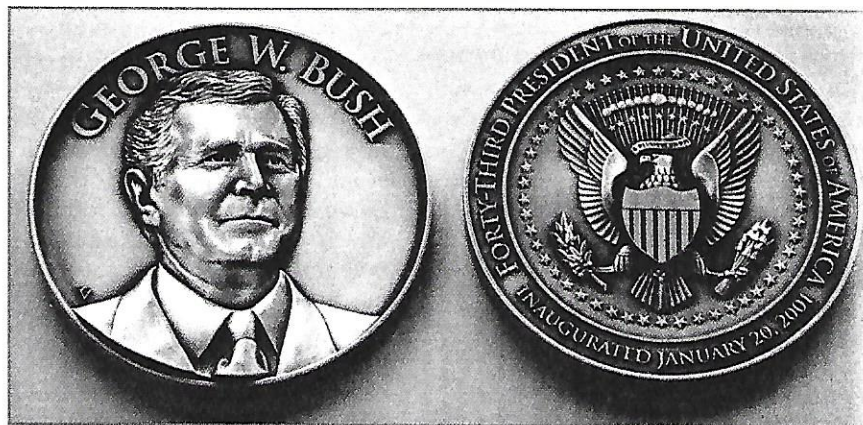


A Piece of Presidential History

On Election Eve 2000, Jim Elliot, national sales director for The Medalcraft Mint, was at Republican National Headquarters in Washington, DC. He was milling around a room with almost 4,000 people who were all anxiously awaiting the outcome of the presidential election between U.S. Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush.

"It was like the Super Bowl of politics," Elliot recalls. "There were 40 to 50 televisions spread around the room. People everywhere were cheering and booing like they were at the Super Bowl or the World Series."

The charged-up atmosphere carried on late into the evening. But by 11 pm everyone was at a loss. Elliot remembers thinking, When's this



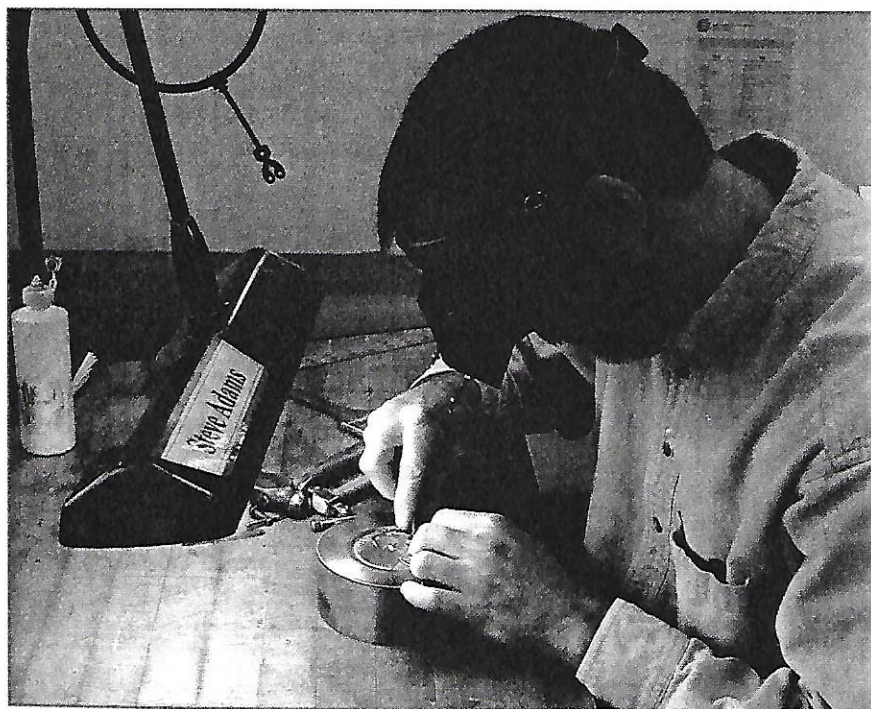
▲ The finished product, shown front and back. National Sales Director Jim Elliot says it was the likeness of President Bush that won Medalcraft the contract.

going to end? Little did anyone realize just how long the historic vote count was going to continue.

A lot was riding on this election for the Green Bay, WI-based company.



▲ The original sculpt, die and medallion. President Bush requested that his signature be removed and Walker changed to W.



▲ Steve Adams, Medalcraft Mint staff artist, makes slight modifications in the die to perfect President Bush's likeness.

The Medalcraft Mint executives decided a year before to pursue a contract to produce the inaugural medallions for the next president of the United States. The only question: Who was it going to be? Elliot says Medalcraft took a \$5,000 gamble in speculative samples on George W. Bush—and won!

In August, the company hired Charles Vickers, an independent sculptor-designer, to create a model in the likeness of the man destined to win the presidency. Elliot says

Continued on page 62

they made minor revisions to the original design in-house to get as close a likeness to Bush as possible. "Portraits are tough to replicate," Elliot explains. "In the case of Bush, there is something in the eyes and mouth that are unique."



▲ Jim Dicke, inaugural medallion committee chair, flew into Green Bay the day before the inauguration to pick up three 3-piece sets. President Bush was presented with set number one of a 500-set limited edition. Pictured (from left) are Jim Elliot, Jim Dicke and Medalcraft President Ron Chimenti.

Two sample medallions were created, one with a traditional antique patina, and one with enamel color in the background. Elliot says adding color was a first for the inaugural medallion. The Medalcraft Mint chose a tasteful blue for the border and red and white in the inaugural seal.

With samples in hand, the real challenge was getting the product to the right people at the right time. So Elliot, along with a representative of C. Forbes, Inc., one of Medalcraft's distributor partners, placed himself in the thick of election eve frenzy to gain the attention of the Republican National Committee (RNC) chair. Elliot says that



▲ Bobbie Branham hand finishes an Inaugural medallion to produce an artistic antique finish.

was the key to the whole process: They had to make sure the medallion was physically in the hands of the decision makers and that it "gets up to the plate and is considered."

Right about the time when Elliot was thinking, When's this election night going to end? it all started to come together. "Around 11 pm, we did get the samples in the hands of the RNC chair," Elliot says. "He told us when the time was right he would forward the samples to the right people."

Persistence, timing and plain old luck paid off handsomely for The Medalcraft Mint. Elliot says they received official word that Medalcraft got the contract on December 29. "I don't think a day went by in those weeks between the election and the contract that we weren't making telephone calls trying to confirm the latest: Who's seen [the samples]? Where are [the samples] now?" Elliot says. "In larger projects such as this, it's not really what you know as much as who you know. [Medalcraft] has won 15 consecutive awards, but that doesn't hold water. It's what they see, the end result."

According to Elliot, Medalcraft won the contract because it captured the overall likeness of Bush. Elliot says the head of the inaugural committee told him that the other competitors (three that Elliot knew about) were a distant second to Medalcraft's sample. Because time between Bush's confirmation and the inauguration was running short, the inauguration team chose the traditional antique patina medallion over the color ver-

SUBLIMATION

Let Nova Chrome's 20 years of experience help you with all your sublimation needs - Call today!

- Sublimation Printers
- Heat Presses
- Laser Sublimation
- Ultra-coat metal
- Unisub plastics
- Sublimatable mugs
- The answers you need!



Buy direct from the manufacturer and save!

**NOVA
CHROME™**

800-788-6682

www.novachromeusa.com

Tele: 925-934-3368
Fax: 925-934-7128
3345 Vincent Rd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

sion. Bush made minor revisions to the front of the medallion and signed off on Medalcraft's piece the last week of December. The company began production on New Year's day.

Medalcraft's next challenge was getting the product to all the venues by inauguration week. The approved design, 2 3/4 inches in diameter, was die struck in both bronze and .999 fine silver. A miniature version (1 1/4 inches) was struck in 14 karat gold. Elliot says they formed multiple dies and were working two and sometimes three presses to get the order ready in time. "The challenge was not only producing the medallions," Elliot says, "but also packaging and shipment. Working with our vendors, everything came off without a hitch."

Medalcraft created a 500-set limited edition that includes the gold coin, silver and bronze medallions presented in a lined box, which retails for \$995 per set. The silver medallion was limited to 5,000 for \$195 each, and the bronze medallion is an unlimited edition that sells for \$48. Elliot identifies three markets for these historic pieces: the inaugural functions, pure collectors and the general public.

The chair of the inaugural medallion committee flew to Green Bay the day before the January 20 inauguration to personally pick up the three-piece sets, the first of which would be presented to then President-Elect Bush. The rest of the orders were drop shipped from Medalcraft headquarters and arrived at their destinations by Wednesday or Thursday of inauguration week.

What began as a possibility earned Medalcraft a place in history and put the 53-year-old company on the map. "The company is honored and quite excited about producing this medallion for George W. Bush," says Medalcraft President Ron Chimenti.

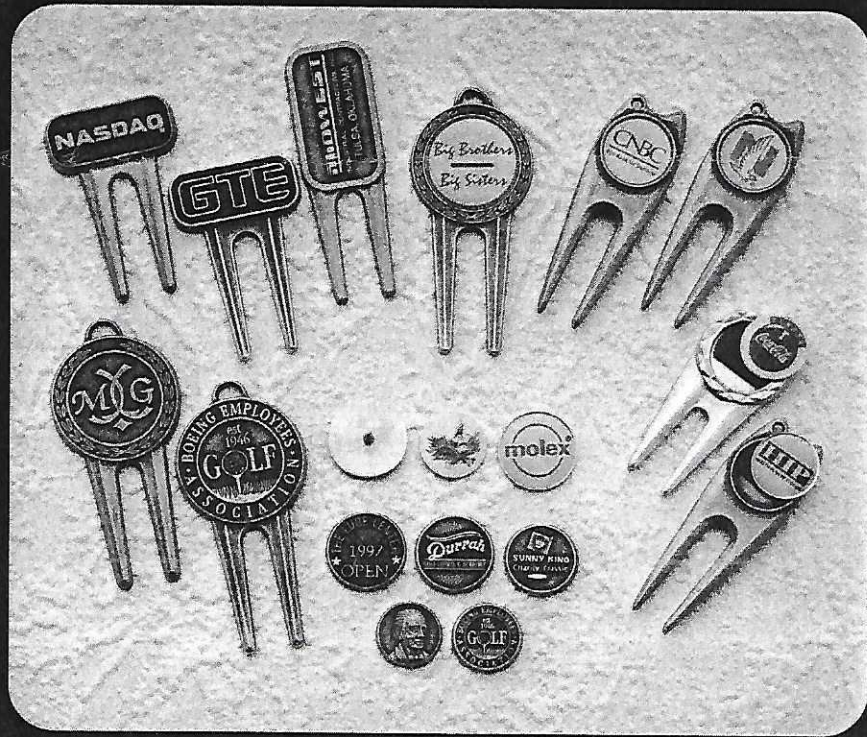
This project, says Elliot, "proves what our capabilities are. Not only making a top-quality product, but also delivering it on time."

For more information about The Medalcraft Mint products, call 920/499-4249, 800/558-6348 or fax 920/499-7092, 800/428-6468. Web site: www.medalcraft.com ▲

ONYX
ART
SINCE 1984

TROPHY BASES IN GENUINE
WHITE ONYX, BLACK MARBLE & GREEN MARBLE
and custom work
P.O. BOX 5601 • CHULA VISTA, CA 91912 • (619) 422-8298
FAX (619) 422-0173

The Newport Mint



Tools of Golf
Custom and Stock
1-800-448-1251

6471 Proprietors Rd. Worthington, Ohio 43085