

## PRO-BONO PRIDE

Hughie's business has come a long way, but the company's community service efforts remain close to home. **By Abby Cymerman**

**D**ave Wheeler, president and CEO of Hughie's Audio-Visual and Computer, recently celebrated his company's 50th year in business. When he bought Hughie's Flower & Film in 1994, he had worked for the company for more than 15 years.

After the purchase, he changed the company's focus — from a flower shop that happened to sell and rent video equipment — to a major national player on the technology scene, specializing in audio, visual, computer animation, lighting and event production.

Wheeler landed an eight-year contract staging magician David Copperfield's arena productions, and Hughie's moved from a 900-square-foot facility to a 15,000-square-foot warehouse to a 90,000-square-foot office and warehouse. Other contracts included programs at the Nautica Stage, Johnson & Johnson tradeshows and the acquisition of a Columbus audio-visual company.

As the company grew, Wheeler became more involved in nonprofit organizations that needed his expertise. Hughie's also performs pro-bono work in staging and managing events. Among the company's favored agencies are the Greater Cleveland Peace Officers Memorial Society (GCPOMS), the Cornerstone of Hope and the Cleveland Advertising Association.

■ GCPOMS was formed in 1985 to honor peace officers who give their lives in the performance of service. Hughie's provides sound systems, a camera crew and an outdoor video screen for its annual parade and memorial service. The society hosted a service in 2002 to honor officers killed on 9/11, and Hughie's donated more than \$30,000 in equipment and services.

■ The Cornerstone of Hope, which hopes to build a center in Cuyahoga County, helps children, teens, adults, spouses and families grieving the loss of a loved one. When Cornerstone was planning its first gala fund-raiser earlier this year, Hughie's donated more than \$20,000 worth of equipment and services. It has also sponsored Cornerstone's golf outing and donated more than



\$10,000 worth of staging, lighting and sound for a summer fund-raiser.

■ Hughie's provides office and warehouse space for the CAA's annual judging weekend to nominate the best in Cleveland advertising and donates more than \$20,000 worth of goods and services to the Addy Awards ceremony. Hughie's also sponsors CAA's outing, donates equipment for CAA's monthly luncheon meetings and donates items to CAA's annual auction, which raises scholarship money. **HOW TO REACH:** Hughie's Audio-Visual and Computer, (800) 449-4115 or [www.hughies.com](http://www.hughies.com)

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