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CONTACT: Grace Ombry, Marketing Director, [989-714-4464](tel:989-714-4464)

Meade A. Gougeon

September 25, 1938–August 27, 2017

“The wind is coming up. Tell the boys they can commence with the race.” Fittingly, these would be the last words of Meade A. Gougeon as he watched a fleet of sailboats, including his trimaran *Adagio*, assembling for the Great Lakes Multihull Regatta in front of his home on the Saginaw Bay. Gougeon died Sunday, August 27, 2017, peacefully at home surrounded by his family. He was 78 years old.

Meade, along with his brothers Jan and Joel, founded Gougeon Brothers, Inc. in 1969. Their employee-owned, ISO 9001 registered company is a world renowned formulator and manufacturer of WEST SYSTEM® and PRO-SET® epoxies. The brothers pioneered the use of epoxy in boat construction and repair. They got their start building DN class iceboats with wood and epoxy. Initially, the brothers obtained access to Dow Chemical’s nearby laboratories to develop an epoxy that could be used for coating and bonding.

By 1973, the brothers’ small boat shop in Bay City, Michigan was the largest builder of iceboats in the United States. Even so, in 1974 they sold the DN portion of their business to focus on soft water boats and their burgeoning epoxy business.

In 1971, Meade launched *Adagio*—the first large, all epoxy bonded and sealed wooden boat built without the use of fasteners. He’d built her with his brother Jan in just six months. She’s been sailing on the Great Lakes ever since, winning the Bayview Mackinac Race in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2016 and 2017. *Adagio* is proof that fully bonded monocoque structures can be built not just to last, but to be serious competitors for generations.

NASA’s Wind Energy Project Office had Gougeon Brothers manufacture epoxy-laminated wood specimens for testing the strength of an epoxy bond between a threaded steel rod and a laminated wood specimen. The company’s samples were so strong that they broke NASA’s testing machine. GBI would go on to manufacture wood/epoxy wind turbine blades for several years.

In 1979, Meade wrote *The Gougeon Brothers on Boat Construction*. This famous boatbuilding guide details composite construction techniques using wood and epoxy. It remains a favorite resource for professionals and first-time boat builders, and is often used as a textbook in boat building programs.

A few of the notable wood-epoxy boats built by GBI. include the Ron Holland-designed half-ton monohull *Golden Dazy* which won the 1975 Canada’s Cup; the 60’ Dick Newick designed trimaran *Rogue Wave*; the Georg Thomas-designed proa *Slingshot* which was clocked at speeds

of over 40 MPH; *Adrenalin*, a Formula 40 trimaran of wood, epoxy, and carbon fiber; the Gougeon 32 production catamarans including *Incognito*, which, skippered by Russell Brown, finished first in the solo class in this year's Race to Alaska.

Meade was an avid multihull sailor, ice boater, and cyclist. Aboard the outrigger canoes *Voyager* and *Elderly Carer* respectively, he placed first in his class in the grueling, 300-mile Everglades Challenge in 2014 and 2017. He raced iceboats with the International DN Ice Yacht Racing Association for several decades, winning the US Championship in 1981 and 1997. He was inducted, along with his brother Jan, into the National Sailing Hall of Fame in 2015.

Always a positive force in his community, Meade served on Delta College Board of Trustees, the Kantzler Foundation Board of Trustees, the Bay Arenac Community High School Board of Directors, and the Bay County Library System Board of Trustees. In 2015, he was honored with the Peggy Rowley Community Enrichment Award at the Bay Area Community Foundation's Faces of Philanthropy event.

Adamant that GBI should remain a robust corporation in his absence, Meade went to great lengths to assure that the next generation of management and employees were smart, hardworking, and forward-looking individuals. Because he laid the groundwork for his succession, the company remains strong as the leader in the epoxy industry.

The oldest of four children, he was born September 25, 1938 to Meade and Elizabeth "Betty" Gougeon. After graduating from T.L. Handy High School, Meade earned a degree in Industrial Management from Western Michigan University in 1960. He served honorably in the U.S. Army.

Meade is survived by his beloved wife of 46 years, Janet Gougeon and their children and spouses, Glenn Kirkland; Anne Michelle and Randy Mortensen; M. Ryan and Janice Gougeon; Benjamin and Logan Gougeon; Renee and Alan Gurski; Mia and Kwafo Adarkwa; Jae Gougeon; and Laura Gougeon, as well as 14 grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother Joel (Kaye) Gougeon.

He was predeceased by his parents, sister Pamela (John) Thomas, brother Jan Gougeon, and son Gary (Michele Baltus) Kirkland.

An open house celebration of Meade's life begins at 12:00 noon, with farewell tributes from 2:00-4:00 PM, on Saturday, September 9 at the Gougeon Brothers Boat Shop. All whom Meade would call friend and family are invited to attend.