

Haller Institute recognizes alumnus as top entrepreneur

Posted October 31, 2017 ILSCO Extrusions, Inc



GREENVILLE, Pa.—The Thiel College Haller Enterprise Institute honors **John Thigpen '86** as its Entrepreneur of the Year at the Oct. 25 Entrepreneur of the Year Award Dinner and Ceremony.

A native of Beaver Pa., John Thigpen '86 graduated from Thiel College in 1986 with a degree in accounting and business administration. He is the son of Guy '49 and Janie '51, and brother to Becky '76, Gary '78, and Diane '81. After leaving Thiel, John moved to Erie, Pa. where he worked in public accounting. He became a licensed C.P.A. in 1989 and received his M.B.A. from Penn State Behrend in 1994.

Thigpen began his career in manufacturing working for Welch Foods. He advanced through a number of managerial roles before relocating to Mercer County in 1996 to join Werner Co. Thigpen climbed the ladder at Werner, taking over the commercial operations of its extruded aluminum business in early 2001.

In late 2005, Werner spun off its extruded products business and the factory in Greenville Pa. John became the founding officer and president of the new company, Signature Aluminum. The company grew and expanded quickly, doubling in size in just two short years. Unfortunately, during the recession of 2008, the company faced challenges related to its financing that proved to be insurmountable, and Signature Aluminum closed its doors in April 2009. Thigpen developed a plan to reopen the mill and found support in a longtime customer of the plant, ILSCO Corporation, a stable family-owned, 100+ year old company in the electrical products industry headquartered in Cincinnati.

In June 2010, ILSCO Extrusions was formed and after a few months of intensive restoration, the facility's equipment was humming once again. During the last seven years, Thigpen has directed a team of outstanding men and women who are proud to be American manufacturers. With a diversified customer base that includes its now vertically-integrated parent along with a group of long-term lease and supply agreement partners, IEI has positioned itself to succeed for the long haul.

Thigpen is also active in building the community. He is an officer and six-year board member for Mercer County's lead economic development corporation, Penn Northwest. Thigpen has served for 10 years on Thiel's advisory Board of Associates, and he was recently appointed to the board of directors for the Northwest Industrial Resource Center in Erie, one of seven IRCs across Pennsylvania.

John is married to Jodi (Fisher) Thigpen '87, and they have two adult daughters, Lauren and Christine.