

Four Generations of Framing



Kim Baas (left) and Barb DeBerge

which drew customers that had been shopping there since the early 1900s. “We displayed lots of old memorabilia and framed news articles regarding the business,” Baas says. “The mayor (of Kenosha) even declared the day ‘DeBerge Day’ because we are so embedded in the community.”

When the women retire, they don’t know who will carry on the torch. “There aren’t any family members poised to take over, but we can’t say there won’t be,” Baas says. “It would be nice.” □



▲ Kim and Barb assist two longtime customers.

Barb DeBerge and Kim Baas could have taken any career path they wanted. The sisters, however, decided to keep alive what’s become a rich family tradition—picture framing.

“It’s what we know, and it’s what we’re passionate about,” Baas says.

For the past 20 years, the women have run DeBerge’s, a picture framing and home-decor business their great grandfather, Henry DeBerge, founded in Kenosha, Wis., in 1890. He built and moved the business into its current location in the same city in 1926. After Henry DeBerge and his wife retired, they handed down the frameshop to their children, who later passed it on to the sisters’ parents.

Today, the women strive to carry on the frameshop’s 117-year history of stellar customer service and high-quality framing. Although they’ve renovated the building, including a facelift to the front of it this year, remnants of the early days remain.

“It has the old-time charm, with the high, original tin ceilings and the original oak and glass cabinets,” Barb DeBerge says. “It’s truly a walk down memory lane.”

Seventeen years ago, the sisters celebrated the frameshop’s centennial anniversary with a special store event,



◀ Two Long-Timers

DECOR had been circulating for 10 years when DeBerge’s opened in 1890. Back then, the publication was called *The Picture And Art Trade*, and it boasted the “latest designs, newest goods, important patents and extended news reports.”

▼ Some of the products advertised in the 1890 issue included the universal sawing machine and moulding pictured here.

