



Golden Memories

Company celebrates 50 years of 'awarding' excellence.

Photo Courtesy of Bovey Trophies

Since 1972, the tan house with the dark brown trim on West Fireweed has been the home of Bovey Trophies.

BY HEATHER A. RESZ

Some people arrive in Alaska by sea, some by air and some take the Alaska Highway – but few people can equal Glenn Bovey’s story of how he arrived in Alaska.

After joining the U.S. Army in 1951, he was stationed in Colorado and Seattle before being reassigned to Fort Richardson. A boat carried Bovey’s unit to Haines and dropped them off.

From there, Bovey said he and his fellow soldiers spent the next 28 days walking to Fort Richardson. The military wanted to know how feasible it was to bring troops in on foot, Glenn said.

This Waterloo, Iowa, boy arrived in Anchorage in September 1951 and served as the first non-commissioned officer in charge of the newly built Buckner Fieldhouse on Fort Richardson.

It was the fieldhouse’s second officer in charge who would eventually put Bovey on the path to business ownership.

After leaving the army in 1956, Glenn and wife Therese “Terry” Bovey

started Bovey Trophies on April 15, 1958. Both from Waterloo, Iowa, the two married in 1952 and Terry joined Glenn in Anchorage.

“I never thought I’d be in the business that long,” Glenn said. “I was just happy to make it through the first year.”

Bovey Trophies, 841 W. Fireweed Lane, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year under the ownership of Pam Kennally who purchased the shop in 2003.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Back when Boveys started the business, Henry Heggen’s downtown store was the young city’s only trophy and engraving shop.

“He used to send me business when I was selling trophies for \$1.75,” Glenn Bovey recalled during an interview at Bovey Trophies in June. “Henry said I wouldn’t be in business more than a year.”

All those years ago, Terry Bovey was among those who doubted the

soundness of husband’s business idea. It would be another six years before the young couple could afford to give up the steady paycheck she earned at working at the Anchorage Hotel, she said.

Bovey Trophy moved from its first location into a back room that was only accessible by walking through a coffee shop in the basement of the Anchorage Hotel, where the Anchorage Hilton Hotel is now.

“There wasn’t even an entrance off the street,” Glenn said.

He said he rented the downtown place for \$125 a month, one block from Heggen’s shop, but he didn’t know that in the winter it would cost him more in fuel oil than it did in rent.

‘HEY, BOV, YOU SPELLED MY NAME WRONG’

To market their new endeavor, Glenn joined the Elks Club and they both joined bowling leagues – Glenn

bowled in six leagues and Terry, five.

Glenn took a catalog from his competitor that showed various trophies the line offered and sold trophies to all the bowling leagues down at the Elks Club.

At the next bowling banquet he said he spent \$160 buying drinks for the various people who came up to him that night saying "Hey, Bov, you spelled my name wrong."

"And guess where he came for the money," Terry teased.

Bovey Trophies moved to its current location in 1972 from its old location across from Sunrise Bakery on Romig Hill. In 1974, Boveys' purchased the Fireweed property the shop still occupies.

After raising their family in Anchorage and surviving winters here since 1951, the couple sold the trophy shop to Leslie Despotakis and Bill Purrington in 1994.

These days the Boveys divide their time between Phoenix and Anchorage.

Despotakis ran the business for about 10 years before she sold it to Kennally in January 2004.

"It was an opportunity I couldn't pass by," Kennally said.

In her previous life, she was a financial adviser, but Despotakis stayed on for a few months to help Kennally learn the ropes.

Kennally said if someone had come in and told her they had the opportunity to buy the business she would have said it was a good idea.

Thanks to the experienced staff who worked at the trophy shop – some for nearly two decades – Kennally transitioned from financial adviser



Photo by Heather A. Fiesz

Glenn and Therese "Terry" Bovey, Ken Tulin, Breanne Clum, Pam Kennally, Christopher Kennally Jr. and Gary Hume at Bovey Trophies in June.

to proprietor of the oldest full-service awards shop in Anchorage.

Longtime employee Ken Tulin explained his longevity this way.

"You get to do something different every day," he said.

Tulin's worked at the shop full-time for 16 years and part-time for three years before that. "We work very hard. It's a fast-paced, deadline-driven business."

Bovey Trophies has five full-time employees: Breanne Clum, Gary Hume, Christopher Kennally, Pam Kennally and Ken Tulin.

A PETRIFIED SAUSAGE PLAQUE?

When you walk in the front door of the small tan building with the dark brown trim that houses Bovey Trophies on Fireweed, expect to be greeted by two boxers that serve as the greeters.

Inside, the showroom's walls are lined with examples of plaques, trophies, gold pans, medallions, ribbons, acrylic awards, sand-etched crystal and stone, outdoor memorials, jewelry, baby items and uniquely Alaskan awards.

The shop also offers engraving, sand etching, laser and sublimation on a variety of mediums including stainless steel and other metals, glass, wood, marble, acrylic and plastic.

"We do a lot of stuff that people don't think trophy shops do," Kennally said. "We can personalize just about anything you have."

New techniques such as laser engraving, sand-etching and digital printing on metal replaced hand engraving, Kennally said. Laser engraving came on the scene about 15 years ago as a new way to personalize items, she said.

Bovey Trophies has provided all of the official Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race trophies since 1973.

The stories fly fast when Bovey staff members are asked to describe some of the most unique awards they've created. They've engraved swords, machetes; made plaques using a manikin's foot, oosiks, building parts, car parts, plane parts, guns, valve covers and even barbecue grill lids.

Perhaps their favorite plaque was one they made for a couple who brought in a petrified sausage they found remodeling their kitchen and asked if shop staff could mount it for their new kitchen. □



Photo Courtesy of Bovey Trophies

Bovey Trophies creates the Dorothy G. Page Halfway award for the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.