

CELEBRATING MILESTONE

Anniversaries

BY BARBARA BOWEN

At the very heart of the Chattanooga business community are businesses that have succeeded for decades. Each has prospered by adjusting business strategies to changing markets and a variety of economic factors. Each has its own story to tell, but all point to core values and an unwavering commitment to the client that has led to their success.

The following businesses are seven out of many in our community celebrating milestone anniversaries. Serving a wide range of industries, these companies are a tribute to the vast number of companies that have prospered for many years throughout the Chattanooga area.



Family Style Realtor Success

HERMAN WALLDORF & COMPANY, INC. – 85 YEARS

A family business serving families and businesses has been a good fit for brothers Rudy and Charlie Walldorf. For 85 years and three generations, the underlying belief has always been to take care of the customer and the income will take care of itself.

Their father, the late Herman Walldorf, founded the firm in 1926, making them the oldest family in Chattanooga real estate. Selling real estate during the Depression is where it all started.

(above) Eighth Street looking towards Market Street

(right) Charlie and Rudy Walldorf

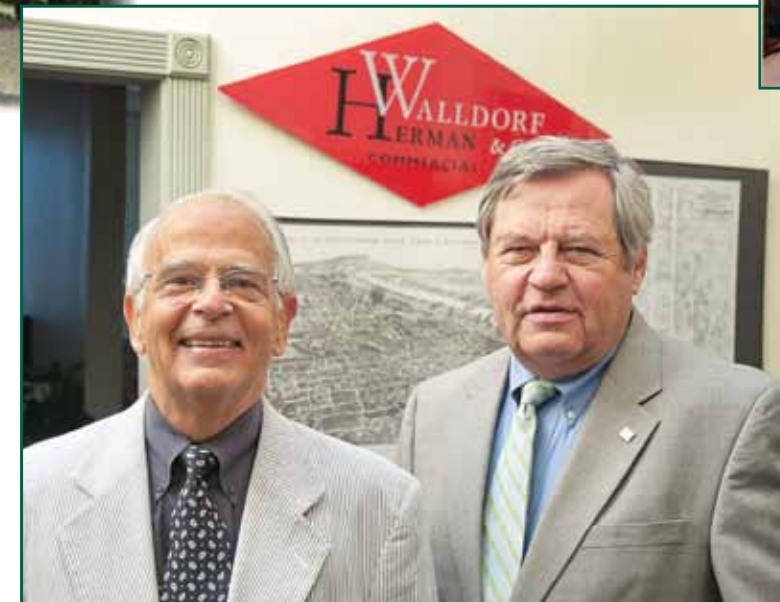
(far right) Charlie and Rudy with their father, Herman Walldorf

“In those days you didn’t always get paid in cash.” Rudy Walldorf says. “Dad once got a stoker for the furnace instead of the commission.”

In the 1940s, John L. McKenzie joined Herman Walldorf, and they expanded to include residential management. Rudy and Charlie worked during the summers collecting rent money before joining the company after college. Today they are guiding the organization through changing times, advancing technology, and increasing market complexities. Earlier this year the brothers took the two divisions, residential and commercial, and made them separate corporations.

“The market has become more sophisticated over the years, and the two divisions are very different specialties,” says Charlie. “The split allows us to pursue specific strategies, thus better serving our clients.”

Charlie and his son Nathan will provide leadership for the residential corporation called Herman Walldorf & Company, Inc., which sells upper-end residential homes, mountain and brow homes, condominiums, and other properties. Rudy is responsible for the new Herman Walldorf Commercial, Inc., continuing their services in commercial and industrial real estate and site location services. Third generation Nathan has been elected secretary-treasurer of Herman Walldorf & Company, Residential.



“Used to be you could sell an old gas station after filling the tanks with sand to keep them from popping out of the ground,” Rudy recalls. “Now there are complicated environmental issues, plus title reports, building codes and property restrictions. There is a need for a higher level of professionalism as we honor our obligation to our clients.”