



# PORT TAMPA BAY

MAGAZINE

WINTER 2022/23

# LEGENDS OF THE PORT

## FEATURING:

- BARKETT FAMILY
- HENDRY FAMILY
- GEORGE HARVEY LORTON
- MARIANI FAMILY
- SAVAGE AND MCKAY FAMILIES



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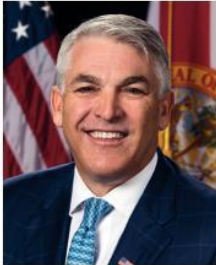
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Dear Reader,

I have always believed that if you have seen one port, you've seen one port. Part of what makes Port Tampa Bay so special is the people who make up our maritime community. This includes our multi-generational families who have been operating businesses within Port Tampa Bay for decades. Similar to the families that you will read about, I also got my start in the maritime industry working for a family owned, multi-generational maritime company. I learned the industry from a well known marine leader who founded an international shipping company still operating today, including in our port. Which is why I am excited to bring you this first-of-its-kind publication, *Legends of the Port*, which aims to celebrate the history and the people who put our port on the map.

Port Tampa Bay's commercial shipping history dates back, in earnest, to the 1880s when cattle trade with Cuba helped to put Tampa on the map. It's a history that's awash with Florida's commercial trade and other ties to the Caribbean, including President Teddy Roosevelt's launching point for the Roughriders during the Spanish American War. By contrast today, the port handles nearly every type of cargo imaginable – not just cattle!

During World War II the port was called upon to assist with shipbuilding efforts for our nation's military. As the war was ending, on June 11, 1945, the Florida Legislature established the Hillsborough County Port Authority as the governing body and port authority of the Port of Tampa to ensure the development and improvement of the harbor and shipping facilities. Shortly thereafter, the Port obtained its first tract of land, the former McCloskey Shipyards, from the federal government.

Through the years, Port Tampa Bay has established itself as the largest port by land and tonnage in the state of Florida and remains one of the most diverse ports in the nation. Port Tampa Bay is an economic staple in our region, accounting for an economic impact of over \$17 billion, providing 85,000+ direct and indirect jobs, and handles more than 34 million tons of cargo annually.

The port has grown leaps and bounds in the past several decades, including some significant developments from the families featured in this special publication. I hope you will enjoy learning more about the history of our port, but I especially hope you learn more about the families who worked together to grow and operate their maritime businesses. The Barkett, Hendry, Lorton, Mariani, and Savage families are some of Tampa Bay's most influential and we are fortunate to work alongside them. The port could not have accomplished all of these milestones alone, and we are honored to work alongside our legacy families, and partners within the maritime community to serve the public!

Sincerely,



A. Paul Anderson  
Port Tampa Bay President & CEO



L to R — Rick, Harry, Anthony, Ken

## HOW THE BARKETT FAMILY BUILT A GLOBAL OIL BRAND

### “BETTER THAN IT HAS TO BE”

There's something to be said for being part of a great big extended family, celebrating holidays at a table set for 30, scrabbling with your siblings and cousins over nothing memorable, but always knowing someone has your back.

That's how it was for the Barkett family, owners and operators of Amalie

Oil Company, North America's largest privately held independent blender of motor oils and industrial lubricants. Growing up in a Lebanese-Spanish-American household in greater Miami in the 60s, and working and hanging out in their father's gas station from an early age, the four Barkett brothers knew the value of family, hard work, and a little healthy competition. Those early lessons seem to have guided much of their ongoing success in business.

## THE MIAMI YEARS

Harry Barkett, the patriarch of the South Florida Barkett clan, was born in 1921 in Greenville, South Carolina to parents who had emigrated from Lebanon. As a child, his family relocated to Miami, where he grew up fast, married young, and, at the ripe old age of 18, launched a soon-to-be illustrious career.

In 1939, Harry founded Barkett Oil. His modest gas station required long hours and hard work. His four boys often helped with the drudgery, although at times they certainly hindered him in ways that only teenage boys can. During the 60s and 70s, the little fuel company acquired locations. It eventually became one of the largest independent oil companies in the US, with as many as 300 gas station/convenience stores staged from Key West all the way up to the Florida-Georgia line.

## THE TAMPA ACQUISITION

Harry's wife, Betty Gonzalez, was a native of Ybor City, the charming Cuban-Spanish-Italian enclave located at the entrance to the main Port of Tampa peninsula. Her ties to the area undoubtedly played some small part in Barkett Oil's next step. In 1977, the family bought Petroleum Packers. Located in the Port of Tampa, it was a small but lucrative lubricant oil manufacturing company.

Rick Barkett, son of Harry, said, "We bought this facility because we already sold lubricants with the gasoline, and thought it would be a good bolt-on business," a way to grow strategically. Petroleum Packers had a two to three-acre site on deep water, with excellent access by truck, rail or ship.

The purchase of the company signaled a shift for Barkett Oil away from stand-alone fueling stations to focus more on lube oil storage, packaging and distribution. Slowly, the Barketts sold off each and every gas station in their cache. Barkett Oil was sold too, and the family, including Harry and all four sons, moved lock, stock and barrel to the Tampa area.

Rick Barkett described one of Petroleum Packers main activities as "tolling" work – essentially service work whereupon the company would offload/receive base oils from big oil companies, such as Shell and Total, then blend the components with other raw materials to create a specific formulation for a car, or boat or other lubricating oil use. Products were packaged and/or distributed.

Because the customers were Big Oil, there wasn't exactly a lot of them. That stymied Petroleum Packer's growth and development plans. It is hard to justify CapEx when you only have three or four large customers.

The company's path to diversification involved searching out small underperforming and perhaps undervalued brands to acquire. The industry was rife with big companies that gobbled up small ones that then languished. Their first big coup was Amalie.

## THE AMALIE COUP

In 1998, Petroleum Packers, Inc. acquired Amalie Oil and rebranded the entire company as the Amalie Oil Company.

Amalie is an American institution. Originally based in Pennsylvania, it was one the country's first oil companies, selling petroleum products

as early as 1903. By the 1920s, the company was distilling crude into lubricating oils. The company was known for pioneering motor oils that addressed wide temperature fluctuations for seasonal weather – 10W30 has since become a household name. Amalie changed hands in 1960, when it was sold to Witco Chemical. A decade later Amalie's refinery in Franklin, Pennsylvania was destroyed by fire, and its operations were relocated to another Witco property nearby, the Kendall brand motor oil facility. Both Amalie and Kendall were then sold to Sun Company in 1996.

Despite its iconic roots, the Amalie brand wasn't thriving, and the Barkett brothers, in their quest to continue to diversify Petroleum Packers, took a closer look. They saw what they wanted – a future star.

Amalie now offers a complete line of automotive and industrial lubricants. Its slogan – Better than it has to be.™ – reflects its market niche for high-quality, well-engineered petroleum products. Under Barkett oversight, Amalie has diversified its offerings of synthetic oils, high-TBN [base neutralizing] fleet lubricants, and specialty industrial oils. Its Port of Tampa production campus includes 25 million gallons of bulk and blended product storage, to keep a close eye on raw material quality, and an on-site laboratory that is integral to product development and quality control.

In the 80s when the industry was converting from oil cans to plastic bottles and supply was proving to be an issue, Amalie introduced its own sophisticated bottle blow-molding and packaging operation – a diversification that rewarded the company handsomely during the COVID-19 era supply chain fiascoes. The company brings in plastic pellets by rail, and produces upwards of 140 million containers per year. This shift has created both a cost savings and competitive advantage over its competitors.

Amalie's materials can arrive by rail and sea, from all over the world. "It could be Korea, It could be Abu Dhabi," said Rick. Among the company's undeniable strategic advantages is its spacious site on deep water with roughly five times the storage capacity of most of its competitors. Locating facilities on deep waterfrontage has become a company-wide best practice. Also, being located in a seaport with what Rick calls "a new port management with a strong customer mindset" has been a refreshing and tangible plus for the company.

Under a variety of licenses, Amalie blends and packages more than 3,000 different products in sizes ranging from 8-ounce plastic bottles right up to full rail tanker loads. It ships throughout the US and exports to 100 countries. While its flagship line bears the Amalie name, it continues to blend and package private-label products.

If a retail customer needs refrigerator compressor oil, or hydraulic fluid for a tractor, or even piston oil for an airboat, Amalie makes it. Their products touch the lives of almost everyone in America, and a good portion of the rest of the world.

The company has invested wisely in better, faster, more automated machinery, but still prioritizes its commitment to employees. Amalie even rolled out a profit sharing plan. Their employees' longevity is unequalled. More than a few have been with the Barketts for close to a half century. Institutional memory complements new business acumen.

The corporate mantra is that the staff doesn't work for Amalie, it works for the customer. A quality product and a customer-service approach that percolates throughout the organization is Amalie's pride.

There are challenges. This is the oil business, one that can be obscenely capricious. When the price of oil skyrockets, or plummets as was seen in recent years, having the strength of a large enterprise is sometimes the only way to get through the storm. Selling inventory purchased at a premium after an oil price freefall isn't for the faint of heart, or the undercapitalized. It has happened. Having the luxury of massive storage capacity comes with the arduous responsibility of filling it at the right time and price.

Amalie Oil's now well-diversified customer base includes oil companies, automotive retailers, and mass merchandisers, among others.

Its commitment to cutting-edge products has also led Amalie to conduct product testing through extreme-performance competition engines and race cars.

## BENCH STRENGTH IN TAMPA

Amalie Oil's headquarters is still located in the Port of Tampa, but the company has six additional facilities including locations in Charleston and California.

Patriarch Harry Barkett Sr. stepped down as CEO about the same time as the Amalie acquisition was executed.

His four sons all remain in the business. The eldest, Harry (Joseph), is at the helm, Rick is COO, Anthony is Vice President and Ken is CFO. Each has parleyed his own strengths into a role within the company throughout and despite its evolutions and acquisitions. Somewhat surprisingly, they have been able to grow the company while dodging the "egos flying around and without killing each other," Rick said, despite the occasional ruckus. Apparently if democracy doesn't prevail, the CEO does.

Over the years, the Barketts have leaned into a hands-on, "walk-the-floor" style. A nose for scenting out problems before they escalate, has been sustained by a culture that aims to pull in opinions from all levels as the simplest way to find the best solution to everyday challenges.

For succession planning, many of the Barkett brothers' own children have already been brought in, starting on the ground floor. Some now play expanded roles in the business.

Outside of the office, the family, which numbers 50 and counting in the greater Tampa Bay area, remains close-knit, but, Rick lamented, each brother's clan has multiplied with marriages and grandkids and simply getting them all together is more and more difficult to manage.

The family respects the lessons of sports – and the camaraderie, deep interpersonal relationships and teamwork that sports promote. It is no accident that these are the same qualities Amalie Oil nurtures in its workforce.

The Barketts are sports aficionados. Rick credits sporting events with having the power to still gather his extended family all in one place, despite their crazy schedules. "The family loves nothing better than a Lightning game. It's a great opportunity to have fun and catch up."

## SPORTS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

You can't sell motor oils and lubricants to the masses without some outstanding brand-name recognition. Amalie Oil's approach to developing that recognition may well have taken root in the childhood exploits and interests of the Barkett boys. Their sports community involvement now strongly defines their brand, and has included everything from National Hot Rod Racing to arena football, and from monster trucks to the National Hockey League.



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There's method to the madness. A commitment to cutting-edge lubricant technology can only be served well with product testing in extreme-performance competition engines and racecars, so the company has done that since the 60s. That has cultivated a loyal following in the racing community. Amalie has sponsored NHRA's Terry McMillen, helping enhance his race car performance, and Gainesville Raceway's prestigious Gatornationals event.

In 2009, Amalie added monster truck star Razin Kane to its sponsorship roster, and in the process is showcasing Amalie Oil to a whole new set of gearhead fans.

The company's support of the Arena Football League's Tampa Bay Storm and its naming rights to their field, the Amalie Motor Oil Field, may have been a springboard to having a National Hockey League arena named after it. In 2014, Amalie acquired naming rights to Tampa's world-class forum and it was renamed Amalie Arena. The company also sponsors the arena's star NHL tenant, the Tampa Bay Lightning.

While the sponsorship deal was largely hashed out over a simple turkey sandwich lunch, it elevated Amalie's community presence in the blink of an eye.

Gearing community investment toward Tampa Bay and Florida-based

sports aligns the Amalie brand with toughness, durability, strength and performance, words that can also describe Amalie's product lines.

Beyond sports, Amalie finds room to share with other community initiatives. Area hospitals, especially children's hospitals, are a particular soft spot.

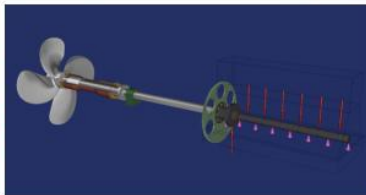
## THE BAR HAS BEEN RAISED

Engaging the public in a thoughtful, strategic manner is a business imperative for Amalie. But it is also fun. The Barketts take their business seriously but when you work day in and day out with people you have known since birth, you learn a thing or two about balancing work life and personal life. They take pleasure in putting smiles on faces at work and in the community, whether that means providing a baby alligator for photo opps at Gatornationals, or supporting the Lightning on another journey to Stanley Cup victory.

Amalie's leadership team has watched Tampa's effervescent growth over the last few decades and has leveraged their family values and hutzpah to trigger similar expansion in their own enterprise. Amalie continues to craft its brand for tomorrow's needs, while introducing a little levity and humanity into the mix whenever it can. ■

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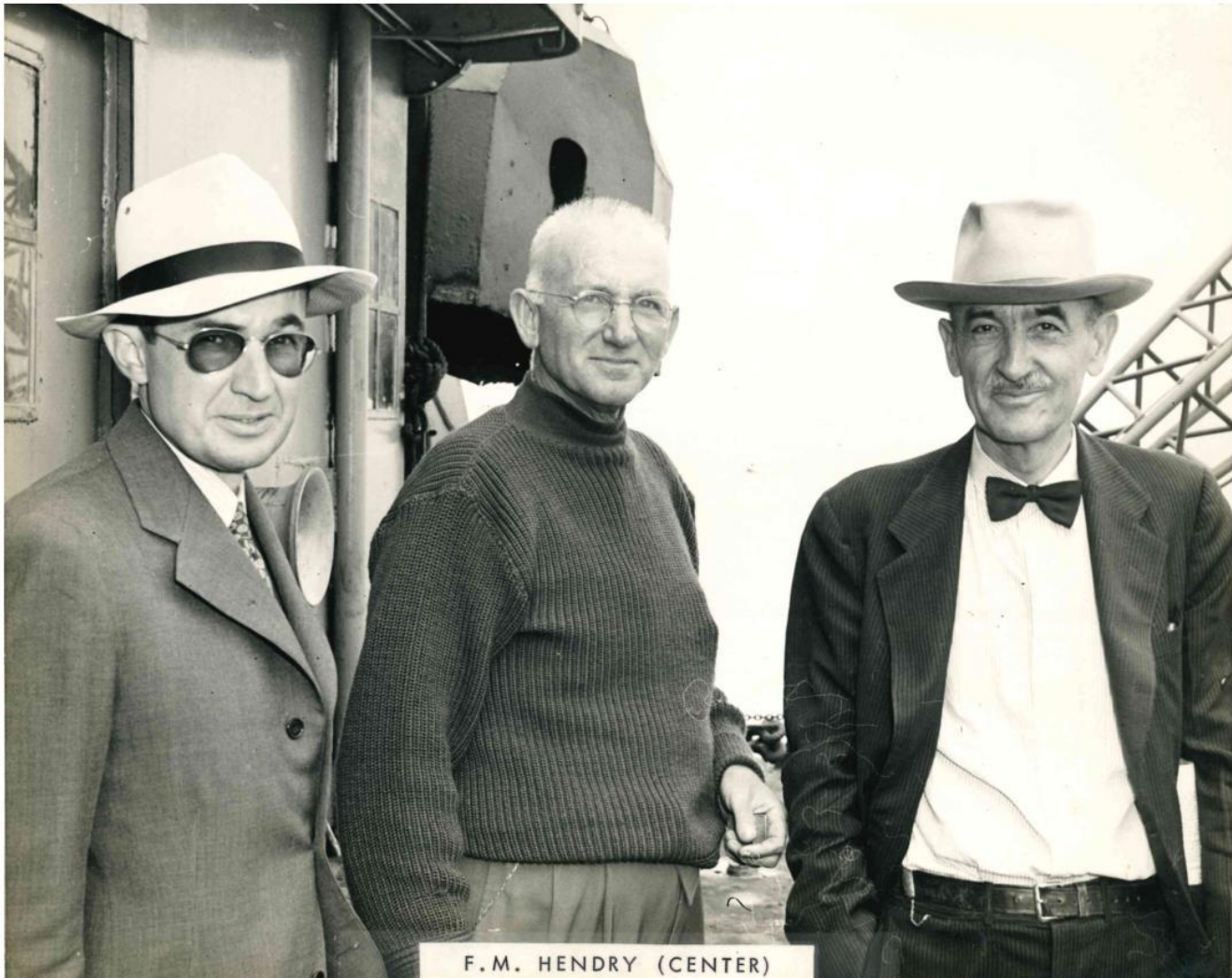
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## THE HENDRY FAMILY HAS LIFTED LIVES IN FLORIDA SINCE THE 1850S

### "DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN"

**T**he story of Florida can't be told without a tribute to certain tenacious and tireless individuals who saw value in unproven resources and took action.

Native Americans, European colonists, and waves of various influential settlers shaped Florida, each in their own way. Statehood came in 1845, and that undoubtedly sparked the interest of pioneering personalities the world over.

### **CAPTAIN BERRY HENDRY**

One such man was Francis Asbury "Berry" Hendry. In 1851, his family made their way from Thomasville, Georgia, driving cattle southward and settling on the Alafia River east of Tampa. Married shortly thereafter, Hendry built a cattle ranch at Fort Meade, located along the military road that connected Fort Brooke (Tampa) to Fort Pierce.

Tales of Berry's adventures and achievements are the stuff of legends. Records indicate he was a towering man. As a son of Georgia in the 19th century, Hendry would have been no stranger to physical labor, sub-tropical pests, oppressive heat and the assorted perils of the southern frontier. Undoubtedly such attributes helped his cattle business flourish, but new challenges called, and at the age of 23 he tackled politics and was elected to the Hillsborough County Commission.

During the Civil War, he supplied cattle to the Confederate Army. To protect the herds while driving them north – mostly from Federal raiders and rustlers – he rallied cowboys and created a 'cow cavalry'. He earned the rank of Captain.

After Florida surrendered in 1865, and right up until 1903, Captain Hendry's political career prospered. At various times he represented Fort Myers, Polk County, Florida's 28th and 24th districts (as Senator), and Lee County (in the House of Representatives). When his Confederate leanings put him out of political favor during Reconstruction, he served



on Polk County's Board of Public Instruction, expanded his cattle empire, set up new headquarters in Fort Myers and was one of the first to ship cattle to Cuba through the new port of Punta Rassa.

"There was a huge appetite for beef in Cuba after the Civil War. Captain Hendry spearheaded the project to build the wharves and port facilities at Punta Rassa to transport Florida cattle to Cuba, and that's how the Hendry family first got their feet wet in the maritime industry," said Kelly Hendry, current president of Hendry Holdings, LLC, and Captain Hendry's great, great granddaughter.

## CAPTAIN FM HENDRY

Captain Hendry's grandson, Francis Merle "FM" Hendry, was born in Fort Myers but made his way to Tampa after stints at the U.S. Naval Academy, in the Navy and the merchant marines. He sailed the seven seas on tankers, working for Standard Oil. Family lore says he worked his way up to a desk job, got bored and needed a new challenge.

That challenge came in the form of the Shell Producers Company. In the 1920s, Hendry acquired partial ownership of this company, which dredged and distributed oyster shells for use in roadworks and other construction projects. Offices were on Water Street in what is now Tampa's thriving Channel District, home to million dollar condos and a spirited gentrification.

Shell Producers was the Hendry family's first maritime pursuit in the Tampa area.

In 1942, Hendry became sole owner of Shell Producers and it became Hendry Corporation. Business activities expanded. Hendry developed a new port area, dubbed Rattlesnake Point, on the west side of Tampa's main peninsula.

Kelly Hendry recalled, "When my grandfather FM was developing that land, my father was a young boy. He said there were rattlesnakes everywhere," which meant he had only limited access to the site during construction, much to his chagrin.

The construction aggregate work thrived. One of the company's most notable projects was the provision of shell underlayment for Tampa's scenic Bayshore Boulevard.

Under FM Hendry's direction, the company soon purchased a small dry dock, expanded into oil transport, and set up a dredging enterprise. The construction aggregate business was transformed into a diversified company, starting an industry-leading dredging enterprise. Captain FM Hendry is credited with weaving professionalism and innovation into his projects, elevating the dredging sector throughout the hemisphere.

In the 1940s, the U.S. Coast Guard was added to Hendry's client base, and, the company built and commissioned tugboats, beginning with the illustrious tug "Mack", which served the company well for many decades, towing and repositioning barges of fuel oil and other commodities.

Some of the company's celebrated projects include conducting dredge-infill work for Saint Petersburg's Bay Pines Hospital, creating a channel in Cedar Key, and providing some of the early marine construction work to create the Intercoastal waterway along Florida's Atlantic coast.

During World War II, Hendry Corporation worked on war-effort infrastructure projects including dredging for the U.S. Naval Station in Key West and several Charleston-area projects for military infrastructure.

## AARON HENDRY

After he passed in 1968, the diversification begun by Captain FM Hendry continued under the oversight of his sons, Aaron and Harold Hendry, now the fourth generation of Hendrys with Florida maritime interests. In 1983, Aaron Hendry became the sole owner and president of Hendry Corporation.

The key businesses of oil transport and dredging evolved into commercial and government ship repair, stevedoring and marine terminal operations, marine environmental services and maritime employee staffing. In addition to Hendry Corporation, the operating entities overseen by Aaron Hendry included Gulf Marine Repair Corporation, Universal Environmental Solutions, LLC, Port Staffing, Inc., Anchor Sandblasting and Coatings and Port Hendry Terminals, LLC. Ownership of these companies was consolidated under Hendry Marine Industries, Inc., which is owned and controlled by Hendry Holdings, LLC.

The diversification effected by Aaron Hendry was to a certain extent reflective of his insiders' eye for maritime business opportunities, cultivated working in the family business from the age of 16. But, his tech and business education – earned at Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Tampa and the prestigious Harvard Business School's Owner/President Management Program – sent him delving into new territory, including initiatives to fill workforce gaps and environmental service needs.

In pioneering these programs and companies, Aaron Hendry mirrored the predilections of his predecessors. He saw an emerging need, found the resources, and voila, customized entities that met the need. He did

so well before many others in the maritime sector recognized the value; indeed, all of today's maritime projects and initiatives must address comprehensive workforce and environmental issues.

Kelly Hendry said that her father's greatest gratification in business came from providing solid family-wage jobs to thousands of workers. He took great pride in his expansion into drydock and ship repair yards, which put many people back to work in an industry notorious for fluctuating labor needs.

Kelly Hendry said, when Gulf-Tampa Dry Dock was shuttered in the early 80s, everyone was told to go home: "This was really sad for a facility that had been operating since the 1940s." So her father bought it, and put the employees back to work almost immediately.

Overnight, shipbuilding and repair became the primary business line for Hendry Corporation.

Aaron Hendry was a fervent proponent of workforce training, education and development. He endowed multiple scholarships, and the A.W. Hendry Training Center was unveiled in 2010 to provide the type of tailored training in welding and other shipyard trades and crafts that just wasn't readily available to Hendry's workforce elsewhere. Kelly Hendry said, "My father believed that the men and women who worked for him were his company's most important asset."

An entrepreneurial spirit runs through the generations of the Hendry family. So does a penchant for action. In 2015, in an ultimate show of appreciation for his workers, Aaron Hendry rewarded his employees with 49% of Hendry Marine Industries through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan.

Over the years, Hendry Corporation has worked on flagship projects throughout the state such as the Trident Submarine Basin at Cape Canaveral, Port Manatee Harbor, what is now PortMiami's Dodge Island, and the original Howard Frankland Bridge, as well as numerous beach renourishment projects.

## KELLY HENDRY

Kelly Hendry's role in the family business was not preordained.

With four brothers and several step-siblings, she made her way through business school and was well entrenched in a South Florida financial career when her father invited her back to Tampa in 2015.

The timing was fortuitous as Aaron Hendry passed the next year.



Captain Marie Tug and Hendry Barge 1959. Courtesy Hillsborough County Public Library.

Kelly Hendry's immediate contributions were related to elevating the financial health of the organization. She had never been on a drydock, but was strongly committed to continuing the family legacy.

She credited her step-brother Mike Hendry for coaching her on day-to-day operations and serving as a steadfast advocate for her leadership.

Perhaps in direct contrast to previous generations, she remained unobtrusive for a time, watching and learning the operations. But Kelly Hendry's management philosophy was firmly entrenched from day one: "Like my father, I'm here to perpetuate the legacy for the workforce. The people are the reason that I do what I do." That's because, she paraphrased from a 1940s company handbook written by Captain FM Hendry, "The good of the company is in its employees. The value of the company is in the men [and women] that do the work."

Having an employee-focused culture has always been a critical part of how the company runs and under her direction that strategy has been refashioned for the current day.

In true Hendry style, Kelly Hendry has already made her mark. The customer base has been greatly diversified. "There were years where 75% of our revenues would all be from two customers.... That was entirely too risky," she said.

And one of her personal platforms is equity. "Let me be one of your contacts. Opening doors is one of the things that I really am all about right now - opening doors, providing resources, providing educational experiences. These are my nature. That's how I intend to leave my footprint here," she said.

Her affinity for introducing individuals to maritime careers means "giving young people a push and putting wind in their sails." One aspiration is to put more women on ships. "Just give me five, give me five women that get an appointment to the Merchant Marine Academy," she said. She wants to "smash those doors."

When asked if her father would be proud of what she has done with the family legacy, Kelly Hendry wasn't making assumptions: "I think he would be really proud that we continue to generate a profit that provides the Hendry family and our employees a lifestyle that promotes health, well-being, longevity and financial security."

While generations of Hendry men have made their presence known in Florida and Tampa Bay, Kelly Hendry said the Hendry women have an important place in history too.

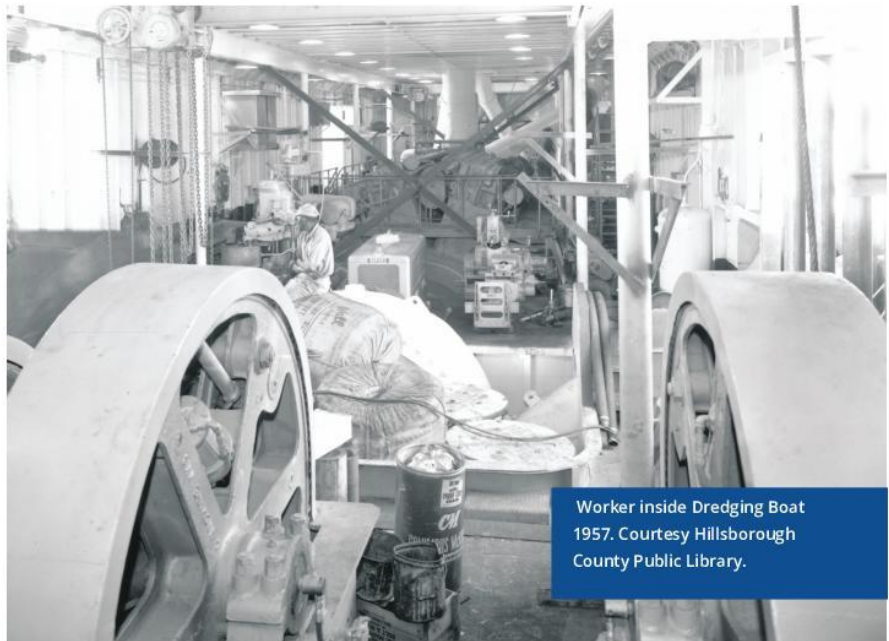
Her personal hero was her grandmother, the wife of Captain FM Hendry. "I was most influenced by her. The way she lived and the way I want to live my life can be summed up in this quote from John Wesley: 'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can in all the ways, in all the places you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.'"

Hendrys have secured their place in Florida and Tampa history with their vision and business acumen, but there is more to this family. Multiple generations have also shared their good fortune, shown goodwill and inspired pride and commitment to community.

Philanthropy and community service are integral to their makeup. Kelly Hendry shared that three of the company's beloved charitable

organizations are the American Victory Ship (a Tampa-based mariners' memorial museum that pays tribute to the men and women behind the American Merchant Fleet), the Tampa Port Ministries Seafarers Center and the Tampa Bay Maritime Scholarship Foundation.

The Hendry family has done good deeds for the state of Florida for more than 170 years. They continue to do so. ■



Worker inside Dredging Boat 1957. Courtesy Hillsborough County Public Library.



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## A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HARVEY LORTON

Port Tampa Bay's maritime community recently mourned the passing of a true legend, George Harvey Lorton. George Lorton was a constant force and respected fixture in our maritime community for more than 60 years. Lorton brought a passion and distinct leadership style to International Ship Repair, Padgett-Swann Machinery Company, and many other businesses operating in the maritime community. Since 1990, he led International Ship Repair with tenacity as well as his generosity and kind and caring spirit.

George Lorton was a true Tampa native. He graduated in 1969 from the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida with a degree in geology. Lorton was a member of the USF Alumni and a Life Member donor. A maritime veteran and businessperson for over 55 years, George began his career as a shipyard apprentice in 1962 and worked a variety of positions in the industry while attending high school and college. From start to finish, Lorton spent his entire career in the ship repair and marine service industry.

In 1990, George purchased International Ship Repair & Marine Services, Inc., and eventually became the sole owner, President, Chairman and CEO. His additional companies include Padgett-Swann Machinery Company, Marine Metal Works and Lorton Holdings, Inc. - which were all located in the Tampa Bay area. As an entrepreneur, Lorton had a varied interest in several different businesses and land holdings over the years. One important change Lorton brought to International Ship Repair was the addition of dry docks. Prior to the change, was only able to perform topside work. Adding dry docks to their portfolio helped to expand International Ship Repair, allowing them to take on bids and work they could not have performed prior.

According to his colleagues, he had a Midas touch as almost any deal that Lorton entered into, turned to gold and was a success. He is remembered for his wisdom when it came to the maritime business and his ability to adapt and evolve in his career. Lorton is also fondly remembered as a man who cared for the people who worked for him. Despite his success, Lorton could relate to anyone and was a true friend to his entire International Ship Repair family.

George Lorton believed in giving back to and being an active member of his community. He served as a former board member of the Florida State Fair Authority; King of the Krewe of the Knights of Sant' Yago and on the Educational Foundation of the Krewe of the Knights of Sant' Yago. He was a long-time member of the Sertoma Club and the Propeller Club of Tampa. An avid outdoor recreational sportsman, George participated in hunting and fishing trips traveling the globe to exotic places such as the Caribbean, New Zealand, Africa, and Alaska.

George Lorton loved all things related to the marine business and could frequently be found volunteering in the community. In his appreciation of life and his desire to do for others, George was a supporter of organizations such as Heartbeat International, USF Marine Biology, Tampa Port Ministries and Angels Against Abuse. Lorton was honored posthumously as the recipient of the James McKay Award during the 2022 Anchor Ball. He was chosen for his lifelong dedication to our maritime community and his devotion and support of Tampa Port Ministries, the Tampa Bay Maritime Scholarship Foundation and many other worthy causes.

Most of all, George Lorton will be remembered as a formidable leader within the maritime industry and a true friend. He helped many people over the years; always believing that he could make a difference in someone's life. All of us at Port Tampa Bay will miss him greatly. ■



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## THE MARIANI FAMILY BUILT A NICHE INDUSTRY THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR FLORIDA'S PROGRESS

### "GOOD BUSINESS TEMPERED WITH GOOD CITIZENSHIP"

A massive wave of Italian immigrants, some four million strong, made their way to the United States between 1880 and 1920. History books say they came seeking economic opportunities, leaving behind a comparatively overpopulated land rife with unemployment. But every family's story is different. Some immigrants ran from struggle, and some ran toward opportunity.

### THE EA YEARS – FROM ITALY TO INDIANA

It seems Eustachio Antonio (Eddie) Mariani was doing a little of both. Born in 1889 in Pescara, Italy, a small town east of Rome on the Adriatic Sea, Eddie was the son of an oppressive patriarch. Betrothed as a child, as was the custom, he married young and at the age of 23, he and his young bride sailed out on a tramp steamer to New York. The paperwork he filed at America's busiest immigration station at Ellis Island listed his work as a cement contractor.

The Marianis found their way to Richmond, Indiana and they proceeded to welcome four children in rapid succession, whereupon Eddie's wife contracted pneumonia and died. Eddie wasn't alone for long. According to family records, while his wife was hospitalized, the charge nurse took a compassionate interest in Eddie and his children. Eventually she married Eddie and they had two more children. Eddie's love life took various leaps and turns which included two more wives, with a return to the third, and an estimated grand total of 14 children.

In Indiana, Eddie worked for a road construction company that was a licensee of a third party, Kenneth Earl McConaughy, a renowned developer of modernized asphalt emulsions and processes that made road construction more efficient.

Road building and asphalt became Eddie's life's work, and K.E. McConaughy would play an important role in Eddie's life and that of future Marianis. McConaughy developed what is commonly known

as the asphalt drum mix plant - essentially a drum plant that blends hot asphalt (or ambient temperature asphalt emulsions) and aggregate used in road or runway applications, as well plants and processes to produce asphalt emulsions. Eddie worked for a third party McConaughay licensee in Indiana operating the plants and constructing new farm-to-market roads that would become so important to Indiana's and the Midwest's economic development in that era.

## AND ON TO AFRICA

Then came WWII. Eddie went to war for the US as the designated "tech rep" for McConaughay Plants and Processes and their contract with the Dept. of War. EA went into combat for the US. Again his Italian served him well. With his officer in tow, EA would visit Italian prisoner-of-war camps, interview a few POW officers, choose some, and head along to the enlisted men's camps, where he would select a workforce. These reformulated road crews rebuilt many captured airfields and roadways through North Africa, then into Sicily, and across to the toe of Italy's boot, and finally north through Italy and into the back door of Germany.

After the war, McConaughay and his licensee honored Eddie by awarding him a license to manufacture asphalt emulsions in Florida.

## THE AMERICAN DREAM, IN TAMPA

In 1945, Eddie relocated to St. Petersburg and by 1947 had become one of the very first tenants of the newly formed Port of Tampa (Hillsborough County Port Authority). He took a lease on an acre and a quarter, more or less, right on the port's main peninsula at Hooker's Point, between a ship repair facility and a sulfur terminal. For \$50 per month, on a 35 or 40 year lease, with a license to make a product much needed after the war years, Eddie had a new livelihood, his very own company - thoroughly embodying the American Dream.

In the beginning, the business simply bought raw asphalt and other raw materials, often from neighboring petroleum product facilities, and made emulsions.



The post-war years were boom years. Mid-century Florida needed good, durable roads. Mariani specialized in advanced and high-quality asphalt products which drove demand and helped the company grow.

## THE SECOND GENERATION

In 1951, Eddie died of a heart attack, intestate. His sixth child, George Mariani - a WWII fighter pilot who had risen to the rank of Lieutenant, and a newly graduated attorney - was the one who offered (out of all Eddie's 14 children and three surviving spouses) the kind of skill set that made him the most logical choice to settle the estate.

Fortunately, George took a shine to Florida, the business and its opportunities. George Mariani Jr. recalled, "First he brought Mom, my





younger brother Tim, brand new baby sister Susan and me down from Indiana for a year. Air conditioning wasn't prominent at the time. Bugs were everywhere. I remember a coral snake in the garage, two scorpions trying to kill each other on the front steps, and a big tortoise outside. Mom wanted to go home [to Indiana]." The boys were intrigued, and the family stuck it out.

Eventually, George worked out a deal with the other 16 heirs, then took the helm of E. A. Mariani Asphalt Company in 1954.

Under George's reign, the business expanded. An all-important contract was won to serve as the retail marketer of Texaco asphalt from their neighboring terminal at the port. He also founded GemSeal, Inc. in 1957, a manufacturer and supplier of pavement preservatives and related products.

Mariani Asphalt was known throughout the asphalt and related industries. It held leadership roles on many industrial boards and committees.

Family companies usually dig deep regional roots and become important to the community with a multitude of pursuits outside of their main business activities. The Marianis were no exception. In the 70s and 80s, George served as City Commissioner and as Mayor of Belleair, and gained a reputation as a doer, an activist. He was a co-founder of St. Paul's School in Clearwater, president and board member of Morton Plant Foundation and a president and board member of the nonprofit organization that operates Ruth Eckerd Hall. He was known for his humor and creativity, as well as his business acumen and commitment to customer service.

George took great pride in the quality of his product and the high standards of his company. With a nod to the future, he gifted each of his five children 9% of the stock, and retained a 55% majority share for himself.

## THE THIRD GENERATION

The oldest of George's children, George Jr. was especially interested in asphalt opportunities. At the tender age of 16, he was off to a lab in Lafayette, Indiana to learn quality control testing techniques from a celebrated industry pioneer, his grandfather's mentor, KE "Mac" McConaughy, for his summer job. He brought back information, ordered equipment and put his new-found knowledge to work, very successfully.

That early experience in Mac's lab and paternal guidance led George Jr. back to Lafayette and Purdue University and continued learning opportunities working at Mac's lab while pursuing BS and MS degree in Chemical Engineering Management and Finance.

The US Army nixed his plans to go on for a PhD, but at a celebration dinner with his family upon his discharge in 1975, his mother – perhaps looking to shepherd her father into retirement and at the same time keep her newly returned son close by – turned to his father and said in her no-nonsense tones, "I think you ought to give Georgie a chance and run that business because you're not there very often anymore." George Jr. recalled his father huffed and puffed a little bit, then simply said, "So, well, we'll try it."

"The next Monday I was at the office," said George Jr.

His father handed over the keys, pointed to the sign above the gate brandishing the name "E. A. Mariani Asphalt Company" for all to see, and cautioned George Jr. to ensure his work would live up to the reputation previous generations had worked hard to build.

George Sr. stayed on as Chairman of the Board for a time but George Jr. took over day-to-day affairs.



George Jr. wasn't new to the business. He and his siblings each spent some time there at some point in their lives. George Jr. first started working when he was 14. He described his first jobs as very demanding manual labor, unloading 100 pound bags of clay all day long, or going into tank manhole's to muck out the bottom in Florida's extreme heat.

A lot happened under George Jr.'s management. The port was growing and the shipyard wanted to absorb both Mariani's original acre and a quarter to the south and its newer leasehold to the north. The asphalt company agreed but found that their grandfathered-in rent, at \$50 per month now in the 70s, was a deal too good to be replicated.

E. A. Mariani Asphalt moved just outside the port area to a five-acre rail-served location on Causeway Boulevard and expanded with a truck yard, laboratories and other facilities. In 1984 Mariani bought out Chevron's Hooker's Point asphalt terminal, so operations split between the two sites. They quickly doubled the on-port tankage, built a new dock to allow use of larger vessels, and bought an ocean-going integrated tug-barge business to enhance access to markets. Mariani Asphalt exported throughout the Caribbean.

In 2002, the icing on the infrastructure cake was the construction of Mariani's polymer modification plant at its 19th Street terminal. This was a first in the state. It set a new production standard for meeting specifications and its accomplishments were widely acknowledged by industry.

The business' success attracted interest, and in 2008 a private equity group, called Associated Asphalt, bought out the company and continues to operate it to this day. In a serendipitous twist, George Jr.'s son, George Mariani III started working at Mariani Asphalt in 1993 and is 4th generation Mariani, and remains as a senior technical director for Associated Asphalt, one of the country's largest asphalt terminal, storage and distribution companies.

## ONE FAMILY'S GIFT

Civil service seems to be hereditary. Each of the five children of George Mariani Sr. have been active in many associations and campaigns. George Jr. said his mother and father's generation served as exceptional role models for giving back to the community. His own charities and service revolve around children and "helping people

who have made good decisions but have been unlucky." He has worked on boards for the Hunter Blood Center and Salvation Army, among others. Close to his heart is the Special Operations Foundation Golf Tournament held at the Bellaire Country Club annually the last five years. This tournament has netted over \$1.25 million for a very worthy cause.

George Jr., like his father, has served as a member of the town commission and as Mayor of the town of Belleair.

Since their arrival in the US, each generation of Marianis has also served in the military –including one of George Jr.'s own sons.

The Mariani family has worked in asphalt in the United States since 1907. In Tampa, it launched its business in the mid-forties. For six decades it made its mark, adding lines of business that eventually included buying and selling liquid asphalt; making and distributing asphalt emulsions and pavement preservatives; operating tank farms, a dock and a tug-barge service; running a liquid-bulk trucking operations; and more.

Its business case is unique in the port. Few companies can claim their biggest competitor, biggest supplier and biggest customer to be the same company. For E. A. Mariani, Marathon was all three for a very long time.



The nature of that relationship attests to quality of product and service, and the mutual respect of all parties. Together, the port industry, and Mariani in its niche role, made important contributions to the economic landscape of the greater Tampa Bay region and Florida.

One of the peculiar things about working in a somewhat esoteric industry like asphalt is that few people really know what a company like E. A. Mariani Asphalt does. They probably don't know that thousands of jobs have been directly or indirectly generated – well-paying jobs that support families. And they are even less likely to know technological processes and controls that have been created and launched that help drive road and runway durability and economies in Florida and beyond.

However, the rich contributions of generations of Marianis will have a lasting impact. The forward momentum of their innovation and hard work over more than a century was foundational to an industry that will continue to be a part of all our lives for generations to come. ■

# HOW THE SAVAGE AND MCKAY FAMILY CHAMPIONED THE DEVELOPMENT OF TAMPA BAY

## "THROUGH THICK AND THIN"

In the early years, providence, for the port and city of Tampa, came largely in the form of a few founding families. Separately at first, the McKay family and the Savage family each helped introduce economic might and convert the western Florida frontier into a global trade gateway. Eventually, marriage united their strengths. The families endured. Today, close to two centuries later, a prominent family business still thrives.

### CAPTAIN JAMES MCKAY'S ARRIVAL

Captain James McKay Sr. hailed from Thurso, Scotland and sailed to America in the 1830s. He married a Scot, whom family historians credit for James' trans-Atlantic journey and settled in Mobile, Alabama. In 1846, James moved his family to Tampa, where there were known to be plenty of wild cattle, a legacy of Spanish colonialism and forests of fast-growing timber.

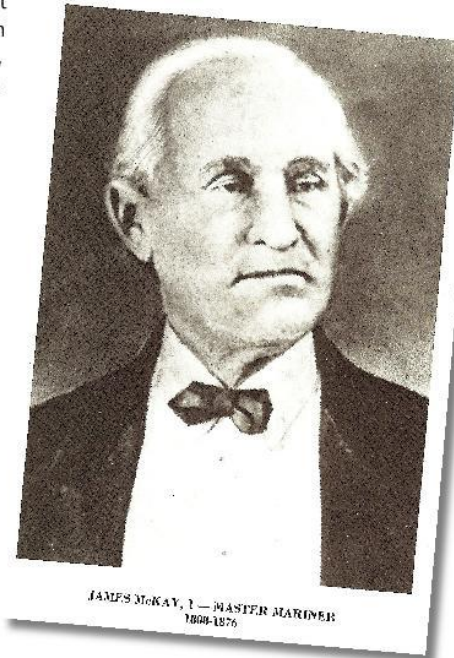
At the time, Tampa was a small village with limited access to basic necessities and no sort of regular trade. Fort Brooke, the Union Army outpost built to fight the Seminole wars, was largely idle. James had sufficient resources and foresight to prioritize needs, and so he acquired land, established the town's first sawmill and launched shipping operations head-hauling cattle to Cuba. That introduced regular two-way trade and sparked the region's economic and physical development. James became involved in government, eventually becoming sixth Mayor of Tampa, unknowingly setting precedent for future generations.

Throughout history, shipyards, vessels and seaports have played an important role in military actions. Tampa's colorful wartime history features James' role in the Civil War. In the beginning, there was a nominal Union presence in west Florida, but at sea Union blockades had become troublesome. James' shipping expertise and intimate knowledge of the coast enabled him to run the blockades and continue moving cattle to Cuba and returning with supplies for Tampa. Paid in gold that he conveyed back to ranchers and dockworkers and others, he helped keep a sort of underground economy afloat.

Records indicate he was captured once, but the Scottish citizenship that he maintained until the day he died, even as Mayor of Tampa, likely aided in his release.

### CAPTAIN JAMES MCKAY JR.

One of James' son, Captain James McKay Jr., worked in the family



business, captaining and piloting ships and continuing to trade cattle with Cuba. James Jr. reportedly even carried the famous 1st American Volunteer Cavalry – the Rough Riders – down to Cuba during the Spanish-American War.

After the war, family history attributes James Jr. with captaining the S.S. Mascotte, Henry Plant's "lucky" ship. It carried mail, cargo and people on a Tampa-Key West-Cuba routing. Henry B. Plant museum literature shares that the vessel supported the development of Ybor City and West Tampa with its shiploads of Cuban-grown tobacco that kept Tampa's significant cigar industry safe from the Spanish embargo.

At one point James Jr. served as Mayor, as did his own son, DB McKay.

The Mascotte was incorporated into Tampa's city seal, albeit depicted inaccurately as a sailing ship.


### ARTHUR RUSSELL SAVAGE'S ROLE

Arthur Russell Savage was born in 1898 in Wilmington, North Carolina and graduated from The University of North Carolina. He was sent to Tampa in 1920s by his employer, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, or ACL. In those days, well before motor-trucks pervaded the transportation market, railroads dominated supply chains and often ran port facilities, vessel stevedoring and a miscellany of maritime endeavors.

In the 1880s, port facilities on the interbay peninsula, now called old Port Tampa, had been developed by prominent transportation businessman and railroader, Henry B. Plant, but his interests there later became part of ACL.

Arthur was Superintendent of Port Tampa for many years, managing rail and vessel loading / unloading operations. After almost two decades in that capacity, he answered the call to arms for WWII. It makes sense that he joined the US Army Transportation Corps, which essentially managed military freight logistics. He eventually became a Lieutenant Colonel and the Port Commander of Antwerp.

Once safely back in Tampa in 1945, he gave up his railroad career to focus on a new initiative, no doubt building on combined skill sets acquired during his time with ACL and the Army Transportation Corps. He launched his own firm, the A. R. Savage Company, in the midst of the peninsula that was fast becoming the new Port of



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Tampa, complete with a brand new government-designated port authority to spur additional maritime-based economic development. The post-war years were a time of rapid port and economic growth.

## A SUCCESSFUL PORT ENTERPRISE DAWNS

Arthur's firm provided ship agency services, a vital link for any arriving or departing vessel. In the days before easy ship-to-shore communications, an agency performed many services to ensure vessel compliance and organized logistical arrangements for the ships and cargo. These days, there are much more compliance and risk.

The arrangements comprised working with pilots, tugboats, line handlers, port authorities and government agencies that dealt with waterways and customs and such. There is a copious amount of paperwork related to crews, cargo stowage, cargo conveyance and bills of lading.

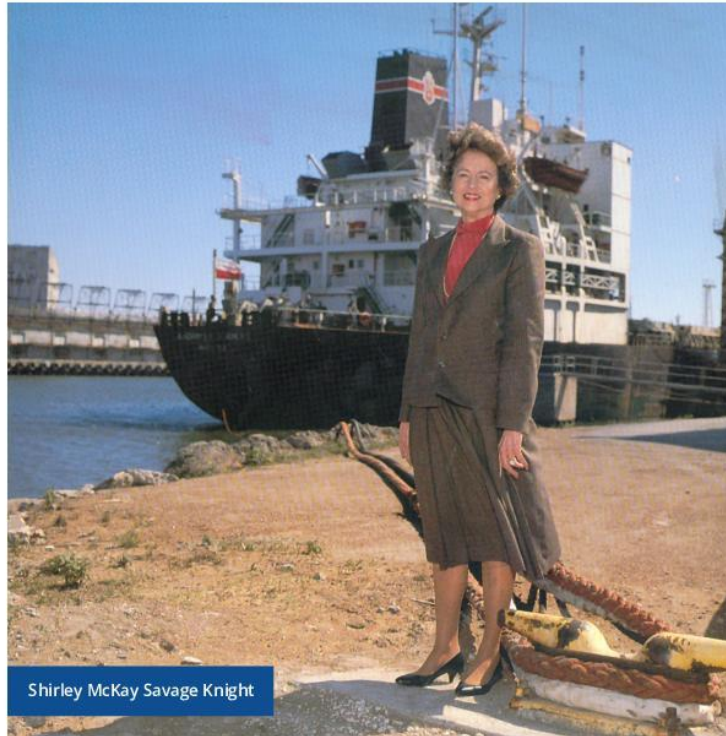
Providing these services through the 40s, 50s and 60s, a time now dubbed the Golden Age of Capitalism, helped fuel extensive economic expansion in the Tampa Bay area.

When Arthur retired in the 1968, his business was a roaring success.

## THE NEXT STEP – A.R. SAVAGE & SON

Arthur's son, William "Bill", has already joined the business. After college he spent time in the military – the Air Force – following in Arthur's footsteps after a fashion. However there the similarities ended. Bill's own son, also named Arthur, labeled his grandfather and father as a study in contrasts. While the elder was stoic, and organized with Army Officer-like precision, Bill was gregarious, fun and customer-focused. The opposite personalities made for a highly effective team, with one seeing to the nitty-gritty and the other building strong business networks and relationships that kept customers coming and also established the firm as a good corporate citizen.

Today's President, Arthur, recalls a childhood replete with customer outings on the family boat and plentiful rounds of Ybor City's famous Cuban sandwiches. Those trips weren't just client entertainment. Arthur said that even as a child he was expected to know and give a full accounting of terminal names, berth lengths, depths alongside – anything to help educate and sell the port and its industries to visitors. His father was even inclined to promote a competitor, if it meant keeping business in Tampa Bay.



Shirley McKay Savage Knight

Bill's untimely death in 1982 led to his wife, then Shirley McKay Savage, taking over as President. She was, astonishingly, the great, granddaughter of Captain James McKay Sr.

When Shirley took over, the company had already expanded into freight forwarding. She was a quick study, and soon realized that without Bill, management had rapidly devolved. She needed assistance, and fast.

Shirley surrounded herself with top-notch advisors, then graciously and deftly became a recognized leader in her field. During her tenure, she served as Honorary Consul for Denmark and Norway and was knighted by both countries for Outstanding

Service. She was active in the maritime community, served on local and national boards of the Propeller Club, and in 1986 was named "Maritime Person of the Year." In 2002, the Tampa Port Authority awarded her the Captain James McKay Lifetime Achievement Award for the Port of Tampa – few knew of her familial ties. She served on the Tampa Convention Center Board and the Board of Governors of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

In 1984, Bill's son Arthur, joined the business.

His path to the family company was not preordained. Upon his father's death, when Arthur was only 19, he had his tugboat captain's license, had begun a maritime career working on the family tugboat and docking ships, and was also going to college. Arthur's heart was in maritime operations. He went to sea for two years to advance his nautical knowledge and qualifications, but then the call of the family legacy brought him into the office.

Mother and son worked alongside each other for 12 years. For roughly a decade, Arthur's sister Betsy also worked in the business.

Shirley retired in 1996 and Arthur became President.

With his understanding of waterside operations, and being young and risk-tolerant, he brought to the table a keener eye for new prospects than many of his predecessors. He saw the world speeding up, bringing new opportunities. He was an early adopter of computerization and handheld technologies.

The hardest part, according to Arthur, was to stay ahead of the curve. He said business could not be complacent, because if the markets or customers changed, the business could go away overnight.

Arthur cited the demise of phosphate rock exports, which led to a loss of 10 million tons of cargo for the port and a good part of his





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business. At the same time, the world's shipping lines had begun to favor larger ships to help improve economies of scale. Larger ships meant fewer ships. And, the conversion of local power plants from coal and oil to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) delivered via pipeline also decreased ship counts drastically. Vessel calls dropped from a peak of 12,000 per year down to roughly 3,500 over a very short period.

The industry was in crisis and the number of vessel agents in the port plummeted.



## SKATING TO WHERE THE PUCK WILL BE

Arthur said the Gretzky perspective – not skating to where the puck is, but skating to where it will be – has been a great inspiration.

“We had to be faster than anybody else, better than anybody else, to give us an advantage over the competition,” said Arthur.

Positioning a company for change means being lean but having the right resources.

A. R. Savage & Son has needed that managerial outlook, as his company has braved some epic challenges. It constructed a purpose-built container yard at the port entrance (to help jumpstart what at the time seemed to be a lackadaisical response by the port industry to a complete realignment of general cargo trades), and within a few short years, FDOT took the land. The company built another East Port container yard, but when the port authority eventually started to invest and the container business took off, it was a mixed blessing for a company that had a competitive yard of its own but also provided services to the new ships calling at the port authority facilities.

With gracious ease, Arthur said, “We won the multi-decade war of getting the port into containers.” Through thick and thin, with the right agility and resilience, prosperity will endure.

That was the case when, defying most expectations, a disease evolved that shuttered the world for a while and wiped out every cruise vessel call at the port for more than a year.

## COMMUNITY

Arthur has continued his mother's involvement in community affairs. He is particularly proud of the company's support of Tampa's American Victory Mariners Memorial & Museum Ship and the Tampa Bay History Center.

Company outreach emphasizes maritime communities in need, maritime education programs and scholarships. Arthur mentors students in maritime and related fields, finding great satisfaction in helping them find a career consistent with their strengths and wishes.

And of course, the family have been lifelong members of Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla – the region's answer to combining history and community scholarships in a fun way.

Today A. R. Savage & Son is the largest ship agency, ocean freight forwarding and maritime advisory services company on Florida's west coast.

## THE STORY CONTINUES

In 2021, Arthur's son, Billy, took on the position of assistant vice president and became the fourth generation to join the business.

In college, Billy entered the Army ROTC program, and upon graduation, commissioned as an Infantry officer in the Florida Army National Guard where he then completed Air Assault and Infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia. During his service he served as a Rifle Platoon leader, Battalion Scout Platoon Leader, and Company Executive Officer. He recently fulfilled his contract with the Florida Army National Guard as a 1st Lieutenant and is now full time with the leadership team in the office as Vice President.

He then worked as assistant program manager for Tampa's Skybridge Tactical. Skills earned coordinating logistics for Special Operations Command and moving resources to and from the Middle East and Southwest Asia may well enable a very easy transition to his new port career. Billy said the family heritage aspect of the company was an undeniable draw.

Billy grew up exposed to a diversifying company – initiatives that had his father's stamp on them. He saw challenges, and grit, in the face of adversity at times, as well as success. He apparently liked what he saw. If he is of the same ilk as his forebears, Tampa will be fortunate. ■





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