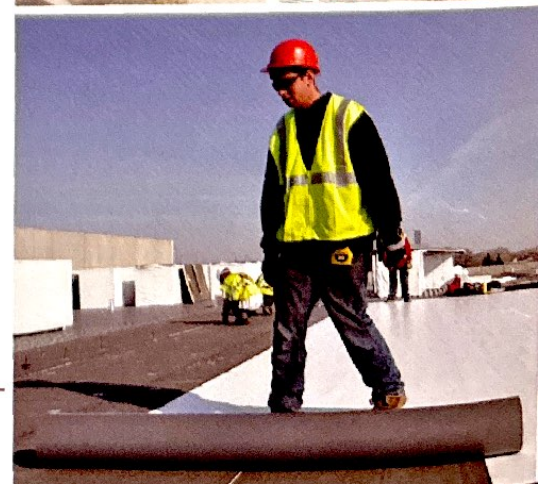
Celebrate the unique history and tremendous future of Conklin Roofing Systems by taking a look at the start of it all. We paved the way as pioneers in the white, reflective roof coating industry, blowing the doors open for countless contractors who made Conklin Roofing Systems an integral part of their successful businesses.

You might be the next commercial roofing and building contractor whose life and business is forever positively changed by Conklin Roofing Systems, just as it has impacted the lives of countless others. However, don't take my word for it. See how you can build upon decades of excellence with Conklin Roofing Systems!

Charles W. Herbster
Owner
Chief Executive Officer
President



Cover photo courtesy of Seth Keehn





BUILDING PRODUCTS AND CONTRACTORS *to last a lifetime*

With well over one billion square feet of commercial roofing products and coatings applied across America, Conklin Roofing Systems and the dedicated contractors affiliated with our company have become a nationally recognized force in the industry. Spurred on by an increasingly cost- and energy-conscious general public, the reflective, white roofing segment of the commercial roofing market has exploded in growth since its inception in the mid-1970s.

In June 1977, the Conklin Company introduced a new elastomeric commercial roof coating, Rapid Roof®, the first acrylic roof coating ever created and produced. How a manufacturing and network marketing company that specialized in mostly vehicle lubrications and agricultural products came to pioneer and then blaze the trail globally for the white roofing industry is a compelling tale worth telling.

"All of us, from employees to Distributors, were very proud that no one else in America had what we had. Rapid Roof was the first product of its kind, and we took great pride in making and filling each batch."

- Vern Pickus
52-year Conklin Employee

It all started more than 45 years ago with a seemingly simple request from some of the fledgling Conklin Company's Distributors focused on agriculture. "Can Conklin make a high-quality red barn paint?" That request, along with the research and development quest that soon followed, was the genesis of Conklin Roofing Systems.

Legend has it that in the early months of 1976, a Conklin employee had finished performing a test with the un-tinted, white prototype barn paint and accidentally left a 5-gallon pail of product uncovered out in the spring warmth and sunshine. When the research team discovered the bucket of paint the next morning, a great deal of water had evaporated, leaving a liquid too thick to use as paint. As the research and development team brainstormed how not to waste this altered material, someone posed the creative question that would prove to profoundly change the destiny of the Conklin Company and thousands of roofing contractor families: "What if we rolled or spread this white coating out on flat roofs?"

Such a question seems pedestrian in today's 21st century commercial roofing environment, but in the mid-1970s, this question bordered on the absurd. While rapidly expanding technological advances like the automobile, manned flight, television, and walking on the moon had revolutionized the way Americans lived and worked in the first half of the 20th century, very little had changed in the commercial roofing industry. The application of hot tar and gravel roof systems still dominated the industry in the 1970s, largely unchanged since this system was first created in the early 1800s. Dirty, dangerous, short-lived, and horribly energy inefficient, tar and gravel roof systems were virtually the only option for flat roofs. Spray polyurethane foam and single-ply roofing products were yet to be invented or were still in the infancy stages.

As the Conklin Company Research and Development team began to experiment with this thick, water-based coating, they discovered that the product was extremely durable and easy to work with and apply. They also quickly realized that, when applied over dark roofs, the white coating reflected an astonishing amount of the sun's heat and damaging ultraviolet rays. Again, this concept seems simple today given our understanding of why sunglasses are a must when you mix direct sunlight and snow-covered terrain, but no one had yet applied this natural phenomenon to commercial roofing.

The excitement grew as the team at Conklin daydreamed about the potential to enter and make a splash in the construction and roofing industry with the very first energy-efficient coating. The as-yet-unnamed prototype roof coating was sent to a lab in Arizona for accelerated aging and weather testing in 1976 and early 1977. This laboratory

testing was able to simulate 10 years of normal aging and weathering in just two seasons. The new coating destined to forever change the roofing industry passed this testing with flying colors and the Conklin Company quickly moved to rollout this exciting product.

June 30, 1977, was a watershed day for the Conklin Company as Distributors gathered from around the nation to take part in the birth of the Roofing Systems Division. The new elastomeric roof coating named Rapid Roof was introduced to an overflow crowd of excited Conklin Distributors and employees at the Knights of Columbus meeting hall in Shakopee, Minn., during a one-day product training seminar. Event organizers at Conklin were uncertain just how many Distributors would decide to take part in this new product rollout and training event, arranging an ambitious number of 400 box lunches just in case. The depth of interest and enthusiasm in Rapid Roof was displayed when over 800 people showed up to take part in the historic event!

Over four and a half decades may have passed, but there are still a number of Conklin Distributors and employees able to give eyewitness accounts of what it was like to be there that day in June 1977. Conklin Company Owner, Chief Executive Officer, and President Charles W. Herbster laughed as he remembered the event. "I sat in the front row and left full of new knowledge and excitement, but starving because we ran out of lunches!" Charles was a young Conklin Director in the summer of 1977, and he quickly saw the potential of Rapid Roof. "Along with many others, I was totally convinced that the Conklin



Company would forever be changed for the good by creating and introducing Rapid Roof. We now had gained access to an entirely new set of potential customers," noted Charles. He paused and then went on to say, "That day was absolutely one of the most pivotal moments in the over 50-year history of our company."

During a chat at their kitchen table in Arizona not long before he passed away, legendary Conklin leader and Distributor Jim Boyle recalled that he and his wife, Bev, arrived to the Knights of Columbus meeting hall on time, but due to the overflow crowd, were forced to watch the proceedings on close-circuit televisions in the basement of the building.

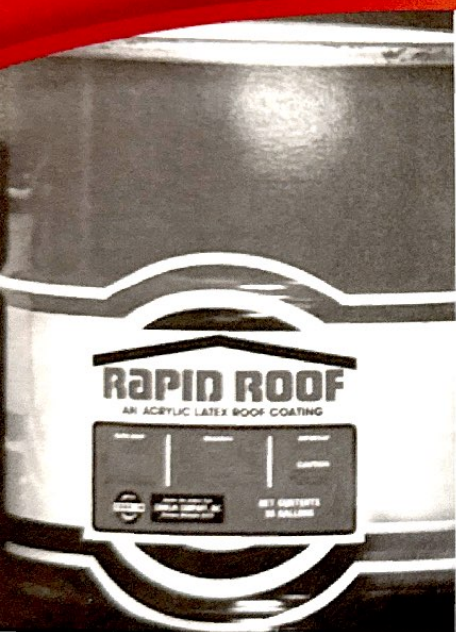
"My memories of the event are in black and white, because we were watching it on TV!" grumbled Jim good-naturedly. With a dazzling smile, Bev chimed in and proclaimed, "The atmosphere that day was positively electric!"

Even though his focus was on growing his Conklin business based on agriculture, longtime Minnesota Distributor Dennis Dammen said he remembers the palpable excitement of the day as the possible uses and applications of Rapid Roof were

detailed to the folks present. Dennis stated, "Someone in a witty moment that morning immediately coined the phrase 'Conklin's bucket brigade!'"

Even with his optimistic nature, early Conklin leader and Distributor Ben Welch admitted that looking back, he didn't dream big enough when it came to the future potential of Rapid Roof. "We just had no idea how big roofing could be for Conklin and how we would play a huge part in shaping the very industry across America," Ben mused as he thought back over the last 45 plus years.

By July 15, 1977, Conklin was ready and prepared for the first orders of Rapid Roof to be sold to Distributors. Today, Barb Kroyer is one of Conklin's longest-serving employees, but in 1977, she was a brand-new member of the Sales Center team. Barb said it was almost overwhelming to take all the incoming Rapid Roof orders down by hand in those days before computer systems. "There was a near constant stream of pick-up trucks, every type of trailer, and even grain trucks that arrived in Shakopee and the 11 regional distribution centers to pick up the 2- and 5-gallon pails of Rapid Roof that summer and fall," marveled Barb as she thought back to that period of fast-paced growth for the Conklin Company.



While there had been extensive lab testing conducted on Rapid Roof, the new roof coating product had actually only been installed on two test roofs prior to the June 1977 rollout and initial training program. Rich McPhillips of Columbus, Neb., has crystal clear memories of what it was like to be a roofing contractor helping to conduct field testing of Rapid Roof in those early years. "We really weren't rivals with other Conklin contractors. Instead, we would constantly talk amongst each other and with the Conklin staff team about what was working and what we could do better to make Rapid Roof a success. Conklin knew a lot about Rapid Roof as a product, but the company relied on us to help it learn about how Rapid Roof would work in application." With pride evident in his voice, Rich went on to say, "That spirit of unity and of cooperation has largely continued unabated for over 45 years. It's a legacy unique to Conklin in the construction and roofing industry."

In today's fast-changing corporate business climate, it is exceedingly rare for someone to spend an entire career with one organization. Vern Pickus is one such individual. Since the Conklin Company's beginning in 1969, Vern has been a dedicated, loyal, and valued member of the employee team. For 50 years, Vern has enjoyed a front row seat to every change and every season of growth at Conklin. When Rapid Roof was introduced in 1977, Vern worked as a compounder in the newly expanded Conklin production facility. "It was so exciting to come to work every day! WEX® had been introduced a few years earlier and, all of a sudden, we were extremely busy manufacturing vehicle, agricultural, and roofing products." During that summer, Vern volunteered to work the night shift on the production line and quickly was made the supervisor of the second shift. With a chuckle, Vern recalled, "In those days, you could buy a 5-gallon pail of Rapid Roof for \$66! All of us, from employees to Distributors, were very proud that no one else in America had what we had. Rapid Roof was the first product of its kind, and we took great pride in making and filling each batch."

With Rapid Roof as its flagship product, the Roofing Systems and Building Products Division of Conklin quickly grew with the introduction of Wall-Up® elastomeric masonry coating later that summer, and with the introduction of Kwik Kaulk® in early 1978. Another native Nebraskan, Gordie Scarborough, was an eyewitness to that fateful June day in Shakopee. "I drove up the day before, because I wanted to make sure I got a seat at the Rapid Roof introduction," noted Gordie from his hometown of Grand Island. "We had so much belief and so much confidence in Conklin that I started a roofing company with four other guys that summer in addition to the diesel mechanic shop and trucking company I owned."

The year 1978 would prove to be very instrumental in the development of Conklin Roofing Systems. In April, Grand

Island was pummeled with a severe hailstorm that left virtually every residential and commercial roof damaged. Gordie's roofing company was still in its infancy, but he received a call that spring after the hailstorm from Joyce Hornaday, the owner and founder of the largest bullet manufacturing company in the world and one of the largest employers in the Grand Island community. Joyce had a large problem: a severely damaged and leaking metal roof and too much business to shut down the facility in order to replace the metal. Joyce heard that Gordie sold and installed reflective roof coatings. The two entrepreneurs worked out a possible solution. While it hadn't yet been done, Gordie proposed to use Rapid Roof and Kwik Kaulk to prepare and coat the metal roof of Mr. Hornaday's facility without forcing any work stoppages. "We went through a whole lot of 5-gallon buckets of Rapid Roof and Kwik Kaulk on that 80,000-square-foot roof that summer," laughed Gordie. "We used one Graco 333 sprayer that had a maximum output of 1 gallon per minute."

The successful completion of that first coatings-over-metal roofing project ushered in the era of the first roofing system at the Conklin Company. Gordie's ingenuity and bold creativity led to what we now know as the MR System®. Today, Conklin Roofing Systems is known around the nation for its diverse, in-depth, and multi-faceted roofing systems.

Within a few short months, there was a tremendous desire from many Conklin contractors across America to learn just how Gordie had grown his business so quickly, and see exactly how he was using Rapid Roof and Kwik Kaulk in inventive ways on different roof types. During the fall and winter of 1978-1979, Gordie and Charles W. Herbster traveled to over 40 states and conducted more than 150 meetings with Distributors and prospects in a campaign that came to be known as the Winter Freedom Drive. They crisscrossed the lower 48 states in a special Conklinaire motorhome designed and made special for this campaign. "I will never forget that time," remembered Gordie as he harkened back to all those meetings and miles. "That trip taught me how to speak in front of a crowd and how to be endlessly positive. I've relied on both over the years."

"I will also never forget that time, because when the Winter Freedom Drive rolled through western Kansas, we made a stop in the town of Wakeeney," recalled Charles. "I can remember that meeting like it was yesterday, because I met a stunningly beautiful young Distributor named Judy!" That brand-new Distributor soon became Mrs. Judy Herbster. That meeting began a more than 35-year business partnership and marriage that forever changed the future of a proud company, and it positively impacted the lives of thousands of people across the nation. "Without the introduction and tremendous growth of Rapid Roof that necessitated the Winter Freedom Drive,

I might never have met Judy," softly commented Charles. He concluded by saying, "The story of Rapid Roof and the beginning of Conklin Roofing Systems is really the story of Judy and me." By the conclusion of the Winter Freedom Drive, hundreds of contractors had the knowledge and the confidence to go out and grow their roofing businesses.

Joyce Hornaday has since passed away, the Grand Island, Neb., Hornaday facility has been built on to and expanded numerous times, and Gordie has fully retired from a 40-year Conklin roofing career, but that original Conklin MR roofing project is still providing service today all these years later.

Like the stories of Ford Motor Company, Microsoft, Carnegie Steel, and many others, the story of the Conklin Company and of Conklin Roofing Systems is a tale of grit and determination forged in free enterprise and the American Dream. Persistence through the good times and bad has defined our company from the very beginning. Conklin Roofing Systems has delivered four and a half decades of superior performance by relying on the finest professional contractors in existence and never cutting corners to produce the highest-quality products anywhere. Charles W. Herbster accurately summed up why Conklin Roofing Systems has not only survived, but continues to thrive after more than 45 years. "You are never going to hear us say that our products are just like one of our competitors. Instead, we often hear that competitors say that their products are just like Conklin's, only cheaper! We will never sacrifice quality and we will never compare ourselves to someone else."

Uncompromising quality and a deep commitment to excellence from Conklin Roofing Systems and the contractors who have loyally used our products and systems over the years has made this over four and a half decade success story what it is. With one foot firmly planted in the proud heritage of our past, we plant our other foot firmly in the bright future confident in the secure knowledge that our best days at Conklin Roofing Systems are yet to come. ♦

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- Rich McPhillips



