

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
2008 ANNUAL DINNER
RICHARD REA SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Four score is considered a pretty good life for most of us. The changes that occur over the span of one's life are sometimes hard to imagine. And it seems those changes come at a faster pace every year. And change isn't itself a bad thing. I doubt most of us would want to return to days of the privy and a hand-crank to start your car engine!

But everyone is drawn to nostalgia on some level. There's comfort and familiarity in things connected to the past. And just like a grandfather, a business that's been around for a lifetime would seem to have something special to offer.

The ability to blend the traditions, comforts, and ideals of yesterday with the advances necessitated by today is a maneuver not easily achieved.

Modern medicine is as advanced as it gets. New and amazing prescriptions are released constantly, and skilled pharmacists must stay informed about them all, as well as be adept at using the latest technology to deal with the vast volume of information critical to keeping customers informed and safe in the proper use of their medications.

Ever increasing pressures from insurance and Medicare regulations and policy changes, as well as a highly competitive marketplace make for a difficult challenge for a locally-based operation.

What hasn't changed are the people of the community, and the care with which they appreciate being served. At the core, doing things the way they were done 80 years ago is what has kept Triplitt Pharmacy & Gifts a fixture on Main Street since before the great depression. They have navigated through ever-changing times by doing things like offering delivery, working through various agencies and churches, or with manufactures discounts to assist all customers in getting needed prescriptions. Special orders of hard to find products are welcomed and generally can be in the store the next day. Personal touches with customers are often achieved with a get well or sympathy card. The staff continues to care for their customers the way all the Triplitt boys taught them. A stroll through the store, especially the upstairs, is certainly a journey back in time that third generation customers have come to love.

Working at a drug store in Zanesville, George Triplitt decided that he needed to be a pharmacist. Heading to the University of Cincinnati and announcing to the dean that he intended to get his degree, the course was set. In 1928 he acquired the Turner & Lear Drug Store and set about filling the medicinal needs of Coshocton folks.

In 1947, George Jr. joined the store. Junior, a graduate of Coshocton High School, was destined to be a druggist when mom and dad drove him to Cincinnati, dropped him off at the College of Pharmacy, and drove away. His only instructions were to tell the dean that he was George's son, and was there to enroll in pharmacy school !

George Jr. continued at the store, doing the kinds of things for the customers that today are mandated by regulators. Another 30 years flew by until George III, or "Dub" joined the crew in 1979. During the 14 years he got to work with his father, "Dub's" interest in computers was instrumental in making sure the store stayed up with the latest technology. Not worrying about what others were doing, they continued to just do what seemed right for their customers, and what was needed to stay viable.

Today, as always, a host of community activities are marked with the participation of the business or its employees. A strong participant in Coshocton Towne Centre events, they are key in setting up the Christmas Village and making sure Santa Claus is around every week before Christmas for local kids to tell their wishes. The business supports many school activities and community improvement efforts.

Energetically motivated by Cheryl Triplitt Wantuck, the loyal and dedicated staff of pharmacists and assistants ensure that the caring customer relationships continue, embodying the spirit of three generations of Triplitts.

Let's hope this year's Richard Rea Small Business of the Year can one day celebrate another 80 years of excellence in local business. Congratulations to Triplitt Pharmacy & Gifts!