



Man retires from Clayton-based company after six decades of service

By Bob Shryock/Gloucester County Times

February 11, 2010, 7:24AM

Howard G. Schwartz met Churchill Hungerford Jr. in 1940 when Hungerford bought produce at the farm stand Howard and his family operated in Mantua.

A friendship and work relationship ensued and two impressive milestones dove-tailed within recent months.

Founder Churchill Hungerford Sr.'s Clayton-based Hungerford & Terry Inc., specializing in implementing and developing state-of-the-art water treatment systems, celebrated its 100th anniversary during 2009.

And Schwartz, 80, the only Hungerford & Terry employee who knew both founder Hungerford Sr. and his son, retired from H & T on Jan. 28 after a remarkable 60 years with the same company.

"I could have stayed, but 60 years is long enough," says Schwartz, who is in generally good health despite triple bypass surgery in 1996. "It's been a great place to work because you know everybody. They've been like family."

"Howard has been a loyal and valuable employee right up to his retirement day," says Alan Davis, president of H & T and subsidiary Inversand and Co. "Howard has handled many duties including the operation of countless pilot studies and helping hundreds of clients resolve process-related water treatment issues. Additionally, he has run many R & D projects for us, and, recently, has performed quality control testing on the manganese greensand product mined and manufactured at the Inversand plant in Sewell."

Schwartz, who is single, has lived his entire life in Mantua. A 1948 graduate of Pitman High School, he is one of five sons of farmers Charles and Emily Schwartz. He is the lone survivor of the five.

Howard began working for H & T as a laborer at the Inversand green sand pit in the late '40s and was transferred to the main plant in Clayton in 1950. Drafted into the Army in 1951, he took basic training at Fort Dix, and spent two years with an intelligence outfit in Germany before his 1953 discharge. Schwartz returned to H & T to spend the next 57 years as a lab technician. He spent about a fifth of his time traveling domestically and "troubleshooting" for the company.

Hungerford & Terry has been a monumental industry success story.

Some H & T employees own controlling share of company stock. As a result, it has prospered and maintained its basic character over a full century, while avoiding takeover by larger companies.

According to Davis, Hungerford entered the water filtration business by chance when he found work with an engineer who was building a gravity water filter plant for the city of Hartford, Conn. When the engineer was fired, Hungerford was given his job and completed installation of what was then a state-of-the-art system.



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Staff photo by Lori M. Nichols

Howard G. Schwartz retires from Hungerford & Terry Inc. in Clayton after 60 years

Hungerford then went to work for Continental Filter Co. of New York City. From there, he became a partner in the United Water Improvement Company in Philadelphia. He left the firm in 1904 and sued for his patent on mechanical sand valves, a tool for water treatment. Although he won the case, legal problems nearly bankrupt him.

Then came a major turn of events. In 1904, C.H. formed a partnership with Arthur Terry, a civil engineer. They incorporated in 1909, converting a Philadelphia row house into company headquarters.

Hungerford bought a synthetic material (Zeolite) from a German inventor for an early application of water softening. C.H. tried to buy the patent, but the inventor wanted \$1 million and Hungerford turned him down.

Hungerford did purchase several tons of Zeolite for use by a Passaic silk dyeing company. One filter was converted to a water softener by removing the sand and placing Zeolite on the gravel bed, a primitive method that worked nonetheless.

Hungerford bought Terry's stock after World War I but kept the company name. In 1921, H & T relocated in Clayton. Today, company headquarters is in the same location.

Hungerford's son, also Churchill, was working for the company by 1922. A year later, "Church," as employees referred to him, discovered "greensand" in a pit below the ground surface. He was certain this could be used for water softening and he was right.

H & T struggled during the Great Depression, prospered after WW II, and went international in the early 1950s, supplying water purification systems for atomic, fossil fuel, and electrical utility plants.

The company continues to sell water treatment systems around the globe while adapting technology to cope with new problems like removing arsenic, radium and nitrates.

Hungerford & Terry honored Schwartz' longevity and unfailing dedication with a watch and a cake.

Schwartz will miss his work, and his fellow employees, but will now have more time for his passion for travel.

After 60 years with the same company, he's earned it.

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