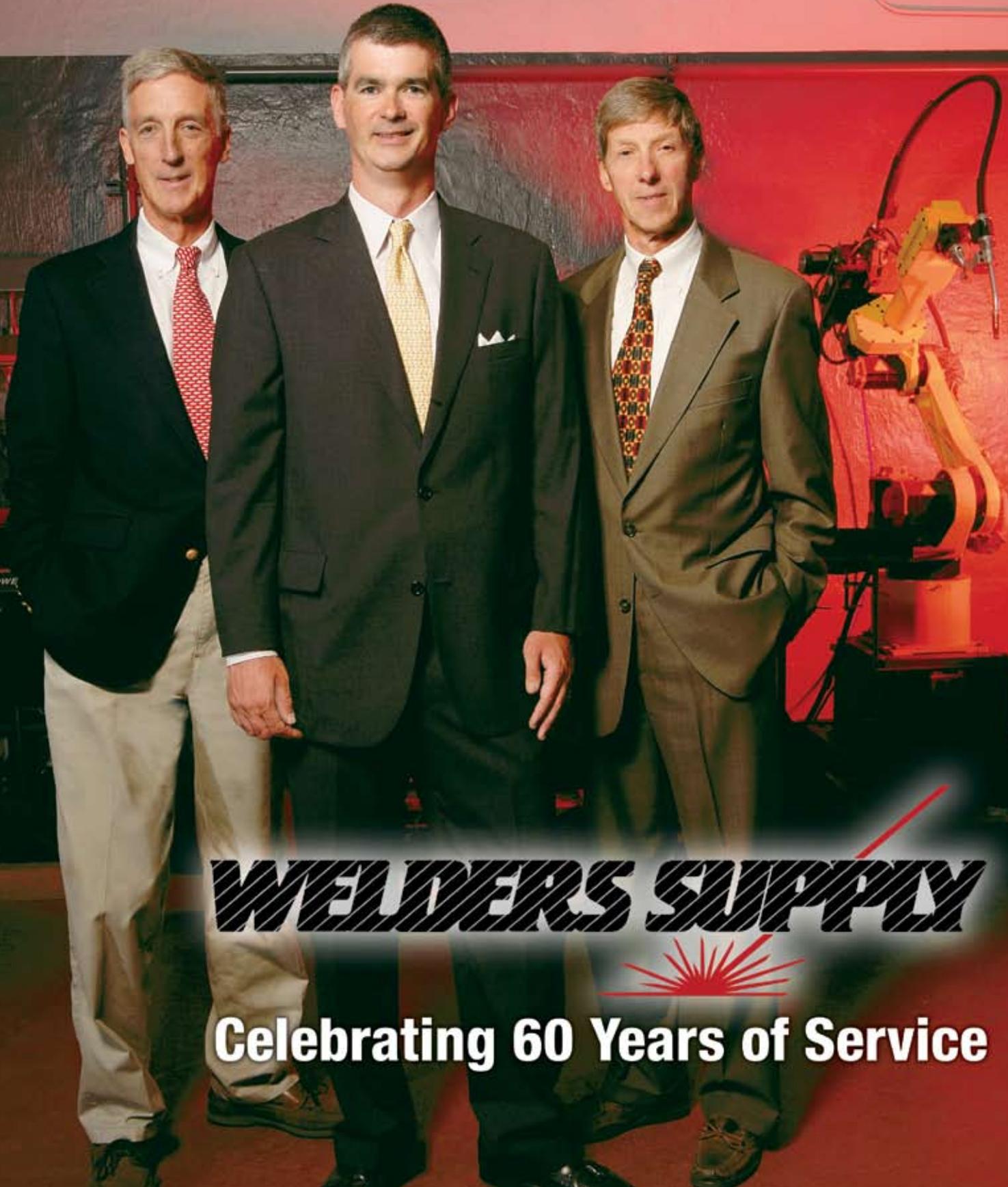


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**WELTERS SUPPLY**

**Celebrating 60 Years of Service**



Jack H. Raimy, founder of Welders Supply Company, stands in front of his first store at Fourth and Walnut streets in Erie. Raimy's grandson, Mark, and sons, Bruce and Gary, have continued to grow the business into one of the region's premier suppliers of welding equipment and specialty gases.

# WELDERS SUPPLY

*In 1946, America was still reeling from the Second World War.*

*Post-war production was in full swing.*

*And a young visionary by the name of Jack H. Raimy saw an opportunity to capitalize on the manufacturing market by founding a gas and welding equipment store aptly named Welders Supply Company.*

**T**oday, Welders Supply, a division of the Raimy Corporation, is one of the largest suppliers of welding and specialty gases, electrodes, equipment and accessories in northwestern Pennsylvania and southwestern New York. This year, the company is marking 60 years as an independent, family-owned business with new leadership and a renewed commitment to the community and its customers.

Mark Raimy, the third generation in his family to take ownership of the company, headquartered at 1628 Cascade Street in Erie with a satellite location at 47 Winsor Street in Jamestown, New York, views this milestone anniversary as an affirmation of the company's business strategy and value-added customer focus. "We emphasize service," he says. "But we also understand the latest manufacturing processes and procedures and we are able to help companies become more efficient, whether that's training the labor force or increasing production. Welders Supply initiates the newest technologies that make our customers more competitive in the marketplace."

This strong customer focus can be traced back to Mark's grandfather, Jack, who spent many years as a salesman for Airco in Upstate New York before being transferred to Erie at the beginning of World War II. Finding opportunity to go into business for himself with the Linde franchise (now Praxair), he opened a small two-man operation on Fourth and Walnut streets that grew quickly due to the rise of heavy industry and a significant need for welding and fabricating equipment in Erie's industrial sector.

Requiring more space to outfit his business, Jack moved the storefront to 2005 Peach Street in 1952 and eventually expanded the operation to Jamestown by the end of the decade. His customer base extended from Erie and Jamestown to Meadville, Oil City, Franklin and Titusville, and in 1961, he moved the operation to its current headquarters near 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Cascade.

After 20 years in business, Jack's sons Gary and Bruce — Mark's uncle and father — came aboard to take the reins. Gary, a graduate of Penn State, and Bruce, a graduate of the Case Institute of Technology, brought their knowledge and applied it to the day-to-day business operations. Gary, then president, focused on the manufacturing and maintenance side of the business, while Bruce, then CEO, took over sales and marketing. Both saw



## Celebrating 60 Years of Service

opportunity in the new processes developing in the industry and realized Welders Supply Company could grow and prosper.

"We were a very small business at that time," recalls Bruce. "However, through focusing on the customer and adding value, we were able to increase our sales and penetrate the market."

From this platform, the Raimys would eventually buy Mills Welding Supply in Buffalo, nearly doubling the size of their operation. Meanwhile, Welders Supply continued to increase its market share by offering quality products and specialty gases to northwestern Pennsylvania and western New York. Welders Supply became one of the leaders in the supply of medical and industrial gas. The company is committed to the manufacturing, health-care, laboratory and transportation industries.

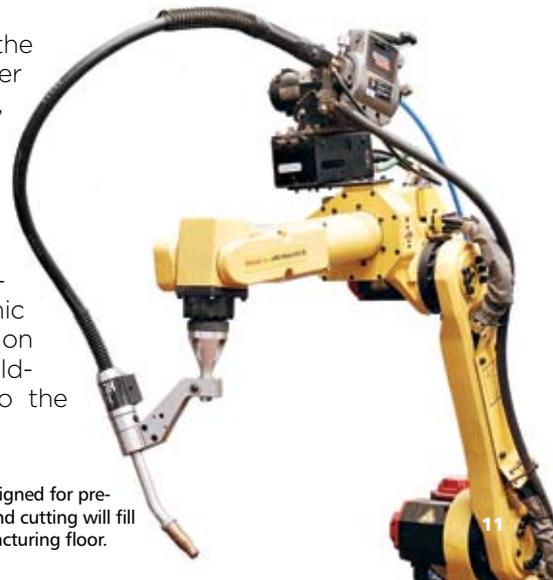
**F**urthering this growth is the relationship the company has with its suppliers. Welders Supply has long been a distributor with The Lincoln Electric Company located in Cleveland, one of the nation's largest welding equipment suppliers, and additionally Praxair, one of the largest producers of atmospheric and specialty gases with operations in nearby Ashtabula, Ohio, and Niagara Falls, New York.

"We are probably one of the oldest Lincoln distributors in the country, with a contract that dates back to 1946," notes Gary. "We have been a distributor for Praxair for 60 years. Throughout that time, we have continued to provide quality

products with competitive prices and great customer service. We strongly believe in our customers. We've tried to maintain that philosophy throughout the history of the company."

Mark, who in the past year and a half has taken over the business, is focused on fostering those relationships and using his financial expertise to steer the company forward. A graduate of Denison University, he worked for Massachusetts Financial Services, a mutual fund company, for five years in Boston and then spent an additional 10 years on Wall Street as a vice president and institutional equity trader for Prudential Securities in New York. The success of Welders Supply, as he sees it, has been and always will be connected to the success of local businesses. When their customers do well, so does Welders.

That's why in the fall of 2005, under Mark's direction, Welders Supply took the initiative to approach Erie Shipbuilding LLC. The shipbuilder would provide an economic boost to the region and return shipbuilding once again to the port city of Erie.



A Lincoln Electric robot designed for precise, high-speed welding and cutting will fill many needs on the manufacturing floor.

According to Dirk VanEnkevort, president and director of operations, the Erie shipyard, located on a 44-acre site with more than 200,000 square feet of product space, is expected to create a total of 200 jobs by the end of 2006.

“We have been well received by the Erie community, and Welders Supply was progressive in approaching us and ensuring that they’d have what we needed,” he says. “They came down to the yard when we were starting out and were very assertive in assessing our needs. The support we get from them is huge. We are working closely with Lincoln and Welders on welding shipbuilding modules, and we are using Lincoln equipment exclusively now.”

For Erie Shipbuilding and Welders, the relationship is a win-win situation for all.

“We realized early on that Erie Shipbuilding is a big opportunity for Erie,” Mark says, “and we knew from the beginning that if we did everything we could to make sure they were successful in their startup phase that, in turn, that success would be good for Erie and good for us. We are so vigilant in having the customer value-added focus, because all of our success is tied to the success of the businesses in Erie. And that’s why we want to be their partner. We know that if we can continually make our customers more efficient and competitive then they’re going to be healthy, and that’s going to ensure our future.”

**W**ith a dedicated management team led by CEO Mark Raimy, President Steve DeHart, Vice President of Operations Tony DiNicola and Vice President of Sales Michael Shaw, a loyal work force and fundamental belief in community service, Welders has remained committed to the economic success of the region. Welders fosters this employer-employee relationship by providing good paying jobs, benefits, profit sharing and a matching 401(k) and, in turn, has reaped the rewards of a long-term work force, many workers who have 20 or more years of service.

“Businesses are people,” says Bruce. “You can buy equipment. You can buy trucks, but businesses are people. We like to invest heavily in people. We’re in a service business and it’s all about people.”

So strong has been Welders’ investment in people, that the Raimys have lent their expertise and



Each day, Welders Supply delivers specialty gases by the truckload to various health-care, laboratory, manufacturing and transportation companies.

knowledge to various boards and organizations, including Mercyhurst College, Hamot Health Foundation, United Way, Erie Rotary Club, The Children’s Art Museum, Erie Conference on Community Development and Junior Achievement, to contribute to the economic viability of the region.

Welders Supply also has worked tirelessly with Guy and Michael Euliano, the principles of the Tri-State Business Institute, to help assist with formation of the Tri-State School of Welding Technology, which teaches students the gamut of welding applications and techniques. Welders Supply furnishes equipment, environmental systems and technical support in an effort to ensure Tri-State remains a premier educational facility.

The company actively participates in professional organizations that help Welders Supply stay on the cutting edge of welding technology. Some of those organizations include The American Welders Society (AWS), Gas and Welding Distributors Association and Independent Welding Distributors Cooperative.

As Mark explains, Welders Supply remains competitive by continually looking for ways to make its customers more efficient and more productive. “We’ve integrated consulting, training and technology to better satisfy the needs of the marketplace,” he says. “It is that commitment, dedication and service that has enabled the company to celebrate 60 years of continuous operation. But it is more than just that — it is 60 years of commitment, dedication and service to the community with an eye on Erie’s future.” ★

*For more information about Welders Supply Company, see [www.wscrc.com](http://www.wscrc.com).*



Welders Supply has a dedicated team of support staff and longtime employees.

