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Tiger guards front door of communications firm

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Scott Paulus

Tony guards the door at Mueller Communications.

Tony scares some people who walk in the door at **Mueller Communications Inc.**, 1749 N. Prospect Ave., Milwaukee, owner Carl Mueller said.

You might be scared too if you were greeted by a 200-pound tiger with a ferocious grin.

But don't worry. This 100-year-old wooden tiger, formerly a fixture on an unknown carousel, isn't going to be snacking on anyone.

Mueller found the animal with his daughter, Kirsten, at an antiques shop in Columbus, Wis., 12 years ago, he said. Kirsten fell in love with the tiger, but she was about to leave for college. Tony occupied a spot at Mueller Communications' old home on the near south side before moving to Kirsten's apartment after she graduated college. Kirsten recently left for a year in New Zealand, and Tony now finds himself in the firm's new home in an Italianesque mansion.

"It becomes a real conversation piece," Mueller said. "Whether you like it or you're afraid of it, it's kind of startling."

Mueller's home and office are stuffed with antiques of every type and age. He has no idea how many items he has, he said.

"I've been accused of collecting everything," he said.

— Stacy Vogel Davis