**Knights of the Black Tie**

**Founded by King Solomon, Historical Background**

Jacob, the son of Abraham, moved his family into the land of Egypt where they increased greatly in numbers. After many years of hardships inflicted upon them by the Egyptians, there arose among the Israelites a great leader, Moses, who led his people out of Egypt and through the wilderness for 40 years toward the promise land.

During this time Moses was given the 10 Commandments. At Moses death, Joshua led these people on into the Promised Land. David, who had gained prominence as a boy because he slew Goliath, the Great Champion of the Philistines with a sling and a stone, was made King. He was a most wise King and ruler and made plans for the building of a great temple in which the people could assemble and worship.

It was during the building of this temple that Solomon noticed among the laborers that some were doing more instead of less. To create an incentive, he sought out those who desired to do more and right away set up the order of “The Knights of the Red Jewel”. Since the laborers were only clothed in a loin cloth he devised a jeweled chain with red insignia to be worn around the neck. Those who displayed this emblem were laborers of distinction who desired to do more instead of less. Kind Solomon issued the charter of the order and the workers responded with great zeal, building the finest temple in the world.

After Solomon’s death, the country became involved in civil war and Israel became divided. This was about 931 B.C. For 200 years the story of the two kingdoms was not a happy one. About 721 B.C. Sargon captured the Northern kingdom or Israel and carried away many of the people. The charter and records of the “Knights of the Red Jewel” disappeared and nothing more was known of them until 1918 when Halle Salessie, King of Ethiopia, and a direct descendant of King Solomon, discovered them in an imperial receptacle.

Realizing that only in America remained a people with a natural desire to do more instead of less, and having heard many favorable reports concerning that renowned group, “The Indiana Sons of the Soil” at Purdue University, he caused the original charter to be sent to them with the expressed hope that the “Knights of the Red Jewel” would again become a ongoing institution.

Once the original precepts were examined by “The Sons of the Soil” in Hoosierdom, the order had a rebirth and has flourished even beyond the dreams of Kind Solomon. Times have changed. The habits of men have changed. To fit into the modern dress habit, the jeweled chain with the red insignia was changed to the “Red Tie”, which every member wears with distinction. It marks him as a person who has achieved the distinct recognition of having, through the years of service to his fellow man, done more instead of less.

The Son’s of Soil evolved into the Indiana Food Processors Association and later into the Mid America Food Processors Association. Among the members of this association were tomato processors and growers. In 1989, the Tie was bestowed upon a tomato farmer from Bluffton, In. Rick Harnish.

As I transitioned from farming to fixed wireless internet, I always strived to carry these characteristics with me and soon realized that a new generation of hard working entrepreneurs was evolving in this industry. In 2005, WISPA was founded and now with over 600 members across the continent and even some worldwide, I felt it was time to recognize those who have been instrumental in the association, the industry and continue to build broadband where few others will venture to go.

I sought and was given permission from the Mid America Food Processors Association to adopt this award and have modified it slightly. Since WISPA’s colors are orange and black, I felt it was more fitting to adopt the black tie as the award distinction.