

City Bids Farewell To Local Household Name



When Jim and Gloria Berkey decided to retire from the jewelry industry, it wasn't easy. The store they owned and operated on the corner of North May Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard in Oklahoma City had been good to them for many years, and saying goodbye was like losing a friend. After all, the store had a rich history serving the people of Oklahoma City. Their customers would miss the store they had come to know and love as their family jeweler.

Jim Berkey's passion for the jewelry industry started at a very early age. His father, James (Jim) Berkey and his uncle, Charles Berkey, were the longtime owners of Berkey Brothers Jewelers, also in Oklahoma. Jim spent most of his youth working for his father and learning the tricks of the trade. He had always admired his father for his keen sense of business, so it came as no surprise that after his passing, Jim would follow in his footsteps. In 1972 Jim opened his own jewelry store, Trust House Jewelers.



JIM AND GLORIA BERKEY

Much like his father, Jim also had a keen sense of business, and he used his talent to turn Trust House into a local household name. The store first gained popularity in the 1970s when he and his wife, Gloria, sponsored a late-night movie on a local television channel. The movies ran every Sunday from 10:30 pm to midnight. Gloria and Jim's ads appeared five times throughout the show. "The exposure helped our



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sales tremendously," noted Jim Berkey.

Soon they had enough income to continue advertising on other TV channels in the city. Customers would come in and see us behind the counter. "They would think we were just TV personalities but when they actually saw us in the store, they would feel like they knew us," Gloria said.

The Berkeys were known for their personal approach to customer service. They never had a web page or even a second location because they wanted one-on-one interaction with their customers. Through the years many of their customers became their loyal friends. Even when business slowed after the oil bust in the 1980s, the Berkeys survived.

After 35 years of serving the people of Oklahoma City, Jim and Gloria Berkey needed a break. However, successfully leaving a business that they put so much into wasn't going to be easy. Before they could pick up and go, they had to make some important decisions. After all, they wanted to make sure that they went out with the same class and dignity they came in with all those years ago. Of course, there is also the issue of money. Gloria and Jim needed to be sure that they would be able to maintain the active lifestyle to which they had grown so accustomed.

After months of contemplation the Berkeys decided to call Wilkerson and Associates – the nation's leader in conducting transition events for retail jewelers. Wilkerson evaluated their situation and developed a plan for a comprehensive Going-Out-of-Business Sale. The event was an enormous success – the Berkeys exceeded the projected goal the Wilkerson team had given them.

"We're so pleased with the work that Wilkerson has done for us. Now we'll have time to enjoy each other and the remaining years of our lives," commented Jim Berkey. Bobby Wilkerson, president of Wilkerson and Associate added, "We are delighted when we can bring hard working people to the next stage of their lives...when they can see the rewards of a lifetime of work and can transition to a leisure lifestyle. It is extremely rewarding to see a company of such distinction leave the business on a high note."



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