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Company History and Key Executives

Started by two Georgia Tech buddies in the late 1980s, Epilog Laser has grown from a basement operation to an industry leader in the design and manufacturing of flying optics based CO₂ and fiber laser systems. Steve Garnier, president of Epilog Laser, and John Doran, vice-president of engineering, were college friends who were both studying electrical engineering at Georgia Tech. After getting their degrees, the two moved to the Denver area. While Steve was doing motion control work for embroidery equipment manufacturer Melco, John was a rocket scientist at Lockheed Martin.

After leaving their respective positions, the two decided to combine forces and develop a laser system capable of creating graphic images. At this time, there were laser engraving machines in existence; however, the industrial-type machines were very large, non-computerized, and extremely expensive.

Steve and John were responsible for creating the first conveniently- sized laser that ran directly from a computer – it was literally as easy as pressing “print” to send your engraving job from the computer to the laser system. And it was only a fraction of the cost of the bulky, industrial-sized equipment on the market.

The two sold the manufacturing rights of the first generation laser to Melco, who produced and sold their design in the late 1980s and early 90s. In the early 1990s Steve and John began working on the second generation laser system. At this time, Melco was purchased by another company, so both Steve and John left their respective jobs to focus solely on Epilog Laser and its second generation system, the Eclipse.

Mike Dean, who had previously worked with Steve at Melco, came on board in 1991 when the duo asked him to become a partner and manage sales and marketing for the Eclipse.

In 1991, after countless hours of developing and prototyping, the newly formed trio hit their first trade-show – the Awards and Recognition Association Expo. Interest levels soared, as the Eclipse was introduced as the first laser system that could laser graphic files directly from CorelDRAW. The Eclipse emulated a paper printer, but instead of putting ink to paper, it burned images and text into wood, plastic, acrylic, and other materials. That first tradeshow positioned Epilog Laser as an innovator within the industry and proved to be the catalyst for the company’s initial and continued success.

Key executives:

Steve Garnier, president & CEO

John Doran, vice president of engineering

Mike Dean, director of sales and marketing