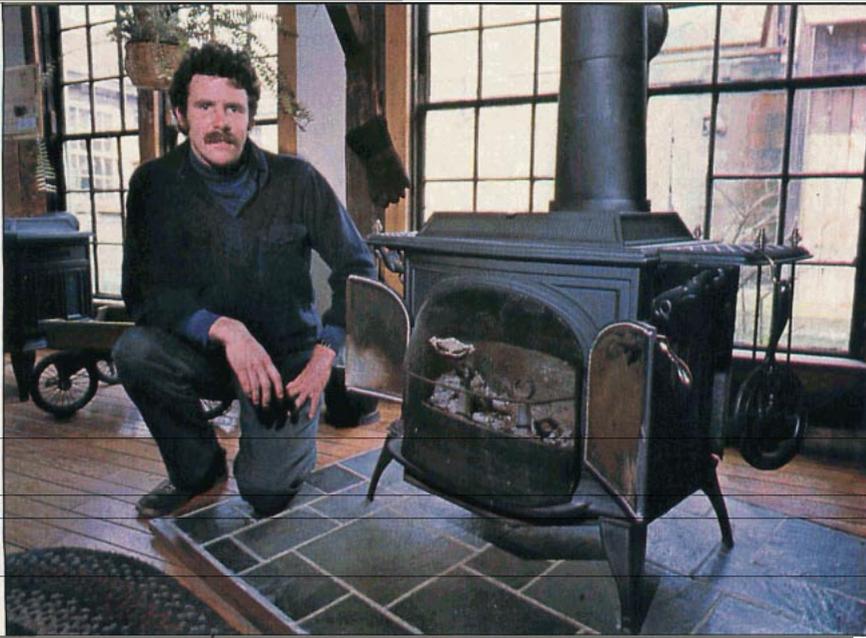


# MURRAY HOWELL



Murray Howell in the Vermont Castings showroom

Duncan Syme, in writing the obituary of his partner, brother-in-law and friend, called Murray Maynard Howell "the very soul of Vermont Castings." Howell also was the company's heart. At 37, the intensely shy business genius was a well-respected father figure to the youthful work force of the Randolph, Vt., company and to the industry.

Howell was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1945, and educated at the Pomfret School in Connecticut. He received a B.A. in political science from the University of Pennsylvania in 1968. Before hooking up with Syme, he was employed by Corporate Property Investors of New York City.

The company that Howell and Syme

built started on borrowed money from friends and parents in 1975. Blessed with a special business knack, Howell had the foresight to envision—and plan—the tremendous growth of his company during the late 70s. He was responsible for taking the company from its humble beginnings to its current position as an industry leader—a transition that most companies do not make successfully. Today, Vermont Castings is a company of more than 450 employees and maker of more than 40,000 units that are shipped all over the world.

Howell received a Small Business Award from Ronald Reagan in the Rose Garden in May of 1982 for this accomplishment. Earlier, his wizardry

in finance and manufacturing led to being named Vermont Small Businessman of the Year.

Howell's finesse also extended beyond spreadsheets. He had a major hand in shaping the culture and fantasy of Vermont Castings. For example, he was particularly uncaring of what his employees wore to do their jobs well. In dedicating the company's \$8 million cast-iron foundry with Vermont Gov. Richard Snelling, he sported a multi-layered assortment of thick clothes, blue jeans, and a down parka patched together with duct tape.

"He had that very rare capability for merging a good feeling for huge business growth with his ideals and ethics, which he never lost," said Judge Thomas Lichty, a long time Vermont Castings dealer. "He was a very unique person who never compromised his principles."

C.H. Anthony, one of Vermont Castings' original dealers, said Howell "held the company together. He was one of the pioneers in this business." Anthony recalled "that whenever I had a problem, I could call him and he would get things done. He had a great deal of respect within the company."

Said Frank Verprauskus: "As a person who watched what he did, I would say he was a major force in bringing out a U.S.-made product that combined efficiency and elegance of design. It was important to keep moving forward and Vermont Castings did that. We owe them a lot." William Eckert said that though he met him only once, "the accolades that have been heaped on him were deserved. It is too bad this is a posthumous award. He was definitely a founding father."