

GOPIIONEER

December 2021

11

**APPS TO HELP
CONQUER YOUR
NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS**

beginning on pg. 5

**ARE YOUR GOALS
REALISTIC?**

PG.3

**MAKE SURE YOUR BILL
GETS PAID.**

PG.11

**“WE’VE GOTTEN A LOT FURTHER
IN LIFE BEING KIND.”**

**FOCUS
ON.**

**Earnheart
Oil**

PG. 9

Three Generations of **GROWTH**

Earnheart Oil Celebrates 50 years of business and continued growth

THE BEGINNING

When Ernest Earnheart established Earnheart Oil in 1971, he'd wanted to try something different. Little did he know, the full-service gas station located in Marshall, OK, would start a family-owned business that would span three-generations.

Edmund Earnheart and his wife, Shirley, worked at the Earnheart Oil gas station before Ernest handed them ownership in 1989.

"It was a full-service station," Shirley said. "We pumped gas, washed windshields, checked tires, checked the oil, fixed tires, delivered fuel to farmers, and just many different things."

Edmund and Shirley would soon find themselves with several acquisitions that helped Earnheart Oil grow into one of the largest bulk fuel and propane suppliers in Central Oklahoma.

"One thing led to another," Edmund said. "A lot of it was just opportunities people contact us about, wanting to know if we were interested. I guess we were foolish enough to try it."

The Earnhearts are humble about their growth, but it wasn't always easy. In the case of locations like the Earnheart convenience store at the intersection of Highway 51 and Highway 74, they found

that providing goods for their customers could be difficult.

"We had a hard time getting people to come to us. We were in the middle of nowhere and at the edge of everybody's dispatch route. It was quite the experience trying to get a loaf of bread or a gallon of milk," Shirley said.

Like any other problem, Edmund and Shirley had to get creative and didn't hesitate to rise to the challenge.

EARNHEART

"At first we did a lot of going back and forth to Sam's. We'd go down, pick it up, haul it up here, but eventually, we got vendors, and one thing led to another and it just worked out," Edmund said. "Now we have people come all the time."

Over the next two decades, Earnheart Oil would encompass fuel and propane services, two convenience stores, a tire and lube center, and even offer industrial tool supplies and delivery.

THE THIRD GENERATION

Edmund and Shirley balanced owning their own company and its growth while raising their three kids: Jason, Valerie, and Troy, before entrusting them with the company in 2011.



at a glance

Q+A

What is your favorite thing about being an owner?

Everybody thinks it's a big deal and I've reached in my pocket and thrown them the keys and said: "Here, it's yours. Go do it." And I've never had anybody keep it. It's a tough deal. -**Edmund**

When we had the Christmas party this year... Where you get to see all those lives that you get to put an impact on. As far as being an owner, you get to see that you've somehow made a difference in those people's lives and getting to see that is probably the best part of the year. -**Troy**

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement?

Getting to see family come back in and see this become a third-generation business. -**Edmund**

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to be a farmer. But trying to raise three kids, I knew I couldn't save enough to send them all to school. -**Edmund**

Anything other than this is what I thought I was going to do. It took me a while, but when I started here, I grew to love what we do. -**Troy**



FOCUS ON.

Earnheart
Oil

Employee Kevina Reeser at Earnheart's convenience store located at the intersection of Highway 51 and Highway 74.



Courtesy photo. Pictured from left to right: Troy, Valerie, Shirley, Jason, and Edmund Earnheart taking a family photo.

with Edmund, Troy, and Shirley

What is the most hilarious family memory you can think of?

One year we signed dad up for a Hoveround chair and they kept calling him about a Hoveround. - **Troy**

And they kept sending him brochures! - **Shirley**

There's been a lot of serious things. There's been a lot of funny things. There's just been a lot. There's probably too many to nail down one. It's like somebody asking your favorite movie. It's too hard to pick one. - **Troy**

If you could share a meal with four individuals living or dead, who would they be?

My parents and his dad. - **Shirley**

I would say the same thing. My grandfather passed away when I was four. - **Troy**

What is something you've never been good at doing?

Book work. I'll be the first to tell you. - **Edmund**

Being organized. I'm terribly unorganized. I've got about 17,000 unread emails. I try. - **Troy**

"They grew up here," Shirley said. "The boys started in the tire shop, and they were fixing tires, fixing flats, driving tractors—they know all aspects of the business from the bottom to the top."

Valerie, their only daughter, took over the convenience store locations and Troy, who had a B.S. in General Business, became President.

For them, continuing what their parents and grandfather started was important.

"We try to offer a quality service, be honest with people, and make sure we provide a quality place for our employees to come to work," Troy said.

Earnheart Oil provides more than 112 jobs. For a family business that started with three employees, the Earnhearts work hard to ensure their values don't change.

"We don't always do things based on a monetary basis, so if it's fair to the customer and our employees, we will take things away from ourselves to make sure those people are treated fairly," Troy said. "That's something I was always taught and he [Edmund] was always taught, and we make sure that is instilled in our company."

“We always try and make sure that the communities we're involved with are taken care of. They take care of us, so we try and take care of them.”

One priority passed down from Edmund and Shirley was ensuring Earnheart Oil employees could maintain a work-life balance.

"It's not unusual to have three or four little kids in here because the ladies bring them to work with them," Edmund said. "They might be grandkids. They might be kids. Our kids were raised around it and they turned out fine."

FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY

Learning from the previous generation is important, and Ernest's values are seen in the company even now.

According to Shirley, Ernest "was a great teacher and was more for the community than anything."

"We try to instill that in our company

to this day," Troy said. "We always try and make sure that the communities we're involved with are taken care of: they take care of us, so we try and take care of them."

Earnheart Oil supports their communities through many programs like stock show funding, providing school supplies to teachers, Backpack food programs, donating propane to churches, and much more.

"We've gotten a lot farther in life being kind. Being kind to people, communities, vendors, and employees have always paid us more of a dividend than anything else," Troy said.

LOOKING FORWARD

Troy knows that there will be challenges, especially after COVID-19.

"The general supply chain is terrible right now. At the beginning of the year, we could get things like lubricants in three days to a week. Now you get it in six weeks," Troy said.

Troy knows that the supply-demand isn't going to fix itself and that it will be a challenge they'll face for the next few years. However, he knows he has a team he can count on and work with.

"Without the guys under me—shoot, without all these people, there's no way it functions," Troy said. "If you can get people that treat it like it's their own, that's fantastic. Those are the ones you can enjoy working with."

Trust, respect, and honesty are what Troy and his team give to his employees, and as they look forward, he intends to keep Earnheart Oil aligned with the values he's learned.

"There's things we could have made more money on if we would have been moderately dishonest or anything like that," Troy said, "but that's not what we do. For me, it's all about making sure I can sleep at night and keep moral integrity versus making a dollar."

Have a local business we should
FOCUS ON?
Visit GoPioneer.com/FocusOn
and fill out a nomination form!