

Kip Earney, 2012 Red Wing Outstanding Alumnus

Nominated by Business Relations Manager Katie Hardyman, Christopher (Kip) Earney has made his footprint in Red Wing not only as a small business owner, but also as a generous community volunteer and donor.

After a sports injury derailed his plans to attend a four-year college, Kip, a Bay City native, attended Inver Hills Community College, but transferred to Southeast Technical to be closer to his future wife Cathy. At Southeast Technical, Kip studied small business and retail management in hopes of someday owning a small business. “My instructors were great. They were sales people and business people and the courses were streamlined, covering all of the fundamentals I needed to pursue business ownership,” Kip says.

Upon graduating in 1986, Kip found his small business opportunity. His wife’s parents purchased West End Liquor & Fine Cigars in Red Wing and were busy trying to balance business ownership with their family farm. With a business plan in hand crafted during his time at Southeast Technical, Kip took half-ownership of the liquor store. When his in-laws retired in 2000, Kip purchased their share.

Besides being known for maintaining an excellent level of customer service at West End Liquor & Fine Cigars, Kip has played a large role in supporting local charities and organizations, including the Red Wing Area Food Shelf, Goodhue County Christmas Project, Toys for Tots, Women in Business, youth baseball and basketball, and Red Wing Hospice. For nominator Katie Hardyman, Kip’s goodwill has not gone unnoticed. “I chose Kip because he’s a great example of the success a Southeast Tech graduate can have, and because he chooses to give back to the community and the college in so many ways through his volunteerism.”

