

Winchester Legend Award: Marion McCollum

Last year, Winchester® presented the first “Winchester Legend Award” to six-time Olympic shooting medalist, Kim Rhode. Now, Winchester honors outdoor marketing luminary Marion McCollum of Mack’s Prairie Wings with the presentation of its second Winchester Legend Award.

Many stories of success include right place-right time. In the case of Mack’s and the McCollum family, it was virtually a matter of being there at the time of the creation of the time and the place. You can begin with the vast grassland of Grand Prairie in the Mississippi Delta in eastern Arkansas. This was a waterfowl paradise from before the time of Columbus, and became only more so as the area grew into a major world producer of rice. And the story of Mack’s is found in the heart of the Grand Prairie on Main Street in Stuttgart in the McCollum Hardware store.



For generations Stuttgart had been known to waterfowlers including Winchester's John Olin who every season rented a floor of the city's Riceland Hotel for a full month in the season to house himself and his hunting friends. It was against this background that Marion's father, M. T. McCollum, saw the possibilities of catering to the unique needs and wants of waterfowl hunters.



In 1945, he essentially pioneered the waterfowling sales business by cutting an archway into the side of the hardware store and adding a department just for duck and goose hunters. By 1967 the McCollum's had outgrown the original hardware store and moved to a new, larger facility, moving again in 2000 to the 42,000-square-feet of retail space that Mack's Prairie Wings now occupies.



Growing up in Stuttgart, Marion was waterfowling from as far back as he can remember. He also spent many years guiding waterfowlers as a young man. So it was in his upbringing, tradition, and even his nature when he took his place alongside his father at Mack's at the start of the 1960s.

In 1992 on a flight with his long-time vice-president Chuck Lock, Marion decided it was time to look at expanding in a new, but related, direction and pulled an airline-mall catalog out of the seat pocket and started mapping out the strategy for what would be Mack's mail-order business, beginning in 1993. Today, Mack's fulfills thousands of orders from its 95,000-square-foot shipping warehouse.

At 78, Marion has been "Mack's" for fifty years, and worked for waterfowl as a major donor to Ducks Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl, served seven years on the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and on the Board of the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation. He has been inducted into the Legends of the Outdoors Hall of Fame and the Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame, has Arkansas's Marion McCollum Greenlee Lake named for him, and is now a Winchester Legend.

McCollum and Mack's have worked with Winchester for many years and consider it one of their best associations in the industry. As Chuck Lock put it, it's better to have one outstanding partner like Winchester than four lesser ones.

HIT UP LEGENDARY

