

Robert W. Baird



Mr. Baird's name was as good as gold, recalls John Seaman, who joined our firm in 1953. He describes an example that illustrated Mr. Baird's reputation.

"I went into a place to buy a drill on State Street. I gave [the clerk] my credit card and he said, 'We don't take credit cards.' I said, 'Will you take a check?' 'No,' he said. 'We like cash.' He said, 'Who do you work for?' I said, 'Robert Baird.' 'Oh, that's different,' he said. 'If you work for that old fella, your credit's good.'"

However, Mr. Baird was not wholly consumed by work. He loved to garden and work with wood, fashioning everything from his famous squirrel-proof birdhouses to cribbage boards he gave to friends. He was purported to have used a wood lathe in his living room, and he did not hesitate to collect chicken manure, which he used to fertilize his Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, gardens.



Listen to former chairman Brent Ruppel's recollections of Mr. Baird.