

BAINUM FAMILY FOUNDATION

Environmental Display Design // Fabrication // Installation

The Bainum Family Foundation offers educational programs and services that help children living in poverty break the bonds of their circumstances. After growing up in poverty, earning an education, and succeeding in business, founder Stewart Bainum dedicated his life to giving children the same opportunities to succeed.

CHALLENGE

Novak Birch was brought on board to update the foundation's office to reflect its new brand and prepare for an upcoming event. We were also tasked with creating a tribute to Mr. Bainum, who had recently passed away, using hundreds of mementos collected over the years.

SOLUTION

To update the office space and welcome visitors and staff, we applied elements of the new brand to common spaces, providing a cohesive, professional look-and-feel throughout the office. We designed, fabricated, and installed a custom glass shelving system, conference room lighting and fixtures, awards display, branded elevator lobby with dimensional logo signage, and reception area wall graphics.

As we branded the office space, we also set to work on the tribute to Mr. Bainum. We conducted an audit of the memorabilia, documenting 100+ plaques, certificates, business cards, newspaper articles, awards, photographs, a documentary film, and more. We found that together, these artifacts told the story of Mr. Bainum's life. Using these mementos, we proposed creating a milestone wall in the foundation's main hallway, so staff and visitors could be inspired by Mr. Bainum's legacy every day.

Our solution included the following:

- We organized the artifacts into phases—Life & Family, Entrepreneur & Pioneer, Philanthropist, Dreamers, and Legacy. This provided flexibility for the undated memorabilia and also enables the foundation to add future milestones to the wall.
- To create visual interest and depth while keeping items close to the wall to accommodate the narrow hallway, we incorporated three-dimensional memorabilia, mounted chronologically to help narrate the story. Many photos are reverse-mounted on glass that "floats" away from the wall, and several awards are framed in acrylic, producing a shadow box effect. This thoughtful design offers an immersive experience while allowing plenty of room to walk through the hallway.
- To keep viewers' eyes moving across the wall, we displayed the mementos using mixed media, including frosted and transparent glass, acrylic, vinyl, metal, paint, and paper. From colors, typography, and materials, to size and mounting, we crafted each piece to both inspire viewers on its own and to enhance the overall installation.
- With clean lines, bright white borders, brushed metal finishes, and neutral tones, the contemporary design brings Mr. Bainum's story to life by letting the three-dimensional memorabilia shine.
- To introduce pops of color and incorporate the foundation's new brand, we incorporated the bubble design element from their recent rebranding. The colorful bubbles serve as a foil to the historic photos and documents, helping them stand out and softening their hard edges.
- We carefully planned the lighting to ensure readability, enhance the artifacts, and offer ambience.
- We conceived, designed, fabricated, produced, and installed the wall.

RESULTS

The foundation was pleased with the office update and milestone wall and has received positive feedback from staff and visitors. They subsequently contracted Novak Birch to create more of one of the wall components—a business card plaque—which they gave as 2015 holiday gifts. Since the wall installation, we've continued to support the foundation with other projects.