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MSI's Manu Shah Named "Entrepreneur of the Year 2007"

BY A STAFF REPORTER

PALM SPRINGS, CA – Manu Shah, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of M S International, Inc. ("MSI"), a leading distributor of natural stone, was named on Nov. 17 the "Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year 2007" national award winner in the Distribution, Manufacturing and Security category. Now in its 21st year, these awards recognize leaders and visionaries who demonstrate innovation, financial success, personal dedication and a commitment to the community as they create and build world-class businesses. Shah was recognized for turning a small business that he started in his basement into one of the largest distributors of natural stone in North America. Shah was honored at a black-tie gala in Palm Springs that was hosted by Jay Leno. Awards were given in nine other categories. All Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year national winners were selected from approximately 400 regional award recipients by an independent panel of judges. Mr. Shah's national award follows being named the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year regional winner for the distribution category in Orange County.

In receiving the award, Shah noted, "...for a man who came to this country with \$210 in his pocket and \$3,000 of debt, this is a humbling experience..." He continued, "Natural stone has been for ages and remains an incredible job creation machine. It is one of the few industries today that continues to support the population



Manu Shah

in the rural regions of the world. I would like to dedicate this award to the millions of people belonging to the non-glamorous stone trade. They have brought us and continue to bring to us vivid, stunning, exquisite and affordable natural stones from far corners of the planet to our homes and businesses."

Shah further stated, "this award is truly a reflection of the ingenuity, hard work, and consistent innovation of the entire MSI Team, which includes dedicated employees, our suppliers in over 33 countries, and devoted customers across the world. We continue to look forward to bringing growth, innovation, and efficiency to the natural stone industry."

After emigrating from Bombay, India, Manu Shah and his wife, Rika, started MSI in their Fort Wayne, Indiana, home with a modest goal – to bring in some extra

income to supplement Shah's earnings as a mechanical engineer. Shah had a brother in India who worked in the natural stone business and Shah saw the possibilities of importing stone for use in monuments. And expand they did. A key milestone came in 1981, when MSI won the contract to provide black granite for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.

After the company was awarded the contract, Shah left his position as a project engineer for International Harvester and joined the family business full-time. Three years later, he relocated the company to Southern California, believing it would be the ideal location for distribution. Shah positioned the company to expand into commercial and residential markets, just as demand for granite and other stone surfaces in homes began to grow. Since then, the company has opened seven natural stone super-centers nationwide and has amassed more than 2,000 recurring customers in all fifty states as well as Canada and Mexico.

The company has experienced strong growth each year since its inception 32 years ago. Despite the slowing housing market, MSI has seen growth of more than 100 percent since 2004. The family business now includes Manu and Rika's two sons and more than 400 employees. MSI maintains distribution centers in New Jersey, Atlanta, Chicago, Phoenix, Dallas, and Boston with three additional branches scheduled for 2008. MSI also maintains purchasing offices in India, Brazil, Turkey, and China.