

Alfred University honors four family firms from Western New York

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ROCHESTER, NY - Four firms from Western New York were presented Galanis Awards for Excellence in Family Business during a banquet ceremony Tuesday afternoon at Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester. Abbott's Frozen Custard, InfoDirections, JRLON Inc., and Mazza Mechanical Services were recipients of Galanis Awards. The awards, now in their 12th year, are made possible by a gift to Alfred University from the families of Terry Galanis Sr. and Terry Galanis Jr. Galanis Sr. is a 1940 graduate of Alfred University and founder of Sealing Devices, Inc., of Lancaster. Galanis Jr. is the president of Sealing Devices and a member of the AU Board of Trustees. Winners of Galanis Awards, presented since 2000, are judged on a number of criteria that the Galanises and Alfred University consider hallmarks of successful family enterprises: commitment to employees and the local community; innovation and foresight; and growth and stability. Sealing Devices was founded in 1963 by Terry Galanis Sr. in the Buffalo suburb of Alden. The company, which manufactures and distributes o-rings, gaskets and seals, has enjoyed tremendous growth over the years and is now located in a state-of-the-art facility in nearby Lancaster. Terry Sr. still serves as company chairman, while his granddaughter, Elizabeth Miller (Terry Jr.'s daughter), is a marketing specialist. Abbott's Frozen Custard was founded in 1902, by Arthur Abbott, who traveled with the carnival along the Eastern Seaboard, selling his original recipe frozen custard. Abbott settled in Rochester in 1926 and would set up a shop on Lake Avenue that remains open today. In 1955, Abbott sold the company to Leonard and Thelma Schreiber. Three generations of the Schreiber family have been involved with Abbott's Custard since Leonard and Thelma Schreiber purchased the firm 56 years ago. The Schreiber's daughter, Gail Drew, has been president since 1989. Her children - daughters Charlotte and Georgia Drew and son Brendon Drew - have also worked at Abbott's. "This is a wonderful honor. We've never had anything like this happen to us," Gail Drew commented upon receiving her business's award. "The Galanis family has set the bar high for excellence in family business." Abbott's, which is headquartered in Rochester, NY, began franchising in 1977 and today there are 45 stores open nationwide. The company employs about 50 full- or part-time workers. The firm supports several charitable agencies in the Rochester area, including Monroe Country Library, Golisano Children's Hospital, and Wilmot Cancer Center. Drew commended her workers for helping the Abbott's Custard what it is today. "Our extended family - our employees - are as passionate about the business as we are," she said. Founded by Don Culeton in Victor, NY, in 1996, InfoDirections offers comprehensive billing, operations and points of sale solutions to help telecommunications providers sell, activate, manage, bill and care for customers. InfoDirections is a second-generation family business. Don Culeton is president and CEO; his wife, Debbie, is vice president; and daughter, Jill Harder, is account manager. The company is an engineering-driven organization that prides itself on being a pioneer in the development of software solutions specifically for the telecommunications industry. The firm's principle products include: an award-winning billing, operations, and point of sale application; an electronic bill payment and presentation portal telecommunications companies use to facilitate on-line bill payment; a Software as a Service (SaaS) hosting platform that allows companies to outsource day-to-day billing operations; and professional services that include custom engineering, consulting and training to telecommunications firms. Don Culeton likened the workers he employs at InfoDirections to a family. "I created two families: one with my wife and children; and a second family - the InfoDirections family," he said. "What's great about families is being able to watch them grow. That's what happened at InfoDirections." InfoDirections employs 159 people. The company provides its workers one day off, with pay, per year to volunteer for an organization of their choice in their community. The company also supports charitable endeavors like United Way Day of Caring, Serenity House Gala, and the Red Cross Blood Drive. JRLON was founded in 1980 in Palmyra, NY, by James Redmond as a custom manufacturer of fluoropolymers and metal products. The firm is also a custom coater of high performance plastics and lists as its markets the aerospace, pump and valve, food processing, chemical processing, office equipment, off-road equipment and gear manufacturing industries. For 31 years, JRLON has been recognized as a dependable source and leading supplier of plastic and specialty metal products. JRLON is a second-generation family business, with both generations currently involved in its operation. James Redmond, founder, is president and CEO; his sons, Brandon (vice president of manufacturing) and Chad (secretary and chief financial officer) also work for the company. James Redmond thanked the Galanis family and Alfred University their efforts to recognize family enterprise, which he called "the backbone of our economy." "This award is special, and I compliment you for spending the time, energy and dollars for this cause: recognizing the humble beginnings and long hours" put forth by family firms. JRLON employs about 80 workers. The

business supports numerous charitable organizations in the Palmyra area. James Redmond has served on the Palmyra Community Center Board of Directors for 18 years and the firm provides financial support for numerous educational programs and fraternal organizations in the area. Mazza Mechanical Services was founded in Olean, NY, in 1932 by brothers Milo and Ed Mazza as a roofing and sheet metal fabrication shop. Today, the company has evolved into a leading mechanical contractor in Western New York and Northern Pennsylvania, providing design-build construction services, industrial ventilation and process installation, and proactive mechanical services. The company is a fourth-generation family firm, with three active today. Joe DeRose, brother-in-law of Milo Mazza, joined the company in 1962 and he and his wife, Rita, purchased the business in the early 1970s. Rita DeRose serves as office manager; Joe and Rita's sons, Dan and Louis, are president and general manager of service, respectively, and three of Dan's children work part-time while attending school. "This is a tremendous honor to be associated with such a successful group as the Galanis family, Alfred University and the other award winners," Dan DeRose commented. DeRose spoke of the lessons his parents taught him and his brother that have helped them further their firm's growth. "They taught us not to become too satisfied with past successes, but to build upon them for a better future," he said. Mazza Mechanical Services has 55 employees. The firm is actively involved in the Olean community, supporting, among others, St. Bonaventure University, Olean General Hospital, the Rehabilitation Center, and the Olean Family YMCA. More than 60 family firms have received Galanis Awards since 2000. Galanis Jr. said he's not surprised with the quality of family businesses in the region, many of which have won or been nominated for Galanis Awards.