

Larry Springer celebrates 50 years of being a local auctioneer

By Janelle Miller

Local resident and businessman Larry Springer has reached a milestone in his career: this month marks 50 years he has been an auctioneer. "I enjoy working with and for the people," Springer said. "I'm really a people person. I've had a tremendous amount of sales over the years."

Springer started on the path to being an auctioneer by attending the Reisch School of Engineering in Mason City, Iowa in June of 1970. "It's something I had been interested in. I went to a lot of sales with my father," he explained. "I enjoyed listening and seeing what went on. I wanted to give it a try. I worked hard at it and am still at it today."

It took Springer experience and persistence to get where he is today throughout the years. "It's not something you can jump into overnight. My first year, I had only four sales, but I was also farming at the same time," Springer stated. "There has to be confidence and trust between me and the clients. It's a highly competitive business to begin with, and there were (and are) many well-established auctioneers in the area. Throughout the years, I just kept picking up more sales and gaining more steam." Two auctions Springer has been the auctioneer for numerous years include the Linden United Methodist Fall Harvest Sale which was one of his first ever auctions and the Otter Creek auction which he has been doing for at least 45 years. "If I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't have done it for the past 50 years," he smiled. "I

enjoy going to the sales and all its intricacies. You've got to have a good crowd and a good seller."

COVID-19 has been a memorable moment in time for Springer's business as he, like other auctioneers, have had to cancel and/or postpone sales as they're just waiting out the pandemic; however, there is a light at the end of the tunnel as Springer hopes to have an auction on Saturday, June 6 in Darlington – his first since the COVID-19 pandemic started. "We could do it [auction] online, but items don't seem to sell for as much because people can't see or feel the items themselves; they cannot truly experience it, like seeing an item that runs and ensuring it does."

As a Wisconsin auctioneer, Springer has also had to deal with unpredictable weather – he explicitly remembers cancelling two sales due to weather. One was a huge farm sale that was in the winter in Livingston that fell victim to a terrible snowstorm.

Springer has done a tremendous amount of auctions for organizations and charities and benefits and religious groups such as the Iowa County Cancer Coalition and the Community Connections Free Clinic – he doesn't charge anything and he never will for these types of auctions. "I enjoy it, and it's good PR. I try to make everyone have a good time and do the best for the group that I can and get the most money," he explained. "You build a good rapport with people, and they benefit; everyone has a good time, and they get to know you and build upon each other. This is what's helped keep me in business."

When asked how he, like other auctioneers, speaks so fast, Springer responded "it's one of those things you just practice a lot. Practice until it's very comfortable and relaxed, like putting a car in cruise. I've done it for so long that I know where my comfort zone is. You need to be clear and distinct so that people can understand you, but keep it at a rapid pace so that you can help bring in more money. There's no killing time – period."

Springer expanded his business by getting his real estate broker's license in 1975 so that he could sell real estate at auction. Furthermore in the early 1990s, he became a state certified residential appraiser. He was doing this prior to the 1990s, but the state said all appraisers needed to be certified – that is what he did. He went to Southwest Technical College and passed all his tests.

Several employees and other auctioneers have been essential to Springer's career. He worked with and learned from Albert Noble and Jim Gordon who were in the farm loan service and changed to Auction Specialists of Mineral Point – now owned by Albert's son, Larry. Jim and Joyce Neuendorf, who owned Livingston Bank, cashed a lot of sales for him. Frank Stepanek clerked sales with him a lot when he was with him and was very helpful. Springer worked many, many sales with Eldon Schraepfer, from Blanchardville, along with several other auctioneers. "Many people have helped me along the way – some still living, and some who have passed away," he explained. "Also, we've had a very good crew of people who help with the setup and the day of the sale."

For the future, Springer doesn't plan on slowing down unless necessary saying "as long as my health is good, I'll stay at it, but if it deteriorates, I'd just quit. I'm not going to do something if I cannot do the very best I can."

When he's not busy running his several businesses, Springer likes hunting and fishing and spending time with his family including Barbara, his wife of almost 25 years, and his three children: Steven, Mark, and Christine. He's also an avid gardener and enjoys watching harness horse racing.

For more information, check out larryfspringer.com.



Another high-traffic sale that Springer auctioneers at is the Iowa County Fair. He is pictured here at the 2007 Fair. Photo contributed.



Larry Springer was the auctioneer at last year's Iowa County Cancer Coalition Fundraiser. For many non-profit organizations, Springer donates his time and talent to the cause. File photo.



Larry Springer and his wife, Barbara, enjoy a bite to eat after an auction. The couple will be married for 25 years in December. Photo contributed.



Throughout his 50-year career, Springer has had a great group of people working for and with him. Photo contributed.



Springer enjoys being an auctioneer and hopes to continue for many years to come.