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## Family Values in an American Family Business

Con-Tech International, a New Orleans based [global parts supplier](#), has been family owned and operated since 1983. Its roots, founding and operations today typify the evolution of an American family business and the family values that it embodies.

[Company founder](#), the late Robert George Evans Jr. (“Robbie”), valued his country, his city, and his family. He had the entrepreneurial drive that made America, and he was proud to have created Con-Tech and developed its high standards of quality and service. Con-Tech routinely was featured in the City Business Top Private Companies in New Orleans. True to his roots, Robbie stated in a 2015 interview, “New Orleans is our home and we prefer to bring in and ship products from New Orleans whenever possible.” Robbie’s family and employees are proud to carry on his company and his vision.



### **DEEP AMERICAN ROOTS**

Robbie's family started in commerce before the birth of the American nation. His Welsh ancestor Richard Evans came here at the dawn of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and, as the wealthy landowner he later became, donated part of his land with other "patentees" to form the District of Columbia. Relatives Edward, Hugh and Richard Evans fought in the Revolutionary War, one of them under the command of Daniel Morgan. Ancestor George Evans fought in the Union Army during the Civil War, while Evans uncles and dad fought valiantly in World War II. But Robbie's mom boasted that the family's achievements should always include her work as a welder on the Higgins landing craft, so critical to Allied D-Day success!

### **EARLY DRUM ROOTS**

Robbie and his son and Con-Tech Executive Vice President Robert G. Evans III, have drums in their blood. They hail from a long line of drum makers here in New Orleans dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Robbie's Great Uncle Charles Evans was president of Chickasaw Barrel Company in New Orleans, where Robbie's grandfather started as a cooper. His grandfather then converted his backyard stables into his own cooperage, where he purchased and repaired secondhand wooden barrels collected by wagon. Robbie's dad worked there, at Chickasaw, and then formed Evans Cooperage Company. There Robbie, his twin brother and his sister learned about manufacturing, reconditioning and filling steel drums. From the age of twelve, Robbie assumed various tasks at Evans, where he rose to the position of Vice President, eventually serving at Evans locations in Louisiana, Texas, and Missouri before founding Con-Tech in 1983.

Thus it is not surprising that Con-Tech began selling industrial steel drum parts and related items, still a vital component of the business today. This journey started with the first load of knock down drums he imported from Venezuela in 1984 to the steel coils Con-Tech imports today.



### **DIVERSIFICATION AT CON-TECH**

Con-Tech then grew beyond the drum industry into an international corporation supplying diverse goods to industries in the Americas, Europe and Asia. Hundreds of products were designed and manufactured under his tutelage, ranging from IBC accessories; marine hardware in a vast array of materials and applications; custom products in high precision stainless steel, specialty metals and plastic; beer keg necks and other specialty beverage parts; stair treads; and a tremendous number of drum and pail components and supplies. And millions of tons of steel coils and discs found their way into American commerce through Robbie's diligence.

### **STRONG INDUSTRY TIES**

Part of Robbie's legacy is that Con-Tech treats its customers and suppliers like an extended family and has decade-long ties with both suppliers and customers. Whether providing standard and custom parts of carbon steel, stainless steel and plastic for industrial packaging such as drums, IBC's, tote tanks, plastic containers, or other diverse products to the petrochemical, marine, [automotive and other industries](#), personal relationships are paramount. Many of these relationships have lasted over 30 years and spanned many family weddings, conferences and shared meals throughout the world.

Excellent relationships allow Con-Tech to maintain its global network and quickly provide proposals [for custom manufactured products](#). From concept through design, prototyping, production, import and delivery, Con-Tech sources manufacturing expertise in casting, machining, stamping, fabricating and assembly and offers suggestions and alternatives to save customers money, making customer satisfaction a top priority.

### **GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY**

Strong family values and commitment to the community are ingrained at Con-Tech as they were with its founder. Following Hurricane Katrina, Robbie devoted hundreds of hours every year to improving New

Orleans public schools and the lives of the children attending them. As was stated in a tribute to him in the United States House of Representatives on March 27, 2017,

“Robbie helped lead a ‘Phoenix from the ashes’ movement in the New Orleans schools. The success was due to the need to throw away the old bureaucracy rules, and the attitude that the schools existed for the adults in them rather than for the kids. Robbie helped turn that all around, attracting national attention for the model...Robbie was a man of high character and integrity. He had a servant’s heart for his community and those who live in it.”

He advocated tirelessly for the inner-city students attending Lafayette Academy and Esperanza Charter School, the K-8 public charter schools operated by the Choice Foundation. He served as a Choice board member, Vice-Chairman and Executive Committee member, directing school management and focusing both attention and resources on educational reform. Whether in the classroom, the boardroom, or the Capitol, Robbie touched many lives with his zeal to leave New Orleans schools better than he found them. These efforts were part of Robbie’s commitment to equal rights, one he shared with his ancestor Dr. Israel Evans, who opened his Kentucky home as a stop for fugitive slaves on the underground railway.

#### **FAMILY VALUES TRIGGER FUTURE GROWTH**

Con-Tech’s business today is an extension business of its own core values of service and providing the best quality product to its customers. Barbara Ryniker Evans, Rob’s wife of 34 years and Con-Tech’s current President and CEO, maintains its commitment to being a customer-focused one-stop source for cost effective, high quality standard and custom products. Con-Tech’s overall commitment to excellence is what Con-Tech stands for. As she says,

“We have a multi-generational involvement in American industry. Our family name is involved at Con-Tech and in all that we do and that is important to us. We have long relationships with [reliable global suppliers](#) with proven track records. Our long standing relationships with these highly qualified suppliers help get the job done right for the customers, many of whom have also been with us for decades.

Our long family commitment to quality is evident I think in how we handle all of the logistics in our global business transactions from import to delivery. We have spent decades handling all of the issues that make global transactions frustrating from language barriers and cultural differences to fluctuating exchange rates and trade restrictions. We are not just making a sale; we are committed to providing the right product for the customer’s application, target price and timetable.”

This is a recipe for tremendous future growth for Con-Tech according to Evans. She sees Con-Tech building on its long-standing relationships throughout the world. As the world is getting smaller, many of the countries with which Con-Tech has strong ties offer many more business opportunities she claims. For example, crude steel production in Vietnam in 2018 was 14 million tons, which has increased five times over the last 10 years and Con-Tech is well positioned globally to take advantage of all of the growth opportunities there and elsewhere.

**What our customers say:**

**“Since 2006, we have been purchasing quality parts from Con-Tech International. What started out as the purchase of a single item has since grown into a vendor that warehouses and supplies more than 50 separate items for us, and that number is sure to increase. Con-Tech is not just a vendor, but has become an integral component of our supply chain and manufacturing process.”**

**K. Spahn**

**Lapeyre Stair Co. Inc.**

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