

Established • 1934

T.F. O'BRIEN

HEATING & COOLING

Carrier Factory Authorized Dealer Since 2004



T.F. O'Brien & Co. Remembers Past; Grows Toward Future

When Thomas Francis O'Brien entered into the commercial refrigeration repair business in 1934, the world was a much different place. The United States was in the throes of the Great Depression, and World War II was a distant rumbling on the horizon. So how did one man build a business that, 76 years later, is still growing and still owned and operated by the O'Brien family?

"My grandfather recognized that the cooling industry was constantly evolving, and he was always willing to venture into new technologies," said Kerry O'Brien, co-owner of T.F. O'Brien & Co. "He started in commercial refrigeration, worked into residential, then appliances, and eventually air conditioning."

Kerry said that in the early days of the business, T.F. O'Brien was a one-man operation. "In the beginning, it was just my grandfather, and he was mostly making repairs to commercial refrigeration systems." Founded in the Richmond Hills area of Queens, N.Y., T.F. O'Brien became a Carrier dealer in 1955 and continued to expand from there. Kerry said that the company moved to their present Hyde Park location in 1968.

T.F. O'Brien is, in every way, a family company. "My father grew up in the business," Kerry said. "He entered the

Navy during WWII, and then went to college, but afterward continued on with T.F. O'Brien." Over the years, T.F. O'Brien has evolved to become a full-service HVAC/R business, offering both residential and commercial heating and cooling. Kerry, who holds a degree in mechanical engineering, currently owns the company with his brothers, Chris and Tom. Presently, T.F. O'Brien employs 20 people, owns a fleet of 12 service vehicles, and serves all of Queens, Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Kerry said that he finds it interesting that in many ways, the company has come full circle. "When my grandfather started out, he was just one man making refrigeration repairs. From there, we moved into construction, renovation and new installation. As the HVAC/R industry grew and progressed, we kind of fell away from maintenance."

He said that over the past few years, largely due to the changes in the economy and housing market, T.F. O'Brien is once again in the preventive maintenance game. "In our business, you need to go with the trends and be willing and able to adapt to change. That mindset is what has helped us stay in business for three generations," Kerry said.

He also indicated that perhaps the greatest reason the company has stayed in business for so long is because the brothers O'Brien never compromise on quality. "We've been selling Carrier® equipment since 1955 because we've always believed in providing our customers with the best quality products," Kerry said. "We offered Puron® air conditioners long before the push was on for environmentally safer coolant, and we continuously look for new, innovative offerings, like their high-efficiency duct-free split systems," he said.

Kerry said his company earned its accreditation as a Carrier Factory Authorized Dealer in 2004, an achievement fewer than five percent of dealerships can claim. He feels that this is due largely to the fact that his company offers technicians and staff the best in training and certification programs. "The more our people know, the better it is for our business and our customers," he said.

Kerry also said that his company has long looked to Totaline® sales centers to supply quality Factory Authorized Parts. "When it comes time to make a repair, we want to service a unit with quality replacement parts," he said. "We use F.A.P. because they help maintain Carrier quality."

For Kerry and his brothers, T.F. O'Brien & Co. is much more than a business – it's the way his family maintains a strong connection to the community. "My brothers and I grew up here. My father grew up here. Our business grew up here," Kerry said. "We know the community and the people like no one else."