

INSIDE NIELSEN

A PUBLICATION OF NIELSEN BUILDERS WINTER 2008

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Welcome to the winter 2008 issue of *Inside Nielsen*. This special centennial issue explores the history of Nielsen Builders, Inc. Nielsen is proud to celebrate its 100-year anniversary. From its humble beginnings in 1908, Nielsen has grown into a well-respected, strong organization serving hundreds of clients throughout Virginia.

Joseph Nielsen founded J. Nielsen & Company in 1908. Through hard work and a relentless pursuit for excellence, Mr. Nielsen grew the company into a premier construction organization. Of course, the success of this company is due to the dedication of our employees. Nielsen employees work hard to please each and every valued client.

This is the sixth issue of *Inside Nielsen*. We want to thank our advertisers for their strong support of this publication. We are pleased to share this magazine with our employees, our clients and our community partners, all who have played a major role in our storied past.

We hope you enjoy learning more about the history of Nielsen. We celebrate the past, even as we look forward to the future.

John N. Neff
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Pencil sketch of Joseph Nielsen on cover by Nielsen employee Courtney Ritchie

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NIELSEN

Corporate Mission Statement

Our Vision

Nielsen will be recognized as a premier construction organization with a commitment toward optimal performance in serving clients within the Commonwealth of Virginia. We will achieve this by consistently “striving for excellence” in providing professional building services.

Our Values

People

Nielsen recognizes that our people are the critical element in achieving our vision. We will support a team approach through open communication among all employees. We will promote the growth and empowerment of our people and commit to human resource practices based on standards of excellence, safety awareness, fair treatment and equal opportunity.

Total Client Satisfaction

Nielsen will build on our reputation and commit to exceed the expectations of our clients by maintaining the highest level of skill and responsibility in providing professional services. We will deliver a superior price/value relationship in providing quality construction services with a profit objective at a fair level.

Leadership

Nielsen is committed to being a leader in the construction industry through innovative construction techniques and product development. We will strive to be a caring corporate citizen in enhancing the community and environment in which we do business.

Quality Assurance

Nielsen Builders, Inc.'s commitment to quality assurance is based on responsible craftsmanship, leadership, innovation, safety awareness and employee satisfaction. Our guarantee to furnish our clients with a total quality product is the heart of our company's existence.

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

It is the policy of Nielsen Builders, Inc. not to discriminate and to provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, or Vietnam era veteran status. This policy is applied to all employment actions including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, upgrading, promotion, transfer, demotion, lay-off, recall, termination, rates of pay, or other forms of compensation and selection for training including apprenticeship.

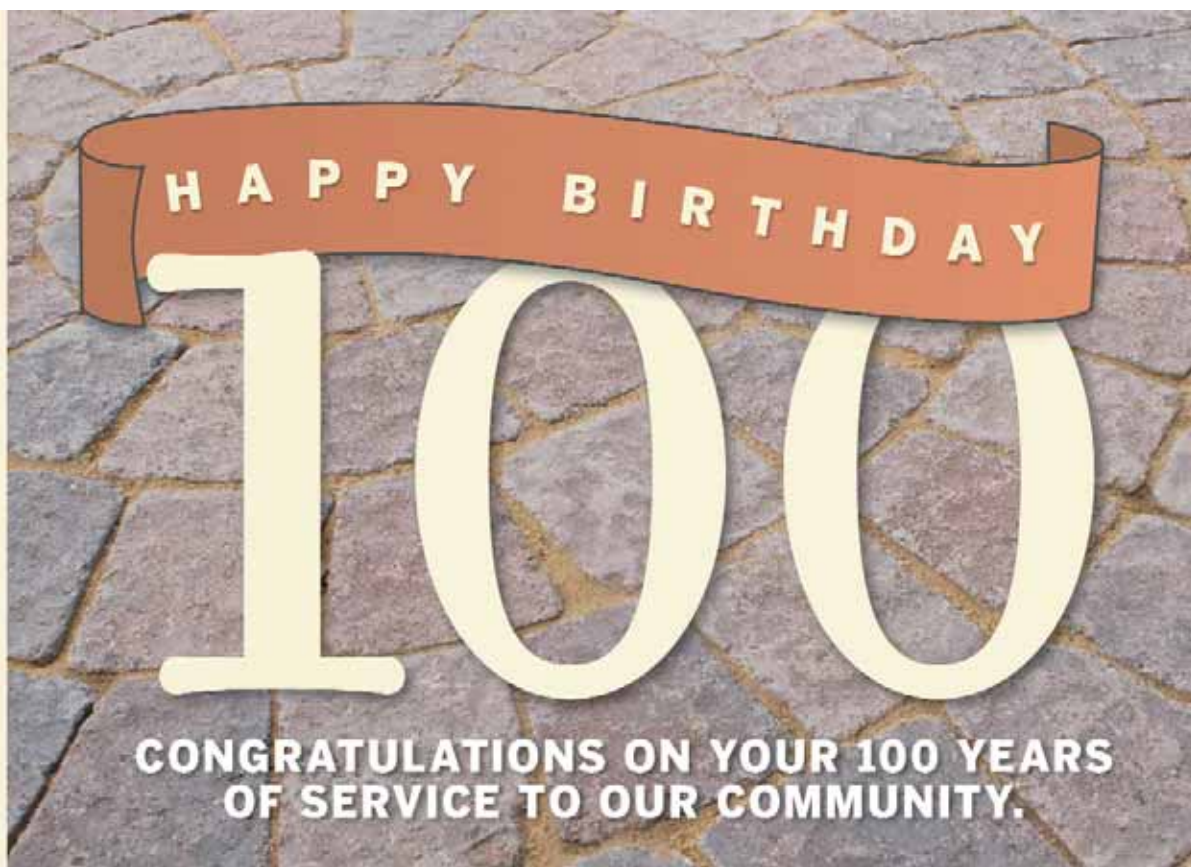
Nielsen Builders, Inc. is committed to the principles of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. In order to ensure its dissemination and implementation throughout all levels of the company, Jean Hieber has been selected as Equal Employment Officer for Nielsen Builders, Inc.

In furtherance of our policy of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity, Nielsen Builders, Inc. has developed a written Executive Order Affirmative Action Program, which contains specific and results-oriented procedures to which Nielsen Builders, Inc. is committed to apply every good faith effort. Procedures without efforts to make them work are meaningless and effort undirected by specific and meaningful procedures is inadequate. Such elements of Nielsen Builders, Inc.'s Executive Order Affirmative Action Program will enable applicants and employees to know and avail themselves of its benefits. The policy is available for review, upon request, during normal business hours.

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The First Five Decades

The Nielsen Years, 1908-60, and

by Dorothy Boyd-Bragg



Joseph Nielsen was born in Birkelse, Denmark, on Dec. 19, 1885, the son of Nils Peter and Christine Poulsen Nielsen. After receiving his early education in Danish schools, he immigrated to the United States in December 1902, at the age of 17. First locating in Buffalo, N.Y., he continued his studies at the prestigious Albright Art School in that city. He was interested in interior decorating and design and was initially employed as a draftsman in 1907 by the firm of Faust, Mitchell & Parker, who were interior decorators in Buffalo. The following year, he relocated to Round Hill, Va., where an uncle, Niels Poulsen, was already established as a respected maker of spokes and handles. Joseph began J. Nielsen & Company, an interior decorating and designing business, in Round Hill in 1908.

At this point in time, the 1910 census suggests that the spelling of Joseph Nielsen's name may have been Johantas D. Nilsen. His occupation is listed as house painter. He was, in any case, clearly identified as Poulsen's 24-year-old nephew from Denmark. Poulsen's nephew did not, however, remain for long in Round Hill. Since it offered greater opportunities, he soon moved to the nearby town of Leesburg, Va., and there continued his business J. Nielsen & Company.



Nielsen's store, located in Leesburg, Va.

On April 23, 1916, he married Kathryn Gardner Rhodes (born October 15, 1893) of Leesburg, Va., a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Rhodes. One daughter was born to this union, Kathryn Bell "Katybell" Nielsen, who united in

marriage in 1948 with Jack F. Mason.

Joseph's two brothers, Nils and Otto Nielsen, also left Denmark for the United States, and the former followed Joseph to Leesburg and ultimately associated with him as a partner. This connection, however,

dissolved in 1917, and in that year Joseph Nielsen transferred his business activities to Harrisonburg, Va., where he secured an important contract to decorate the First National Bank, located on the southeast corner of Court Square (currently the Bank of America). His competence and creativity in executing that assignment led to other contracts in the Harrisonburg area, and the firm of J. Nielsen & Company steadily grew in prosperity and reputation.



Bank of America

W.M. Bucher & Son

During this period, Harrisonburg's foremost construction company was W.M. Bucher & Son, and Joseph Nielsen became well known to the firm through their allied business activities. In 1867, William M. Bucher, at the age of 19, had arrived in Harrisonburg, Va. William Bucher, originally from Stephens City, Va., immedi-

d Earlier Contributors



Anthony Hockman's house, 286 East Market St.

ately found work as an apprentice carpenter with Anthony Hockman, a native of Shenandoah County, Va., who had been born May 4, 1814. Mr. Hockman started working in Harrisonburg, Va., around 1855 and served on the town council in Harrisonburg prior to the Civil War.

During the years of his early employment with Anthony Hockman, William Bucher displayed unusual skill, which was appreciated by his employer. After Mr. Bucher married Mr. Hockman's niece, Laura Ann Hockman, the daughter of Samuel Hockman, Mr. Bucher was chosen to be Hockman's business partner. In 1871, the firm of Hockman & Bucher was formed and flourished in the following years. They prospered in the postwar reconstruction era, building numerous homes in various parts of Harrisonburg — including one for Mr. Hockman himself at 286 East Market Street, described as a "beautiful residence" in the Italianate style. Elaborately stenciled ceilings and a grandly sweeping spiral staircase are among the most striking interior features. A pronounced cupola dominates the exterior roofline. Mr. Hockman built his residence on the south side of his shop, where he owned much of the surrounding acreage. His partner for a time also lived nearby, farther to the west on East Market.

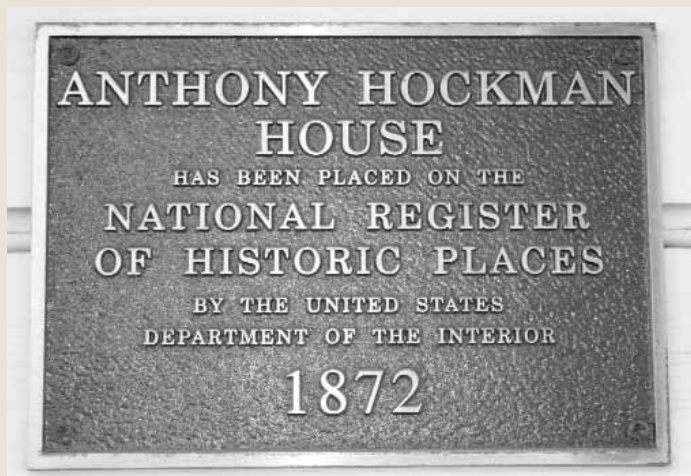
Over the years, Anthony Hockman gradually reduced his personal involvement and had essentially retired at the time of his death on June 7, 1886. He was then approximately 72 years of age

and was buried in Woodbine Cemetery, located almost directly across the street from his residence. The surviving partner, locally known as "Billy Bucher," continued to flourish in the business. In 1902 his only son, Russell, followed him into the construction business after his graduation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Together they adopted the business name of W.M. Bucher & Son.



The Masonic Temple

W.M. Bucher & Son quickly broadened its focus to include commercial, educational and institutional construction. This fortuitous shift coincided with an era of unprecedented growth and prosperity in the Harrisonburg area. W.M. Bucher & Son built often and in all mediums — brick, stone, wood and concrete. Among their most prominent projects were: The First National Bank (1903-4, currently Bank of America), The Masonic Temple (1905-6) and the Waterman School (1911).



Hockman plaque



JMU Ashby Hall 1911



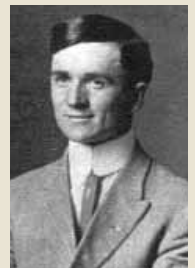
JMU's Science Hall 1909



Mr. Bucher and his son, Russell, are buried in Woodbine Cemetery, in Harrisonburg, Va.

The partnership also erected the first buildings at the State Normal School in Harrisonburg (1908-9) — later Madison College and still later James Madison University — and the original plant of Rockingham Memorial Hospital (1911-2). In each case, with the college and the hospital, they participated in highly competitive bidding and launched what marked the beginning of a 100-year partnership.

The elder Bucher retired from active participation in the company around 1918. Tragically, the unexpected death of the younger Russell Samuel Bucher at the age of 51 occurred on Nov. 21, 1923. His father's death followed a little less than a year later, on Nov. 9, 1924, after a brief period of ill health. Both father and son are buried in Woodbine Cemetery.



Elmo Hosaflook worked for W.M. Bucher and Son since 1911.

After the death of both Buchers within the space of less than one year, the business and its physical plant were quickly acquired by Joseph Nielsen, who was, in fact, already eminently qualified to embark on a career in building. Joseph Nielsen immediately moved to complete the outstanding contracts of W.M. Bucher & Son. The buildings underway and/or scheduled were in fact constructed by Myron Elmo Hosaflook, a native of Shenandoah County, who had been associated with the Bucher firm since 1911 and who later, in June 1925, went to work for its successor, operating under the new name of Nielsen Construction Company. The bond established early on between the two men was symbolized by the fact that Mr. Hosaflook served as one of the honorary pallbearers at the funeral of Joseph Nielsen in 1962. He continued to work with the company until his retirement. He died in 1979.



Early aerial view of JMU campus

The new construction company almost immediately began building a new facility for housing materials and equipment at 56 West Johnson Street, conveniently located near



Rockingham Memorial Hospital 1911



56 West Johnson St.

essential rail transportation. It remained in use until 1973, when the present headquarters was constructed on Early Road.

Otto Nielsen, who had arrived in the United States in 1903, joined his brother in Harrisonburg in 1925 and became a partner in his newly acquired building enterprise. During the next 20 years, the firm prospered and expanded under the practical, capable and always personal management of the Nielsen brothers. Each successive project, executed with skill and in a timely manner, served to advance the company's reputation, built on the earlier reputation of the Buchers for quality performance and distinctive design. The Nielsen brothers were always personally involved, and their consistent oversight generated confidence in their growing ranks of clients.

In 1945, Joseph Nielsen purchased his brother's interest in the company and became the head and sole owner of Nielsen Construction Company. Sam Shrum also remembers when bids were taken for Wilson Hall, which was completed in 1931. "Otto Nielsen left off the millwork by mistake when he bid Wilson Hall, so Nielsen was the low bidder and got the job. The millwork was worth \$3,200. His mistake got us the job." The suggestion is that if there

were ever a fortunate mistake, this was it. He later discovered that the carpentry sheet had slid down a crack along his desk.

Others, like Olen B. Landes, the founder of Landes Heating and Air Conditioning in Harrisonburg, who is now retired and a Brethren minister, would go even further. He believes the Nielsen brothers were "an excellent team," with Joe overseeing the construction and Otto tending to the details. They each, in their own way, helped make Nielsen the company that it is today. They both demanded excellence and got it. Otto certainly kept in touch with the company after the brothers' 20-year partnership ended in 1945.



Olen B. Landes

Otto Nielsen continued to live at Biltwell Apartments in Harrisonburg until 1972, when he moved to the Bridgewater Home for the Aging, which was renamed the Bridgewater Retirement Community. He remained an active member of the Harrisonburg Elks until his death in 1976 at the age of 92. He was buried at Eastlawn Memorial Gardens near Harrisonburg.



JMU Alumnae Hall 1922



Waterman School 1911



Nielsen's fleet of trucks could be seen all over the campus during the boom years of construction for Madison College.



Rockingham National Bank 1960



Sam Shrum

On October 1, 1945, Samuel H. Shrum, a native of Rockingham County, went to work for Nielsen Construction Company as a draftsman, probably attracted by the company's growing reputation for quality and progressive contributions to the Harrisonburg area. Mr. Shrum's father, George, had worked as a subcontractor for Nielsen. The younger Shrum worked for George Shrum Masonry on the JMU Wilson Hall project during his college years at Virginia Tech, gaining valuable experience in the industry.



Sunnyside Retirement Communities

On June 15, 1951, Mr. Nielsen incorporated his expanding company, Nielsen Construction Company, Inc., in order to better accommodate its growing staff and increasingly diverse services. Mr. Nielsen would remain at the helm as president for the next 10 years. Even after his retirement in January 1961, he remained active as chairman of the board and merely shifted his area of primary interest to the architectural aspects of its activities rather than hands-on construction. During his later years, Mr. Nielsen helped launch many architectural careers, including those of Darcy Paul "D.P." Davis Jr., Dwight Miller, Joe Bowman and John Byrd.

was to be the last personally supervised construction that Mr. Nielsen undertook. He was, however, also the guiding force during the period when the majority of the distinctive bluestone buildings were constructed on the Madison College (now James Madison University) campus in Harrisonburg.

Just a year and two months after his January 1961 retirement, Joseph Nielsen died unexpectedly of a heart condition in Rockingham Memorial Hospital. His death occurred on March 5, 1962 — which many "old-timers" remember as the night of the "big snow." The following day, it shared the front page of the *Daily News-Record* with the details of the life and death of Mr. Nielsen.

At the time of his death, Mr. Nielsen was 76 years of age and was survived by his wife and daughter and by five sisters and four brothers, almost equally divided between the United States and Denmark. He had been an important and giving member of



Nielsen Construction Company logo

As a registered architect, Mr. Nielsen designed and supervised many of the structures built by the firm in the 1950s and 1960s, including the Sunnyside Presbyterian Home (now a major part of the Sunnyside Presbyterian Retirement Community) and the Rockingham National Bank (now occupied by the main branch of Wachovia Bank in the Harrisonburg area). The bank building



JMU's Madison Memorial Library opened in 1939. In 1984, it was renamed Carrier Library to honor Dr. Ronald Carrier, fourth president of the college. Its first book was the Bible, a gift from the president of Hollins Institute, later renamed Hollins University. Prior to 1939, the library was located in Maury Hall.

his adopted community for more than 45 years and an active member of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church.

As a moving tribute to the man he affectionately called "Mr. Joe," D.P. Davis wrote regarding his contribution to the building of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church, "After the plans had been completed ... Mr. Nielsen met many times with the building committee ... and [volunteered to] supervise the construction and also make revisions in his architectural office, which would make the construction of the church much more economical." Joseph Nielsen continued to contribute to his church and to his community until the very end of his life. Others who contributed significantly to the church tribute published to honor Joseph Nielsen were Allan H. Fenner, pastor at Muhlenberg from 1942-56; Mervin B. Stickley, the personal accountant for Joseph Nielsen and his company; P. Schwoebel, member of the 1952 church building committee; Samuel H. Shrum; and John L. Derrick, senior pastor of Muhlenberg for many years, who contributed the foreword.

Both Mr. Nielsen and his wife, Kathryn, who died in Harrisonburg on March 16, 1989, at the age of 95, are buried in Eastlawn Memorial Gardens, just east of Harrisonburg.

Yet, without a doubt, the greatest testimonial to Joseph Nielsen's dedication and talents was the company he both founded and loved. He bequeathed to the company that bears his name and to the able builders and leaders who worked with him and followed in his footsteps a wealth of building skill, integrity and innumerable lofty ideas — all derived from a lifetime of dedication to innovation, hard work, superlative quality construction and functional design.

The majority stock held by Joseph Nielsen was purchased from his widow in June 1963 by the new management group, namely Samuel H. Shrum, Jack F. Mason, James W. Gilkeson Jr., Walter R. Trobaugh Jr. and B. Saylor Neff Jr. These five men, individually and collectively, guided and nurtured Nielsen during the coming decades.

The Nielsen management group, circa 1963, from left: James Gilkeson, Saylor Neff, Sam Shrum, Jack Mason and Walter Trobaugh





Nielsen Projects Honored

Two Nielsen projects have recently been recognized and showcased for excellence.

The Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects has named the East Campus CISAT Library as a Merit Award winner for architectural excellence. The award was presented to JMU and Design Collective, Inc., on Oct. 13 in Washington, D.C. The judge's comments included, "The concept of this campus library responding to the site and adjacent buildings was clearly expressed through the solid masonry portion, combined with a contrasting and lightweight metal and glass elevation. The architectural skills of the designer were immediately apparent."

A Design Merit Award was also bestowed on Watson Manor, Charlottesville, by the 2008 Remodeling Design Awards program. This project, designed by Mitchell Matthews Architects, included transforming a dilapidated turn-of-the century mansion into a larger home for the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. The building was suspended on pylons so that the foundation could be restored and the basement rebuilt. The judges appreciated the structure's elegance.



*"Congratulations Nielsen
on your 100th anniversary"*



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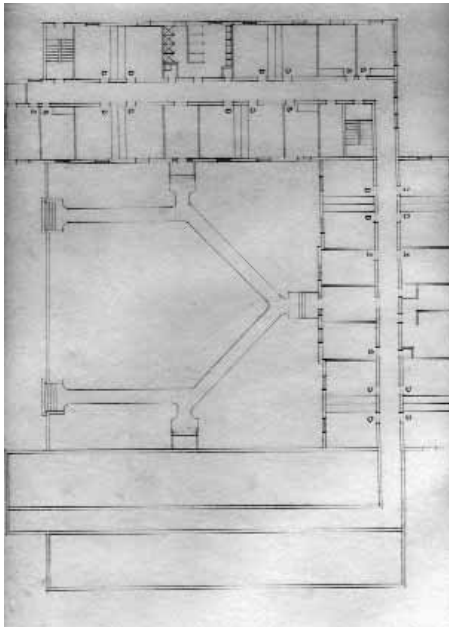


Leadership in the Decades After Nielsen

The Shrum Years, 1960-73, and Beyond

by Dorothy Boyd-Bragg

Samuel Hopkins Shrum, president of Nielsen Construction Company, Inc. from January 1961 until his retirement in 1973, was born at home in Dayton, Va., on June 19, 1912. His family was of Scots-Irish and German descent. Named for his paternal grandfather, he was the son of George Edgar and Annie Rolston Shrum. After graduation from Dayton High School, he entered the Virginia Polytechnic Institute at Blacksburg, Va., and subsequently received a degree in architectural engineering (1933) followed by study at the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., which is now a part of Rider University. On June 14, 1941, he married Evelyn Vaughan of Lynchburg, Va. They were the parents of two children, Edgar Vaughan Shrum and Marilyn Ann Shrum. Both of their children have earned doctorates.



Mr. Shrum worked as a draftsman early in his career.

Mr. Shrum was a partner in George E. Shrum & Son, Masonry Contractors, from 1933 until 1942. Working with his father, he learned the value of hard work and the skills associated with

construction. In 1942, during the war years, he became production engineer for Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, where he worked on aircraft carriers bound for action — a position that he retained until Oct. 1, 1945, when he began work with Nielsen Construction Company as a draftsman and engineer.

Mr. Shrum's talent was well known to Joseph Nielsen. Shrum's father had been a masonry contractor for Nielsen for many years. Sam, as he liked to be called, had planned to enter the seminary after World War II, but circumstances convinced him that he was meant to work with Nielsen Construction.

In the early years, Mr. Shrum wore many hats. He was a draftsman, an estimator and a project manager — all at the same time. He recalled in a video interview recorded just before his death that he liked everything he did. He had a flair for design, an eye for detail, and a love for the outdoors and people. In his many years at Nielsen, Mr. Shrum got to know everyone associated with the company: the sub-



Dr. Ron Carrier and Sam Shrum orchestrated numerous groundbreakings on the campus of Madison College.

contractors, the clients and the employees — especially the employees.

When he regularly visited the building sites, he not only checked to make sure



Mr. Shrum attended hundreds of groundbreakings all around the community during his tenure as president.

that things were proceeding as planned, he also talked to everyone. His mother had taught him to do that as a child. Consequently, he never met a person who remained a stranger for very long. It gave him an edge in dealing with Nielsen employees, subcontractors, architects and clients.

When Nielsen Construction Company was incorporated in June 1951, Mr. Shrum became a member of its board of directors and served as the executive vice president and general manager until 1961, when he was elected president. At the time of his election, he owned the largest percentage of stock in the corporation and was one of the five majority stockholders.

Mr. Shrum always maintained that the symbolic turning point for Nielsen Construction was the successful completion of Godwin Hall on the campus of Madison College. He contended that this venture set the stage for the company's future and for the presidency of his immediate successor, Walter R. Trobaugh Jr.



Godwin Hall 1972

Godwin Hall was authorized by the Virginia General Assembly when Miles E. Godwin Jr. was governor of Virginia for the first time, 1966-70, and was completed in 1972. It was named for the former governor and his wife, Katherine

"Kat" Beale Godwin, a 1937 graduate of Madison College. Among other things, Godwin Hall contains the Sinclair Gymnasium and the Savage Natatorium. As the most extensive construction project undertaken by Nielsen Construction

to that point in its history, Mr. Shrum always believed Godwin Hall marked both a symbolic and a real shift in thinking and expectations at Nielsen Construction — a shift from thinking in terms of hundreds of thousands of dollars to millions.

It was a fitting commentary, considering Mr. Shrum also acknowledged that whether called the State Normal and Industrial School for Women, the State Normal School for Women, the State Teachers College, Madison College or James Madison University, that institution "...kept Nielsen in business. We almost always had a construction project on campus." Repeat business was evident throughout the years. Mr. Shrum clearly regarded the completion of Godwin Hall as the highlight of his career, and growth for Nielsen came quickly on its heels.

Samuel Shrum died at the age of 95 at Sunnyside Retirement Community on Nov. 22, 2007. It was Thanksgiving Day. Among the many tributes offered was the following: "People who knew him well say Samuel Hopkins Shrum built more than buildings. He also crafted a legacy of faith and friendship." All who spoke of Mr. Shrum remembered him with admiration, as a man with practical business and building sense but also as a man with a heart who always put his employees' interests above his own. He had learned early and well the importance of labor, "labor by those who actually get the job done."

Other Nielsen Stockholders



James Gilkeson, circa 1963

James W. Gilkeson Jr. was a vice president at Nielsen Construction during the Shrum years. Among other things, he was primarily responsible for office supervision, planning and scheduling. Other related areas of responsibility included engineering, safety considerations, and expediting and assisting in negotiating selected projects.

After graduation from VPI, Mr. Gilkeson was hired by Virginia Asphalt Paving



James Gilkeson, 2008

Company, Inc., in Roanoke, Va., as a superintendent and worked in various areas of Virginia and on a portion of the West Virginia Turnpike. In 1953, he married Emily Thomas Scott of Salem, Va., and they were the parents of four children.

In 1955, he was transferred to the Strasburg-Front Royal area and became manager of operations for Virginia Asphalt Paving Company for northern Virginia. The following year, he joined Nielsen Construction and was elected to the board of directors in 1961. Two years later, he was elected vice president in charge of engineering and construction projects and later emerged as one of the five majority stockholders.

Since his retirement in 1985, Mr. Gilkeson has become an active participant in Community Caregivers Network (CCN), an organization that works closely with James Madison University's Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services. CCN provides support services to family caregivers preserving an independent lifestyle for the frail elderly, for those with Alzheimer's disease and for the caregivers themselves throughout the region. His wife, Emily, was a CCN client prior to her death in 2007.

Benjamin Saylor Neff Jr. began serving as secretary-treasurer of Nielsen Construction Company in the 1950s, having responsibility for keeping corpo-

rate records, handling funds and securities, supervising deposits, signing all checks, keeping the corporate books, and managing the office facilities.

Mr. Neff was born June 20, 1927, in the Harrisonburg area, the only child of Benjamin Saylor Neff Sr. and Minnie Emma Flory Neff. He attended city schools and graduated from Harrisonburg High School in 1945. He then enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served in various capacities in Richmond and at the Bureau of Navy Personnel and U.S. Naval Headquarters in Washington, D.C. After leaving the service, he entered Bridgewater College as a candidate for a certificate of commerce. While attending college, he went to work for Nielsen Construction Company on a part-time basis in May 1947.

On Aug. 31, 1947, Mr. Neff married Frances Elizabeth Simmons, and they were the parents of two daughters, Gayle Annette Neff and Suzanne Frances Neff, and one son, John Nelson Neff, who eventually became president and CEO of Nielsen Construction Company in 1987.

In 1951, at the time of the company's incorporation, Saylor Neff purchased stock in Nielsen Construction Company. The following year, he was elected assistant treasurer and served



Saylor and Frances Neff

in that capacity until 1956, when he was elected to the office of secretary-assistant treasurer. He assumed the position of secretary-treasurer in 1961 and became a member of the board of directors. In 1983, he was elected to be vice president of finance. He was one of Nielsen's five majority stockholders. Five years later, in 1988, he retired from Nielsen Construction after 41 years of employment. In his last interview in 2006, Sam Shrum clearly indicated that he knew and admired Saylor Neff's vision and work ethic and praised him as a "superb office manager who always had good ideas that he wanted to get done."



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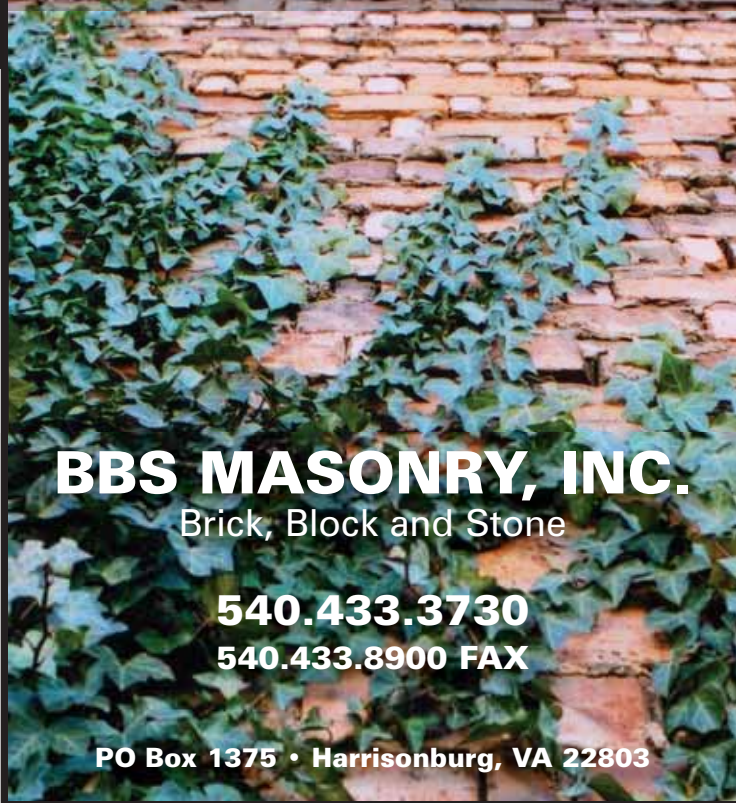
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The Trobaugh Years

1974-83 and 1985-7

by Dorothy Boyd-Bragg

Walter Ray Trobaugh Jr. served Nielsen Construction during the Shrum years as a vice president, having responsibility for estimating and purchasing. He was born July 23, 1926, in Harrisonburg into a family with strong ties to construction. His parents were Walter Ray Trobaugh Sr. and Thelma Furr Trobaugh. On Aug. 6, 1955, Walter Trobaugh married Joan Lee Holst of Princeton, N.J., and they were the parents of two children: Jacqueline Trobaugh and Walter Ray Trobaugh III.



Pictured on the cover of the Nielsen history book from the mid-'60s is young Walter Ray Trobaugh III.

Walter Trobaugh was a 1944 graduate of Harrisonburg High School and entered Bridgewater College for the 1944-5 session before being called into military service. Two years later, in 1947, he re-entered Bridgewater College, majoring in pre-engineering and mathematics. He transferred in 1948 to Virginia Polytechnic Institute, where he majored in electrical engineering and graduated with the class of 1950.

After his graduation from VPI, he was employed by Rockingham Construction Company as an electrical foreman in the interior electrical division — which, at the time, was headed by his father. In January 1956, he went to work for the well-known architect D.P. Davis Jr. designing electrical layouts. Later, in 1956, he was employed by Nielsen Construction Company, Inc. as an engineer.

In January 1961, he was elected to the board of directors, was elected to serve as a vice president two years later and became, in due course, one of the five majority stockholders. When Sam Shrum retired, Mr. Trobaugh became president and CEO of Nielsen Construction in 1974, positions that he retained for almost a decade. He again served as president and CEO from 1985-7 and retired the following year, in 1988. In all, Mr. Trobaugh was employed by Nielsen Construction for more than 32 years.

The Trobaugh presidency at Nielsen coincided with a good portion of the presidencies of both Dr. Ronald E. Carrier at Madison College (renamed James Madison University in 1977) and T. Carter Melton Jr. at Rockingham Memorial Hospital. They were all men of vision and energy and shared remarkably similar views on growth and change. Collectively, they all contributed to the transformation of a small regional institution into a national player on the educational scene and a locally respected hospital into a medical center with regional renown.

Mr. Trobaugh died in Harrisonburg on Sept. 25, 2005, at the age of 79. He is buried in Woodbine Cemetery.



Carter Melton



Dr. Ronald Carrier



The Mason Years 1984-5

by Dorothy Boyd-Bragg

Jack Foster Mason served as a vice president of Nielsen Construction Company, Inc. during the years following 1961. Among his responsibilities were scheduling and maintenance of equipment, planning and estimating.

Jack Mason, born March 12, 1923, in Fayetteville, N.C., was the eldest of eight children born to John F. and Bonnie Lee Taylor Mason. Jack's father was a contractor and later a building inspector until his retirement, and he regularly employed his son in the construction field while Jack was still in high school.

After high school, Mr. Mason attended Army Technical School, Arkansas State College (now Arkansas State University) and the Institute of Commerce and Technology in Washington, D.C. He also served with the 8th Air Force in Europe as a flight engineer from 1943-5. Upon his discharge from the service, he briefly operated a trucking business and later relocated to Washington, D.C., where he worked for the federal government.

There he met and married Kathryn Bell "Katybell" Nielsen, who was then working as a government secretary in Washington, the only daughter of Joseph Nielsen, the founder of Nielsen Construction Company. Kathryn Nielsen Mason was born Oct. 20, 1917, in Harrisonburg, Va., and died there on May 6, 2003. Her obituary reports that, at her request, she was buried in Union Cemetery in Leesburg, Va., where her mother spent her

early years. The Masons were the parents of one daughter, Kathy Foster Mason.

In 1950, Mr. Mason joined his father-in-law's company as a material and truck dispatcher. He was elected to the board of directors in 1957, became a vice president in 1961 and became president in 1984. Mr. Mason knew the company and its founder extremely well, both as a business associate and as a family member. Like his predecessors in the company, Mason and his family resided in the local community and contributed to it in many ways.

In 1985, at the end of his year-long presidency, Mr. Mason retired from Nielsen Construction. He was 62 years of age at the time of his retirement. He and his wife remained in the area until their deaths years later. With the retirement of Mr. Mason, Mr. Trobaugh stepped back into the role of president until 1987, when John Neff took over the reins of the company.

He died March 8, 1999, and his funeral service was held in Wilmington, N.C., with a memorial service later in Harrisonburg, Va. At the time of his death, most members of his family, including his daughter, resided in North Carolina.



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The Neff Years 1987-2007

by Dorothy Boyd-Bragg

John Nelson Neff, the son of B. Saylor Neff and Frances Elizabeth Simmons Neff, has a long and personal association with Nielsen Construction. He graduated from Harrisonburg High School and went on to earn a bachelor of science degree in construction engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and subsequently joined Nielsen Construction in 1974 as an assistant project manager and estimator. He “grew up in the business,” mentored from the first by Mr. Shrum. As a young man just out of college, Mr. Neff worked with Mr. Shrum in the construction trade from 1974 to 1976. “He took me under his wing.” Their relationship certainly remained close until Mr. Shrum’s death.



Tilt-up construction on the SRI International building

Following the retirement of Mr. Shrum in 1976, Mr. Neff remained at Nielsen, achieving the position of vice president for estimating and administration in 1984. Two years later, he became pres-

ident and chief executive officer. During the years between 1974 and 1987, he was involved in most of the projects undertaken by Nielsen. So many of those projects involved work on JMU’s

campus that he once remarked, “I often went to bed thinking ‘Go Dukes.’” He also touched base regularly with his mentor, Mr. Shrum.



Nielsen worked on a number of projects on the James Madison University campus in the '70s and '80s, including the Warren Campus Center addition, which is pictured midway to the right in this photo. Also pictured are Gibbons Dining Hall and Wilson Hall.



John N. Neff

During the years that John Neff led the company, Nielsen became more specialized in certain areas, and began to self-perform a number of functions, including the following:

- Tilt-up concrete
- Cabinetry and millwork through Legacy Cabinets
- Small projects
- Drywall
- Steel
- Masonry

Also during this time, Nielsen opened up a warehouse for storage and inventory of supplies and coordination of equipment.

In truth, Mr. Neff believes that he's been blessed throughout his working life. "I've been blessed to work with a talented group of diverse craftspeople with a strong work ethic. I get much satisfac-

tion in seeing the tangible results of a team effort. Our team spirit is especially strong, in part because people tend to stay at Nielsen for generations and recommend us to others with a similar work ethic. Clients also tend to build lasting associations with us. They trust us, and we essentially know what they want and need. These represent the hallmark of Nielsen that I have observed in the last 30 or more years ... repeat relationships ... attention to craftsmanship ... and strong work ethic!"

During a 2006 video interview, Mr. Shrum focused on the Neff years periodically. He repeatedly praised Mr. Neff and compared him with others at Nielsen. To paraphrase Mr. Shrum's

comments, "Companies often decline when they have change at the top, but not at Nielsen. John's really like his father and Joseph Nielsen in that he's got high standards. He's a good man ... does a great job ... and is always fair and honest in pursuing his vision for the



Mr. Neff now serves as pastor at the Grottoes Church of the Brethren.

Nielsen employees have always had a strong work ethic.





Nielsen employees take great pride in their work.

company and working with employees and clients. He's especially good working with people — all kinds of people. Nielsen has clearly benefited during the Neff years."

While ably handling the demands of his multiple responsibilities at Nielsen, which in 2008 employed more than 200 individuals, Mr. Neff has also contributed to the needs of his community. Among other contributions, he has served on the Harrisonburg City Council, 1992-6,

and fulfilled the additional responsibilities of mayor for two of those years. Growth was certainly characteristic of the city during the years that Neff served on the council.

Since January 2005, after taking courses part-time at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Mr. Neff has been ordained for the ministry and accepted a pastoral assignment in September 2005 with the Grottoes Church of the Brethren. Fittingly, one of his first pas-

toral duties was officiating at the funeral of Roy Lee Gooden Sr., who died on Oct. 5, 2006. Mr. Gooden had worked at Nielsen for more than 20 years before his illness.

The *Daily News-Record* reported on May 22, 2008, that "John N. Neff has two major heroes who have guided his life — Jesus Christ and Walt Disney." His abiding dedication to the first is obvious and needs little explanation. The second, personified by a somewhat large Mickey Mouse seated in a rocking chair in his office, an impressive number of other Disney characters on each window ledge, and a discreet logo of Mickey Mouse on his neatly tailored business shirt, is very easily explained: "My wife and I go to Disney World three times a year ... Walt Disney was a visionary. He could see through all the stages of a project in his mind before [the project] even began." By following both of his heroes, Neff has achieved success, attained happiness in his life and shared his vision with others. His heroes certainly seem to harmonize well with the heritage established early on by Joseph Nielsen.

Mr. and Mrs. Neff have two children, a daughter, Melody Carol Neff, and a son, John Benjamin Neff.

Mr. Neff officially stepped down in 2007 as president and in 2008 as CEO of Nielsen Builders, Inc. while continuing on as chairman of the board. He remains devoted to Nielsen despite his new interests and increasing demands on his time. He still knows what is most essential. People are what really matter. As reported in *Crossroads Business* magazine in the summer 2007 issue,



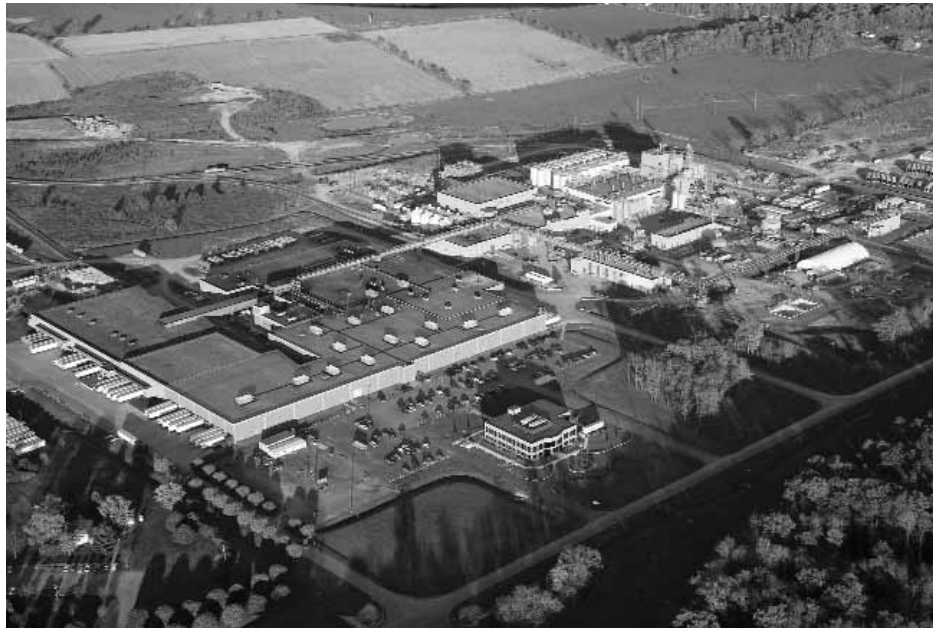
John and Linda Neff, with daughter Melody in the middle



Coors Brewing Company-Shenandoah Division was built in Elkton in 1986. The plant was originally a bottling facility. In 2007, brewing capacity was added to the mix.

"Employees who take ownership of their work and the entire project provide a valuable, competitive advantage for Nielsen Builders." Mr. Neff wholeheartedly agrees that Nielsen's greatest strength lies in its employees. "From our intellectual capital through craftsmanship, our most important assets are our people. Our employees are truly engaged in quality and that allows us to respond quickly to clients as well as new trends in the construction industry." Fortunately, some things never change.

During the Neff years, the wheels were already in motion to develop a new strategy and management team for the future. When Mr. Neff first took over as president, Bill Fisher and Dick Holsinger were already part of the Nielsen team. Monty Cox and John Morsch joined shortly afterward. Bill Fisher, John Morsch and John Neff served on the board of directors executive committee, and Dick Holsinger was on the board of directors. Monty Cox joined the board in 1987 as secretary. Mr. Neff had a vision of where he wanted the company to be in the future; Mr. Fisher, Mr. Cox and Mr. Neff worked to make that vision a reality.



Coors aerial shot

At about the same time, Nielsen began its relationship with the Coors Brewing Company, which was poised to expand to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Mr. Neff traveled to Golden, Colo., to meet with the Coors team. Nielsen played a key role in the construction of that facility

and took from that experience many of the systems that were implemented to help Nielsen expand into a new era of construction management. Coors acted as its own construction manager; Mr. Neff was project manager; Junior Hensley was superintendent. The Coors



Nielsen had a long partnership with Shenandoah's Pride, constructing most of the buildings on the complex.

job was very significant; it taught Nielsen how to work on a major, complex project.

Other large and complex projects followed soon after, including Shenandoah's Pride Milk Producing Facility, where Nielsen was first recognized as a construction management firm. Nielsen continued to hone its skills as a construction management firm with the Rockingham Memorial Hospital expansion to include the Regional Cancer Center, the Ambulatory Surgery Center and the expansion to its Emergency Room.

When Sunnyside planned to expand its services to Martinsville, Va., with its Kings Grant Retirement Community, Nielsen was selected as their construction manager. This change was instrumental in moving Nielsen to the next level of working on high volume, very complex projects.

Nielsen Builders, Inc. was formed in 1996 with Mr. Neff as president and CEO. The company included two divisions: Nielsen Construction Company, with Mr. Fisher serving as vice president of operations, and Nielsen Management Group, led by Mr. Cox. The team at Nielsen developed an integrated system of construction services that was instrumental in moving Nielsen to another level in the construction industry.

With this important reorganization complete, the management team held sever-



The RMH Cancer Center was built in the late '80s and opened in 1990.

al retreats to discuss strategies for the success of Nielsen Builders. The group determined that the board of directors needed to expand to include leadership for the future.

In 1997, Jim DeLucas joined the board. Several more managers joined the board in 2000, including Tony Biller, Thomas Moomav, Joe Miller, Gary McBride and Don Hicklin. This leadership group was brought in by the current team to develop a succession plan for Nielsen and to

ensure a seamless transition. Mr. Neff and his colleagues knew it was important to develop the future management team.

In 2003, Nielsen expanded its market area by opening a regional office in Charlottesville. Mr. Hicklin was instrumental in this effort and has managed the affairs of this office from its inception. Nielsen began to hire additional managers and superintendents from other companies. The management team felt that bringing in people from other companies would bring new knowledge and new perspective to the company. Mr. Fisher recalls, "We learned a lot from employees who came from outside Nielsen. They gave us new ideas and approaches." The whole focus of the company changed; it moved from six or eight superintendents overseeing the projects to a company with 25 superintendents. Nielsen moved from two project managers to 18 project managers in 2008.

Nielsen began an era where the competition for projects was against the likes of Barton Mallow, Bovis and Donley. Rockingham Memorial Hospital's Short Stay Center, Lake Prince Retirement Community, Fauquier Hospital, major building programs for the cities of Waynesboro and Harrisonburg, Third Barracks at VMI and the JMU Performing



Kings Grant Retirement Community, Martinsville, Va., is part of Sunnyside Communities.

Arts Center are just a few examples of the large and very complex projects included in the Nielsen résumé as a construction management firm.

In 2007, Nielsen announced a new president and a new management team. The future will, indeed, be in their hands. They are likely to continue to reflect the philosophy of Joseph Nielsen, a philosophy based on the belief that everyone served by the company should ultimately feel that Nielsen handled every stage of planning, execution, production and administration in an exceptional manner.

To a remarkable degree, Nielsen employees embody the company's positive philosophy, both in words and in deeds. The new management team at Nielsen, following in the footsteps of Joseph Nielsen and Sam Shrum, works exceptionally hard at enhancing business and interpersonal communications, at creating structures that meet the client's needs, and at fostering relationships and partnerships. The results are certainly apparent.




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Official announcement of the formation of the Nielsen Management Group



Tony Biller became president of Nielsen in 2007 and was named CEO in 2008. John Neff remains chairman of the board.

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THE SECOND CENTURY BEGINS

Nielsen's Future

by Dorothy Boyd-Bragg

The new management team, announced in 2007, began the second century with more than 200 highly skilled employees. The team consists of **Tony E. Biller**, president and CEO; **James D. DeLucas Jr.**, chief development officer; **Don A. Hicklin**, vice president for operations, Piedmont region; **Gary L. McBride**, vice president for operations, Valley region; **J. Thomas Moomaw Jr.**, chief operations officer; **Joseph R. Miller**, vice president for operations, services division; **William J. Fisher**, senior vice president; and **John W. Morsch**, chief financial officer. The future for Nielsen and every other successful company will involve maintaining the integrity established in the past, establishing and cultivating good working relationships with all leaders in the area and region and embracing the rapidly changing technology of the industry.



Tony E. Biller



James D. DeLucas Jr.



Don A. Hicklin



Gary L. McBride



J. Thomas Moomaw Jr.



Joseph R. Miller



William J. Fisher



John W. Morsch

Nielsen Celebrates 100 Years of Construction Excellence

Joseph Nielsen started J. Nielsen and Company in 1908, which means that 2008 is Nielsen's 100th year in business. The company planned a series of special centennial events throughout the year to showcase and celebrate this milestone anniversary.

- A special 100-year anniversary logo was developed and was used throughout the year.
- A centennial DVD depicting the history of the company was created and shown to all employees.
- Nielsen hired a writer to research and write an updated history book about Nielsen.
- All Nielsen employees received hats, shirts, hard-hat stickers and static stickers with the centennial logo on them.
- Special centennial luncheons were held for all employees during January and February 2008.
- Each month during 2008, Nielsen held a centennial history trivia contest. Two history trivia questions were included in all paychecks. Winning employees won a day off with pay plus \$50.
- A special charity golf tournament was held on Friday, May 9, at Lakeview. The tournament raised about \$4,000, which was donated to the Harrisonburg/Rockingham United Way and the Thomas Jefferson Area United Way.
- The 100-year anniversary picnic was held on Friday, Aug. 1, 2008, at Grand Caverns. This picnic included lots of new activities and events to help celebrate the centennial.
- The wrap-up centennial celebration was held Nov. 13 at James Madison University.



Nielsen employees can take great pride in the fact that Nielsen has been in business for 100 years. Nielsen has grown and expanded over the years, so that, today, it is a well-respected business in the community, with dedicated, hard-working employees with countless years of expertise and experience in the construction industry. From a small one-man shop in 1908, Nielsen has grown to a company employing 200 people and doing millions of dollars of business in a variety of construction projects.

Nielsen – “Celebrating 100 Years of Construction Excellence”



Nielsen Names 2008 Award Winners

Nielsen President Tony E. Biller presented the 2008 employee awards at the Nielsen Centennial picnic on Aug. 1.



John W. Smith, superintendent, was named recipient of the Joseph Nielsen Award. The Joseph Nielsen Award is given each year to an employee who demonstrates continuous dedication and commitment to Nielsen and service to the community. Mr. Smith has been with Nielsen for 15 years. He and his family live in Harrisonburg.



Taulsa W. Cook was named Employee of the Year. This prestigious award goes to an employee who demonstrates an attitude of performance excellence and consistently promotes teamwork on the job. Mr. Cook has been with Nielsen for 14 years. He is an assistant superintendent and lives in Staunton, Va.



The Safety Excellence Award was given to **Gary A. Daisy**, mason foreman. Mr. Daisy is from Harrisonburg, Va., and has been with Nielsen for 21 years. This award goes to an employee who is a leader in continuously promoting safety awareness on the job site.



Wayland Aaron Cross, Swoope, Va., was named Hardworker of the Year. He is a foreman and has been with Nielsen for 10 years. The Hardworker Award is given to an employee who consistently demonstrates an attitude of hard work and dedication to the job.

Many thanks to the centennial committee for their hard work in planning and implementing centennial events throughout the year: Blake Abplanalp, Kathy Baxter, Jim DeLucas, Bill Fisher, Jean Hieber, Jacob Hull, Patty May and Shirley Terry.



Safety Award Winners

For the fifth straight year, the Virginia Contractors Group Self-Insurance Association has named Nielsen a Gold Award winner for its outstanding safety program. Nielsen was selected for this prestigious award according to several criteria: a culture evaluation worksheet, loss ratio for the last full year and the experience modifier. The criteria for the award have been tightened up in the last few years. Mark Sisler, Virginia Contractors Group Self-Insurance Association says, "Interestingly, even after adding the teeth, Nielsen comes out ahead. Congratulations — you deserve it!"

Joseph R. Nielsen Memorial Scholarship Created

Nielsen Builders, Inc. created the Joseph R. Nielsen Memorial Scholarship in 2008. This fund was developed in conjunction with the centennial celebration to honor founder Joseph R. Nielsen. Each year, the scholarship will provide four \$500 scholarships to children/stepchildren of Nielsen employees.

The award winners for the inaugural year were **Cody Robert Dyke**, son of **Patricia May**; **Kaitlyn**

Hassler, daughter of **Douglas** and **Suzanne Hassler**; **Jacqueline Meaghan Hieber**, daughter of **Jean** and **Bill Hieber**; and **Hunter Nelson**, son of **Ann** and **Tony Nelson**.

Nielsen plans to recognize and reward its talented employees and their families in the future as it has in the past. After all, they are and always have been family.



Cody Robert Dyke



Kaitlyn Hassler



Jacqueline Meaghan
Hieber



Hunter Nelson

Inside Nielsen Magazine Wins APEX 2008 Award of Excellence

Nielsen Builders, Inc., has been awarded the APEX 2008 Award of Excellence in the Magazine and Journal Writing category for its work on *Inside Nielsen*, the company's biannual publication.

APEX 2008 — the 20th Annual Awards for Publication Excellence — is an international competition that recognizes outstanding publications from newsletters and magazines to annual reports, brochures and Web sites.

According to the APEX 2008 judges, "The awards were based on excellence in graphic design, quality of editorial content and the success of the

entry in conveying the message and achieving overall communications effectiveness."

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The APEX Awards for Publication Excellence is an annual competition for writers, editors, publications staff and business and nonprofit communicators. It is sponsored by Communications Concepts, Inc., publishers of business communication reports, including *Writing That Works*, a subscription bimonthly for professional communicators, and special reports on topics such as writing feature articles and Web publishing.

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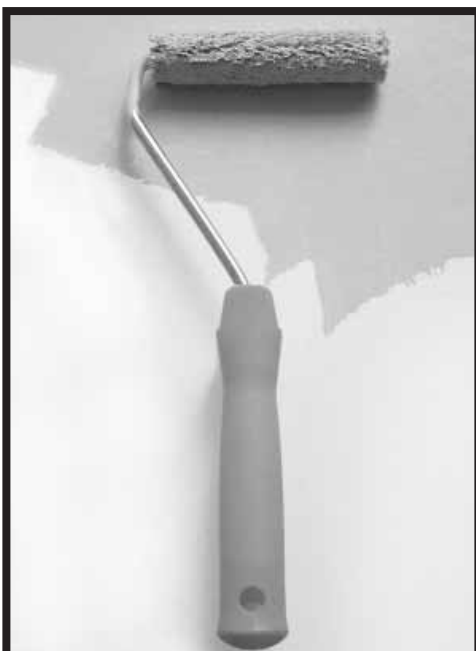
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