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A YEAR TO REMEMBER: *Woodard Celebrates 150-years of Craftsmanship*

Iconic casual outdoor furniture marks 150-year anniversary, shares successes

Owosso, Michigan, April 14, 2016 – [Woodard](#) sure knows how to throw a party. To commemorate its 150th anniversary, the iconic casual outdoor furniture company will honor its founder’s vision—emphasizing quality craftsmanship and materials—and celebrate generations of talented employees with a series of yearlong events.

Since the company was established in 1866 in Owosso, Michigan, it has withstood natural disasters, including cyclones and devastating fires, and weathered the Spanish Flu epidemic, the Depression and WWII. Despite these obstacles, it was able to survive and thrive, thanks to a willingness to adapt to the changing needs of consumers and the courage to create groundbreaking designs, such as the renowned [Sculptura](#) chair.

Initially a manufacturer of wood furniture and caskets, Woodard began forging a new identity in the 1930s, when it introduced its first iron chair. Within a decade, metal furniture production became its focus. “We value tradition when it comes to producing the best iron outdoor furniture in the industry. But we are also innovative, creative, forward-thinking and firmly anchored in the 21st century,” emphasizes Jean Liu, CEO of Woodard.

The company still employs a traditional method for making iron furniture: It uses an age-old process that requires craftsmen to form each piece by hand using solid iron stock. “We’re proud that in addition to being beautiful and durable, our iron collections are among the strongest in the industry,” maintains Liu.

For its aluminum and woven-wicker furniture, Woodard employs state-of-the-art, high-tech manufacturing processes to ensure that designs, ranging from classic to contemporary, meet its high standards. “We’ve never lost sight of the attributes consumers, furniture retailers and the hospitality industry associate with our brand: quality materials, including the highest grade of aluminum and cutting-edge synthetic fibers, pride in craftsmanship and a promise to strive for perfection,” Liu underscores. Management has also introduced team-based production methods, with plenty of participation and feedback from employees.

To celebrate this banner year, Woodard will host exclusive anniversary dinners and cocktail parties at the April and October High Point Markets and July’s Casual Pre-Market in Chicago. It will also hold a celebratory gala during annual Casual Market in Chicago in September.

On July 30, the company will pay tribute to employees, many of whom hail from families who've worked at Woodard for generations. A day-long picnic will honor those who have contributed to Woodard's success. Guests will include members of the community of Owosso, industry media, and area and state dignitaries. Each will be invited to take part in factory tours and enjoy entertainment provided by area talent.

Other plans include adding an extensive timeline to the company website that traces its 150-year history. Woodard will also re-introduce an iconic design adapted for today's living, an Anniversary Rocker, to mark the occasion.

"Only a few manufacturers in the country have been in business as long as we have," says John Mares, Woodard's CFO. "In the 1700s, a few household names, like Baker's Chocolate and Crane and Co., preceded us. Later, Dupont and Colgate came on the scene in 1802 and 1806, Proctor and Gamble in 1837, and Pfizer in 1849, among a few others," he asserts. "We are fortunate to belong to this exclusive club of companies with staying power—one more reason to celebrate."