

Inventor of molded fiber technology to be inducted into Paper Industry International Hall of Fame

Martin Keyes, founder of Keyes Fibre Company in 1903 and inventor of molded fiber technology will be inducted into the [Paper Industry International Hall of Fame \(PIIHF\)](#) on October 9.

As the father of molded fiber, Keyes significance to the industry and Huhtamaki is undeniable. Molded fiber products such as packaging for eggs, fruit and other food products, as well as cup carriers and packaging for electronics remain critical to the company's success.

Huhtamaki acquired the rights to market molded fiber products in Europe in the 1930s and eventually bought the Keyes Fibre Company in the late 1990s. The factory built in 1908 to house Keyes' expanding business still operates today in Waterville, ME as part of Huhtamaki, Inc. and is also the original factory for producing the CHINET® line of single-use tableware.

Nominating Martin Keyes

The nomination process for gaining this much-deserved honor for Keyes was spearheaded by Paul Anderson, Huhtamaki materials manager and resident mill historian in Waterville, ME and Waterville Mill Manager Ray McMullin.

However, the idea for nominating Martin Keyes for the PIIHF came from Marilyn Gardner, a former employee of Quality Assured who bought film for plastic bottles from Huhtamaki in Finland. While on a visit to Waterville, ME, recognizing the Huhtamaki name on the mill, she started to research the company to learn what Huhtamaki was doing in the United States and came across Martin Keyes' story.

"Marilyn is a volunteer for the PIIHF and she quickly realized how significant Mr. Keyes' contribution to the industry has been," Anderson said. "She thought Mr. Keyes should be nominated for induction and started with the Waterville Chamber of Commerce, then went to the Historical Society and eventually to Colby College in Waterville. The information eventually found its way back to the Huhtamaki plant from our connections to Colby College. That's when we started to work on the nomination."

After waiting out a backlog of nominations for nearly two years, Keyes' nomination was accepted and he will enter the PIIHF posthumously, 100 years after his death, in October.

Acceptance

Anderson and McMullin were notified of Keyes' impending induction into the hall of fame in May by Harry Spiegelberg, Chairman of the PIIHF.

"Our Honors Committee and Board of Directors recognize his contribution to the worldwide paper industry and we wish to honor him by including his name with other industry giants in the Hall of Fame," Spiegelberg said in the acceptance letter.

Since 1992, the PIIHF has inducted 117 people from 14 countries with careers spanning 19 centuries.

The Keyes family name

The Keyes name continues in business as the [Keyes Packaging Group](#) located in Wenatchee, WA. The CEO, Rebecca Kalis will attend the induction ceremony along with employees from Huhtamaki's Waterville plant.



Martin L. Keyes



Original molding machine from the Keyes Fibre company.