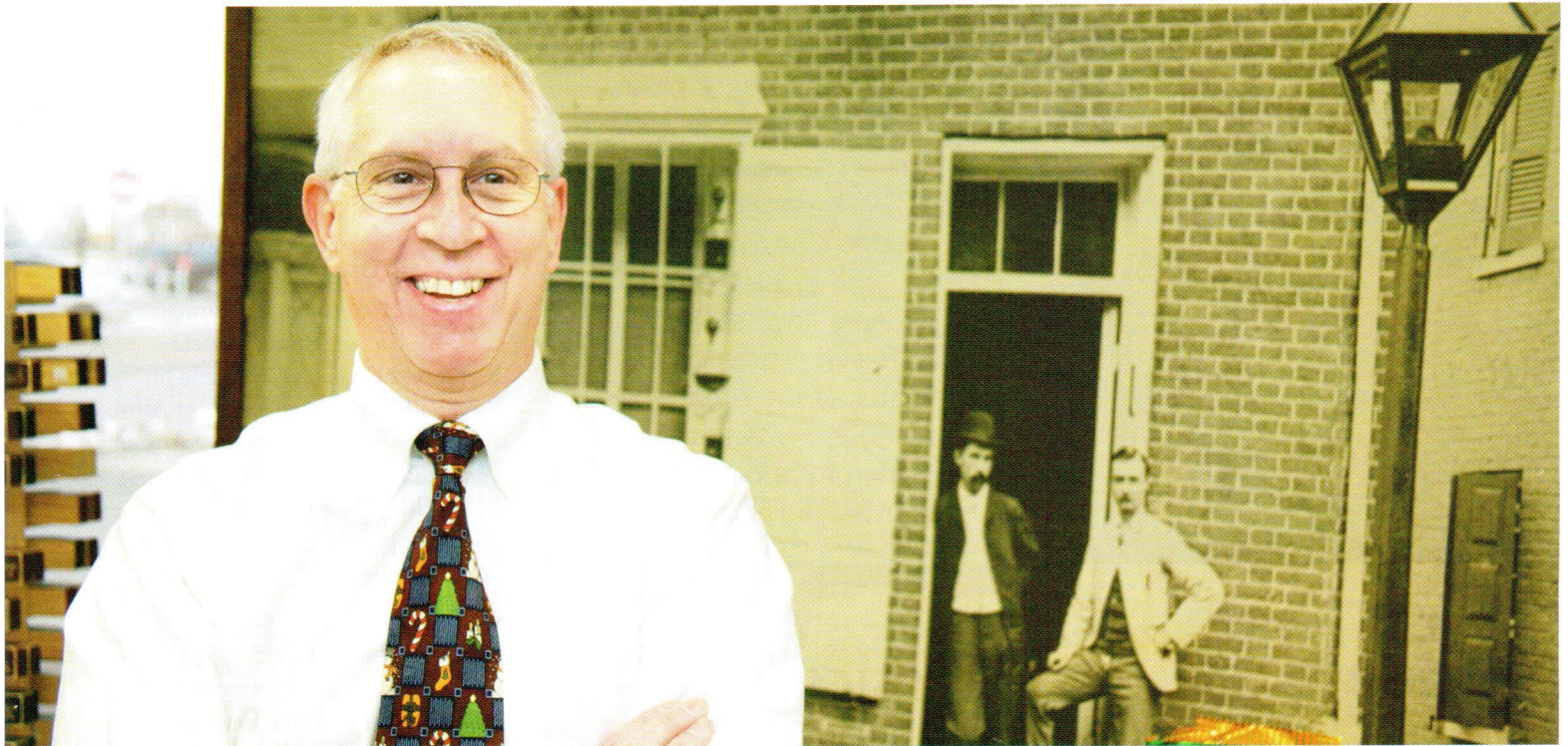


# RX FOR BUSINESS LONGEVITY

Commitment to Customers and Community Spans 185 Years at Carl's Drug Store.

by Kelly Z. Conrad + photos by Mahlon Yeager Photographics



Since taking ownership of the business in 1974, Frank Ervin has continued the Carl's Drug Store commitment to personal service and dedication to community.

## 1825. IT WAS A YEAR THAT SAW

the opening of the first U.S. engineering college, Rensselaer Polytechnic in Troy, N.Y., the opening of the Erie Canal and the inauguration of John Quincy Adams as the sixth president of the United States. 1825 is also the year that Carl's Drug Store opened its doors for business at 13 S. Carlisle St. in Greencastle. And on April 27, the store celebrated its 185<sup>th</sup> year of continuous service to the Greencastle area. Over the years, the business and its employees have remained true to the kind of personal service and dedication to community that stems from that bygone era.

## A DOCTOR AND A BUSINESSMAN

According to Frank H. Ervin, the current owner of the business and publisher of *Carl's Drug Store, A Commemorative History*, Dr. Adam Carl was born in 1800 in Hanover, Pa., and studied

medicine at the Washington Medical School in Baltimore. While still in school, he moved to Greencastle and decided to open the drug store. He married the following month.

In 1854, Dr. Carl returned full-time to the practice of medicine, leaving the drug store to the management of his oldest son, William. In addition to his normal caseload of patients, most of whom he visited on horseback, Dr. Carl also treated soldiers passing through Greencastle following the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. When William died in 1874, Dr. Carl returned to run the drug store with the help of his grandson, Charles.

The drug store remained in the Carl family throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, until 1974, when Frank Ervin purchased the business from Edward R. Carl, Dr. Adam Carl's great-grandson. In 1999, Frank moved the drug

store from Greencastle's downtown to its current location at 145 N. Antrim Way. "My dad worked at Carl's Drug Store as an assistant pharmacist, which they don't have anymore," Frank says. "I grew up with Dad working here." After completing his studies at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, and serving internships at Carl's and at Rine's Pharmacy in Chambersburg, Pa., Frank went to work full-time at Carl's with his father, Richard, in May 1973. Shortly thereafter, Frank was offered the opportunity to buy the business. "I had to think about it," Frank says. "I had to think about how to get the financing. I had nothing."

#### THE CARL'S FAMILY

Since taking the helm of Carl's Drug Store in 1974, Frank has continued to assist customers with exceptional service, advice and friendship. "I started going to Carl's when Frank's father, Dick Ervin, still worked there," says Sue Besecker, a 45-year resident of Greencastle. "Frank was always very kind, very friendly. With Carl's being right downtown, you didn't think of going anywhere else." For Jim Myers, a life-long resident of the Greencastle area, going to Carl's is something of a family tradition. "My grandparents went to Carl's," he says. "Now I go in there for my mother's medicines, as well as my own. When I go into Carl's, Frank always asks, 'How's your mom?' It's that personal service from caring people that makes the difference."

Sue agrees. "The doctor knows what to prescribe, and Frank tells you why he prescribed it, what the medicine will do, and what to expect... I always feel that when I go into Carl's, I get as much help from Frank as I do from the medicine."

In addition to helping customers in the store, Frank and his employees give back to the community at large by donating their time and energy. "People who work here serve on several local boards, like the library board, the playground board, the cemetery association," he says. "It's not just where we work, it's where we live. This is our home." A great advantage to being locally owned is that schools and organizations in the Greencastle community know they can count on Carl's to participate in fund-raisers and other projects. "We contribute to a lot of different groups such as school yearbooks, fire companies, football teams," Frank says. "Some businesses would have to get permission from their parent company before they could contribute to local organizations."

Though he's uncertain what the future holds for Carl's Drug Store — Frank explains that there are no children to "carry on the torch" — it is certain that there are many Greencastle residents who are faithful customers of Carl's who would be unable to imagine the community without the long-standing reliability of the pharmacy they trust. "Carl's wants to benefit the individual," Jim says. "I'm not slamming other pharmacies in the area, they do a good job, too. But at Carl's, it's the personal service and friendly atmosphere." ■

#### Carl's Drug Store

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Greencastle's Allison-Antrim Museum contains an extensive display of Carl's Drug Store artifacts, including medicine bottles (top) and tools; Pharmacist Shane Clugston and Frank help customers understand their medications.