



Newsom Oil Company

Distributor Since 1945

The History of Newsom Oil Company

John Newsom signed a contract with Kendall Refining Company to be their Central Florida distributor on March 21, 1945. He began his business in a rented corner of the Knollenberg warehouse at 506 Macy Street in downtown Orlando. As the sole employee, John doubled as salesman and driver. He worked long hours making deliveries of oil and grease products out of the back of his pick-up truck. When sales outgrew the truck's capacity, he also pulled a trailer. In 1947 John built the first Newsom Oil Company warehouse at the present location, 1702 Atlanta Avenue. At that time Atlanta Avenue was a dirt road. When the circus came to town, he would watch the elephants pull the wagons from the train station past his business to the circus grounds on Kaley Avenue.

In the early days, oil was shipped from the refinery by rail in boxcars and delivered to the back door of the warehouse. It was packaged in glass jars that came with instructions for cleaning and reusing them for canning food. John liked to experience all phases of his business. When semi-trucks became the means of shipment, John decided to go on the road with his driver to pick up a load at the refinery in Bradford, Pennsylvania. He was one happy man wearing his L. L. Bean wooly flannel shirt and chewing on his cigar.

John was a landlord to purple martins for over 75 years of his life. He had martin houses wherever he lived and carried that tradition with him to the office. Colorful gourds hung at each corner of the warehouse and visitors were always greeted by the martin's cheerful call. John was also known for making the warehouse a home for stray cats. "Miss Kitty" was his favorite.

In 1974 John asked son-in-law, Doug Gordon, to join him in the business. This gave him more time to spend on "The Mermaid", a houseboat that he and Kathryn had built. Doug bought into the company and became majority owner in 1988. He introduced the business to the world of computers - making inventory, record keeping, and billing more accurate and time efficient. This move was resisted by John who had always kept handwritten ledgers and sent monthly statements that were hand prepared by his wife, Kathryn. Believing his system was best, John continued to hand post even when the computer had already finished the job. He continued to work 6 days a week until his passing in 1997.

Doug Jr. joined Newsom Oil Company in 1989 after graduating with his Master of Accounting Degree from Florida State University. He bought the company from his father in 2008 and is the current president. The recently completed facility is the result of Doug Jr.'s persistence, prayers, and God's provision. He would like to thank his brother Danny, a partner of HuntonBrady Architects, for designing the building and being an invaluable help during the entire process. He would also like to thank the many others who helped but won't fit on this page. These include his valued employees, friends, and family.

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