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## FACT SHEET

### **Lightology at a Glance**

- Founded by Gregory L. Kay in 1983 as Tech Lighting, Lightology is the largest contemporary lighting showroom in North America—and the oldest in Chicago.
- Prices range from a sleek \$75 halogen desk lamp to a unique, hand-blown, Murano glass chandelier at \$5,000.
- Lightology (formerly Tech Lighting), began in 1983 as a small lighting showroom under the L tracks, started manufacturing low-voltage halogen lighting in 1988—selling to 800 showrooms worldwide—and, in 2001, sold the manufacturing operation.
- After purchasing and completely gutting a building around the corner from the original Tech Lighting store at Superior and Franklin, Kay changed the showroom's name to Lightology and opened to the public in December 2001.
- Sales doubled from February to April 2002, despite the fact that the showroom was only 30 percent open.
- Showroom comprised of three levels, affords 15,000 square feet of display space. Ground floor is public, top two floors accessible only to architects, designers, builders and contractors. Sales through May were 50 percent architects/designers, 50 percent consumer.
- When complete, the building will feature two roof-top gardens, adding another 5,000 sq. ft., to display outdoor landscape lighting as well as provide unique meeting spaces for professional groups and customers.
- The company also has a 24,000 square foot warehouse and office space at 1718 W. Fullerton, Chicago.
- Lightology will open the Evolution of Light Museum, designed to be educational and fun, in early 2003. Also in the works, a unique product Web site with real-time inventory.
- The company's client list includes many restaurants, including Ben Pao, Pasha and Manifesto, as well as CNA Insurance, St. Luke's Church in River Forest, AT&T Showcase, Armani AX stores, Disneyworld, Disney Cruise Lines and more.

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## **About Gregory L. Kay, President/Founder**

A Detroit native, Lightology president and founder Greg Kay launched his career as an electrician, earned master electrician status in 1979 and moved to Chicago in 1983, opening Tech Lighting, the city's first all-contemporary lighting showroom.

Five years later, when distributing European low-voltage cable systems proved troublesome in the U.S. market (due to different codes, junction boxes and listing requirements), Tech Lighting began manufacturing low-voltage lighting in Chicago. Kay combined his electrical background with an innovative design sense to introduce a revolutionary series of low-voltage halogen lighting systems—KableLite, TwinRail, MonoRail, 2-circuit MonoRail and FreeJack—which feature totally interchangeable fixtures.

The young entrepreneur was also part of a group instrumental in persuading the National Electric Code to recognize this type of lighting, which permitted his systems to obtain UL or ETL listing—and made low-voltage lighting systems available for the first time in the American market. The company became America's largest American manufacturer of low-voltage halogen systems, controlling over 60 percent of the market.

After building his \$2,000 investment into a business doing multi-million in sales, Kay found the administrative demands so far outweighed his love of lighting design, that he opted to "follow the American dream" and retire early. In 1998, he sold Tech Lighting's manufacturing operations, but retained both retail showroom and original (vacated) warehouse.

And, of course, Greg Kay never retired. Selling the business allowed Kay to channel that energy and innovation into building his dream store—Lightology—which will open officially this fall, although the main floor (the only floor open to the public), opened quietly earlier this year.

## **Awards, Honors and Innovations**

Greg Kay has received numerous awards and honors, including one of the first Edwin F. Guth Awards of Excellence in Lighting Design presented to a Chicago-based lighting designer (1988). Some of Kay's other awards and honors include:

- The 1999 Lightfair International Award for Best New Fixture Design ("Symphony" chandelier);
- IESNA International Illumination Design Awards of Merit (1997);
- Instrumental in getting National Electric Code changed to recognize/allow low-voltage halogen lighting, and all Tech Lighting products UL/ETL listed (1996);
- US Patent #362,323 for CP telescoping light (1995);
- Chicago Lighting Institute Award of Merit for Lighting Excellence (1994);
- Chicago Athenaeum Good Design Award, for Johnny and Wishbone KableLite fixtures (1992);
- IESNA Chicago Illumination Award, for UNIVERSAL Information Services Showcase Networking Div. (1988);
- IES Lighting Design Award for Midwest Kable and Lighting (1983).