



Fred's farewell address was heartfelt and humorous.



Blue Chip Award winners donned holiday-themed apparel to greet guests at the Baird Holiday Party.



For the second time, the Milwaukee College Preparatory School – which Baird has been closely involved with for several years – provided the entertainment for the holiday party.



Bryce Edwards (left) says goodbye to long-time friends Fred Kasten and Paul Purcell.



Paul presents Fred with more than 500 hand-written notes of appreciation from Baird associates.

See you around

A fond holiday farewell to Fred Kasten

After 42 years, it is hard for many to imagine life at Baird without G. Frederick Kasten, Jr. And, if the “retirements” of past chairmen are any indication, they shouldn't have to.

“Brent Ruppel had an office at Baird until he was 81,” said Baird President & CEO Paul Purcell at the Baird Holiday Party in Milwaukee on Dec. 15. “I predict Mr. Kasten will outlive that record handily – will have an office and will visit us.”

Then Paul added, jokingly: “But it will be on the same schedule he's established the last six months. When the weather is nice, and Milwaukee Country Club is open for play, it's likely you'll find him on the 28th floor. But when the snow is flying and it's below 25 degrees, it's highly likely he'll be at Vero Beach.”

Fred – who will hand the Chairman title over to Paul when he officially retires at the end of the year – spoke very fondly of his time with Baird to the associates who'd braved a snowstorm to gather at the Pfister Hotel.

“I've lived in one city all my life. I had one job all my life. And I've had one wife – and I'm proud of all three,” Fred said. “I'm also very proud of where the firm is today – our talent is better and our future has never been brighter.”

Appropriately enough, associates had all been given glow sticks to shine in Fred's honor, which they did after he'd been presented with a sack of approximately 500 hand-written letters, showing their appreciation for his years of leadership and insight.

Paul expressed his appreciation to Fred for being “a great mentor, friend, leader and absolute owner of the Baird Way. You've given us all so much, and no one more than me. I can't imagine a better partner in business than Fred.”

Paul also gave his annual address to associates at the party, telling them that 2005 would be a year of “record revenues and profits – only because of your dedication and hard work.”

“People ask me where my passion and energy come from and I tell them it comes from the people at Baird,” Paul said. “We have the best in the industry from a professional standpoint and from a cultural standpoint. Only because of your talent, commitment, passion and energy are we a great firm.”



When the lights dimmed, associates produced blue glow sticks to represent the guiding light Fred provided for more than half of his 42 years with the firm.



Fred gets a fond embrace at the door.