

Company of the Month

Varsity Plumbing and Heating, Inc. celebrates 50 years of business serving properties of all sizes

By Bobby Bellini,
Varsity Plumbing and Heating, Inc.

It was a good year: the Yankees won the World Series, Jack Nicklaus won the U.S. Open Golf Championship, and the first Target store opened. It was 50 years ago, 1962, and it was the year my father, Bob Bellini, got started in the plumbing business.

"I started the company with one old beat-up Ford pick-up truck, me behind the wheel, doing the job, getting back to a little storefront which I rented at that time for \$60 a month. I'd greet my wife there who was doing the typing, answering the phones, and she had my little baby daughter in a bassinette. And that's the way we started the business," Bob recalls.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, Varsity Plumbing and Heating, Inc. has over 40 vehicles on the road and over 80 employees. Our headquarters, located in Flushing, Queens, features a 28,000 s/f office as well as an 8,000 s/f parts warehouse with over \$1 million worth of inventory, enhancing our ability to service our clients at any time of day, without the need



Bob Bellini, founder of Varsity Plumbing and Heating, Inc., far right, with his sons, from left: Rick, vice president; Tom, vice president; and Bobby, president; and sons-in-law Robert McConnell, field supervisor, and Mike Lyons, chief financial officer. They all work together at Varsity, a family business celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year.

at it, they asked me how much it would be, and I told them 'it's four fifty.' I did the job and they handed me a five dollar bill, and said, 'keep the change.'" He laughs, remembering the moment. "So I couldn't argue with them, but I learned that from now on, if I meant \$450 I would say

joined the business, too.

It's very hard to stay in business for this long without doing things right. You have to have a good reputation, do a good job at a fair price, stand behind your work, and always keep your word. Believe it or not, we are still serving some of the same customers

have a lot of respect for them and the way they run the business, and I'm very honored to be a part of it. I love working here."

This year, 2012, is a celebration of my father, "Mr. B," as much as it is of Varsity Plumbing. Varsity performs all aspects of plumbing work. The greatest benefit that we bring to our customers is our ability to provide true 24/7 service. We'll go out anytime that somebody's in trouble. If they need us, they call us, we come. The other value added service that we provide for our customers is reducing their plumbing and fire protection costs through our operational efficiency.

As part of our 50th anniversary celebration, we are currently offering various promotions and contests, including a customer appreciation discount of \$50 off any job of \$250 or more, and a 1962 Trivia Contest on our Facebook page (facebook.com/VarsityPlumbing). Facebook Fans who answer trivia questions correctly will be entered into our June drawing to win a Kindle Fire. In addition, B103 radio listeners are invited to win a pair of tickets, each week for

the entire year, to see the Jersey Boys on Broadway. We are also planning a client outing to see the Mets this summer, which will include a visit to the dugout and some time on the field during batting practice.

Varsity is proud to serve properties of all sizes, from co-ops and condos to single-family homes, multi-family apartment buildings, and commercial properties. We offer one-stop service to meet all compliance obligations for backflow prevention installation and filing as well as complete water filtration and de-scaling installations and service. Our services range from building-wide systems to single unit repairs. Although we do accept credit cards, we no longer accept chickens for payment.

For more information visit VarsityPlumbing.com or contact me, Bobby Bellini, president of Varsity Plumbing, at (877) VARSITY or (718) 358-5400.

Bobby Bellini is president of Varsity Plumbing and Heating, Inc., Flushing, N.Y.



Varsity's headquarters, located in Flushing, Queens, features a 28,000 s/f office as well as an 8,000 s/f parts warehouse and a fleet of trucks to service customers throughout New York City, Long Island, Westchester and northern New Jersey

to depend on suppliers. Our company provides a wide range of services to all kinds of properties, from co-ops and condos to rentals and commercial properties throughout New York City, Long Island, Westchester and northern New Jersey. Varsity's expertise includes plumbing, heating, cooling, sewer and drain cleaning, air and water quality, backflow prevention, pumping systems, and fire sprinkler/standpipe systems.

But as my father tells the story, "It was rough in the beginning. One time I got paid with two chickens. And I said at least we could go home and have something to eat." Another time, "I had looked at an extensive job for an elderly couple. And after looking

four hundred and fifty dollars! As the years went by, my sons joined me in the business, and they built it into a great, successful business."

Although Bob Sr. has long since retired, his three sons run the company. My job is president of the company, and my brothers Tom and Rick are both vice presidents. All three are licensed master plumbers, holding licenses in New York City, Long Island, Westchester County and New Jersey, and I am also a New York City master fire suppression license holder. My brother-in-law Mike Lyons, is chief financial officer, my brother-in-law Robert McConnell is field supervisor, my sister Terri runs our Long Island office, and my daughter Erica has

that my father did 50 years ago. Now we are servicing their children and their families. It just goes from one generation to the next. We're a family business looking out for families.

"I learned from my father and uncles that the key to a successful business is to put in a lot of hard work, a lot of time, and always treat your customers the right way," said Erica. "I remember growing up with my father, the beeper would go off at 3 am with emergency calls, and even though it was late and he was trying to sleep, he would get up and make sure that the customers were always taken care of. It really taught me a lot about how you should run a business, and how you should treat people. I



Bobby Bellini, president of Varsity, with his daughter Erica, who recently joined the firm.