



**Senator
Bill Stouffer**

DISTRICT 21

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

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Stouffer Report: “Guest” Column from Don Copenhaver, CEO of MFA, Inc.

This week's Stouffer Report comes from Don Copenhaver, president and CEO of MFA, Inc. Sen. Stouffer served as the chairman of the board for MFA, Inc., at a time when the company made significant changes to continue as an effective business in Rural Missouri.

The Missouri Institute of Cooperative's Hall of Fame is wonderful recognition for exceptional leaders of cooperatives.

Add Sen. Bill Stouffer to the list. This year, the Senator from Napton joined the other MFA luminaries in the MIC Hall of Fame.

Let me say up front, with the exception of political issues that directly affect agriculture, I try to use this space in a nonpartisan way.

Specifically, I avoid endorsing or opposing particular candidates or parties. I need to provide a disclaimer that my comments are in support of Bill as an individual who served MFA faithfully as a corporate board member and as president of our board. He's in the public eye today as a state senator, but he's in MFA's record book as one of our most effective board members.

As a member of the corporate board of directors for MFA from 1979 to 1995, including two terms as board chair, Bill Stouffer epitomized excellence. He was first elected to MFA Incorporated's board during a crucial period in the cooperative's history.

Agriculture was consolidating rapidly. Bill forged stability and success for the cooperative during an agricultural crisis and leadership change. 1979 was the year long-time MFA President Fred Heinkel was defeated

in his bid for re-election. In the midst of turmoil, Stouffer molded the board into a strategic entity.

Bill Stouffer embraced economic reality. He understood the fiduciary responsibilities of board members. He is a strategic thinker capable of complex analysis. He is not afraid to make difficult decisions. Bill was a willing champion for necessary change.

As a member of the corporate board, Bill was flawless in preparation. His leadership skills were impressive. He was willing to challenge management, but he did not micromanage. More importantly, he was able to see the big picture. Bill has a keen ability to press for appropriate action through consensus, not confrontation, by knowing when to end discussion and reach decisions for the good of the cooperative.

Bill epitomized a board member. He completely understood the role of a corporate board director and the role of management and he respected the boundaries. He was instrumental in stabilizing MFA's corporate board during a time of turmoil. More importantly, he molded the board into a strategic entity capable of assisting and directing management.

Bill Stouffer has been instrumental in the success of MFA Incorporated and now serves our state with the same level of integrity and purpose. He sets a standard for leadership that all should aspire to match, but few will achieve. He is worthy of inclusion in the Hall of Fame. He's definitely worthy of our respect and admiration.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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