

Jeweler began as diamond in the rough 65 years ago

Anniversary celebration

McCary's Jewelers, 1409 E. 70th St., in Shreveport, extends an open invitation Friday and Saturday, when appreciation gifts will be given to all who attend and customers can register to win a pair of 1-carat total weight earrings. A special gift will be given to long-time customers who can bring in a box from McCary's Milam Street or Shreve City stores.

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McCary's Jewelers may have had humble beginnings but it definitely has had endurance.

The family-owned jeweler is celebrating 65 years in business in Shreveport, having opened in 1941 in a rented space shared with a barber shop at 410 Milam. With only \$500 and some loaned jewelry equipment, founders Jim and Ruth McCary started a business that primarily was known for watch sales and repairs.

"Back then, Youngbloods, Flournoy & Harris, and Peacocks were the principle jewelry stores and Milam Street was the hub of retail shopping," current owner R.L. McCary said in a news release. Through the years the store moved twice. "McCary's established with good, loyal customers who followed us with each move."

During the years of World War II, jewelry was considered a luxury item. McCary's became one of the main watch inspectors for trolley drivers. With six watchmakers and high demand for pocket watches and chains, the business thrived.

After the war, soldiers returned with all types of jewels and McCary's found its niche in resetting stones and designing settings.

In 1961 the jeweler opened in Shreve City Shopping Center, then the largest mall in Louisiana.

"Shreve City opened doors for our family," said Lynn McCary-Thomas, youngest daughter of R.L. McCary and vice president/appraiser. She said her father "created a reputation for his unusual designs and has proven to be not only an artistic manufacturer, but also a respected businessman."

McCary's was an anchor for 26 years at Shreve City, but as the retail scene in Shreveport changed with the arrival of malls and discount stores, McCary's moved to its current location on East 70th next to the Clarion Hotel.

All of McCary's design and manufacturing is done in house, and staff includes a certified geologist appraiser. The store is a member of the American Gem Society and the Gemological Institute of America.

McCary-Thomas said the store has seen generations of customers.

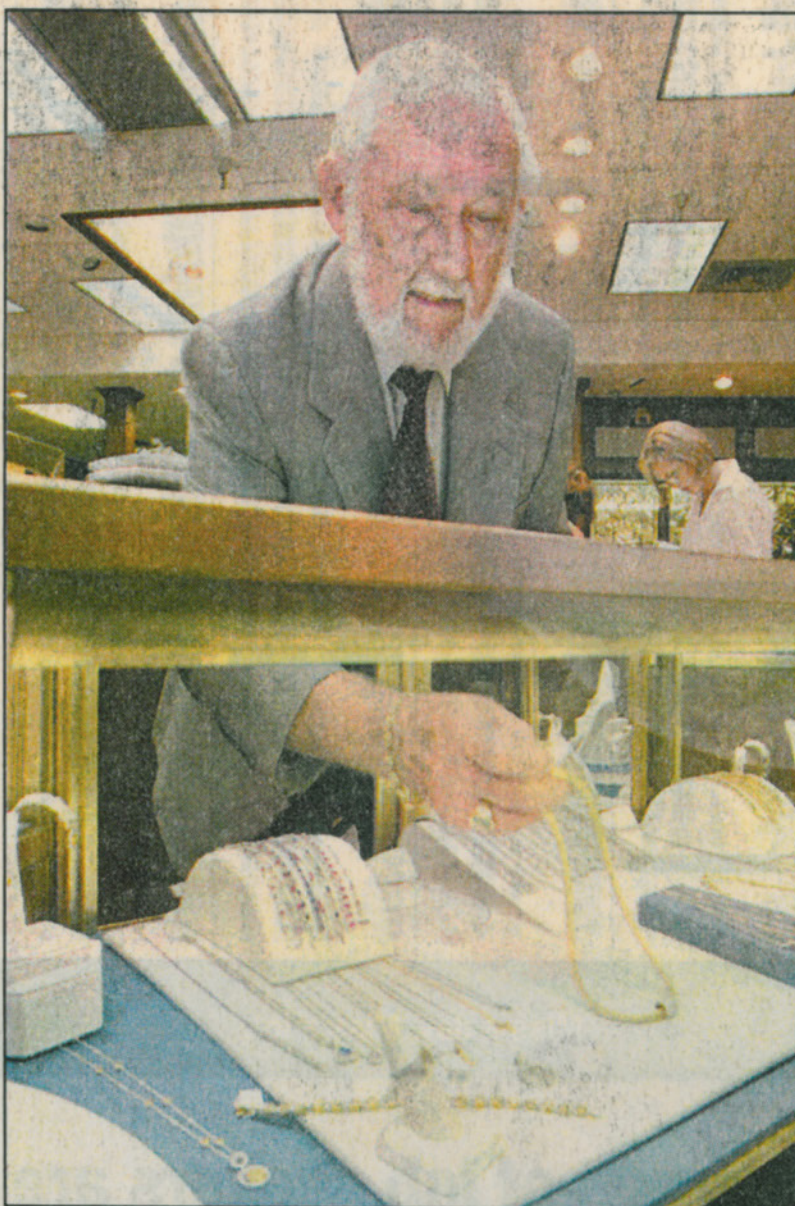
"We have provided their baby gifts, their wedding rings, their anniversary surprises, their birthday celebrations, their graduations, and just very special moments," she said.



McCary



McCary-Thomas



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Greg Pearson/The Times

Custom designs sit in a display at McCary Jewelers.

LEFT: R.L. McCary retrieves a necklace from a display case at his store on East 70th Street.

"Shreve City opened doors for our family."

Lynn McCary-Thomas, youngest daughter of R.L. McCary and vice president/appraiser of McCary's Jewelers

RIGHT: David McCary uses one of several specialized machines on a piece of jewelry at the family business, McCary Jewelers.

BELOW: David McCary works on some jewelry behind the scenes at the family business on East 70 Street in Shreveport. McCary's Jewelers is celebrating 65 years of service.



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