



2017 WALKS OF LIFE HONOREES

JTM Products

(Murphy Family)

Many people are familiar with Murphy's Oil Soap, but few may realize that the household cleaning product was first produced in Cleveland more than a century ago by the son of Irish immigrants from County Cork.

Jeremiah T. Murphy initially established his business, Phoenix Oil Co., in 1890 to manufacture metal-working oils and compounds for industrial uses. In 1905 he decided to add production of a soap made from vegetable oil to his factory located in what is now Cleveland's Tremont neighborhood, across the Cuyahoga River from John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Co.



Years later as construction of the Interstate Highway System was proceeding, Jeremiah's grandson, Murlan Jeremiah Murphy, saw a need for concrete-curing compounds in road construction. To produce the product, he built a manufacturing plant in Madison, Ohio, which now makes the ChemMasters line of construction

materials. In 1968, the Phoenix Oil name was changed to the Murphy-Phoenix Co., to reflect the company's products, which were then about evenly divided between the household cleaner and industrial compounds.

In the mid-1970s, Murlan's four sons - Jerry, Ray, Paul, and Brian - realized that in order for the company to grow Murphy-Phoenix needed a plan to sell its products beyond Ohio and the surrounding states. Paul was pursuing an MBA at the time, and for his thesis he created a marketing strategy to expand the company's products nationally. The company implemented the strategy that soon made Murphy's Oil Soap the third leading household cleaning product in the country.

In 1991, the family sold the Murphy's Oil Soap brand to Colgate/Palmolive Co. The sale enabled the company to diversify its product line, and the family to support local community endeavors through the Murphy Family Foundation. Since then, what was once the Murphy-Phoenix Company is now JTM Products, and what was once the Spray-Cure Company is now ChemMasters, Inc. The two companies are operated by the fifth generation of the Murphy family, under the leadership of Paul Murphy and his sons, Patrick and Paul Jr. Family continues to be a priority for the company, and the Murphy family takes pride that multiple generations have worked there over the years. Using the knowledge and expertise handed down for more than a century, the Murphy family continues to provide lubricants and construction materials, with production facilities in Solon and Madison.

Above: Founder Jeremiah Murphy. Below: Paul Murphy with sons Paul Jr. and Patrick standing before a portrait of Paul Sr.'s father, Murlan J. Murphy