



George Kent Home Improvements Celebrates 65 Years!

**Standing the
Test of Time
Since 1949.**

Above, Left to right: Current co-owner Paul Travis, recent retiree Al Stokes (87), company founder George Kent (90) and current co-owner Wayne Palmer.

Survival is the ultimate challenge for any new venture. But perhaps George Kent had a feeling that 1949 was going to be a good year when he opened the doors to his new business. Newfoundland joined the Confederation and the Leafs swept Detroit to win the Stanley Cup. Kent started the company a few years after returning from the war, having been in the Canadian Navy during WW II. He began his entrepreneurial career as a contractor, selling aluminum siding, storm windows and doors. In no time, he expanded the business to include roofing and insulation; and not too long after, he

began manufacturing his own windows and doors.

Founders of businesses often have a motto or expression that becomes an integral part of the company's approach to business. George Kent had his.

"... always believed that many competitors failed because they forgot to take care of their customers ..."

"Treat your customer with respect, offer quality products and workmanship at a fair price and the rest would take care of itself."

Apparently competitors did not heed his message. Kent always believed that many of them failed because "they forgot to take care of their customers." Many followed Kent's philosophy, including his suppliers. One of them was Wayne Palmer.

“I knew George Kent as a customer for 40 years. I sold him windows in my capacity as general manager of Alcan Building Products,” (known today as Gentek Building Products).

Five years ago, Palmer purchased the company with his partner Paul Travis. “Paul’s experience was in exteriors and roofing. Mine was in windows, doors

“... hiring the best people in the industry is what sets us apart ...”

and siding. Our experiences complemented each other.”

According to Palmer, there have been major developments in the quality of all products, including windows, doors, roofing and insulation and especially relating to energy efficiency. The company prides itself on staying on top of industry changes and providing the best products to customers at competitive prices.

For example, “Neat” glass (solar activated) windows, according to product descriptions, practically clean

themselves. “It’s like having self-cleaning windows,” says Palmer. Cardinal Neat® glass coating is applied to glass during production to reduce the need for frequent exterior window cleaning. The coating is activated by sunlight and breaks down organic materials, such as dust and other airborne particles, resulting in a much cleaner surface.

Laminated sound reduction glass, twelve times stronger than a standard pane of glass, is used where security is needed as protection against unwanted guests. It also improves sound reduction by 25% and significantly reduces ultraviolet rays.

What sets the company apart from competitors?

“We hire the best people in the industry, from our corporate staff and sales teams, to our installation and service technicians.” says Palmer. Presently, there are thirteen active sales people



George Kent during the Toronto subway construction.

(referred to as estimators), including 85-year old Bruce MacDonald. Another estimator, Al Stokes, recently retired.

Many product features are unique. Primed FG jambs and casing trim are one example. Most competitors do not prime the wood. A Fly Maze feature, which keeps insects from entering the

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home, is not available on many competitive windows. A maintenance free vinyl trim package eliminates painting. Energy Star certification covers Zone C or D in Northern Canada; and homeowners actually have the option to use foam-filled frames and sashes as a way to further increase energy efficiency.

Recently, the company embarked on a private label program. Available to



Using moving billboards to promote the company’s windows and doors.

dealers in select geographical areas, it features the EverView branded window.

What defines its products and services are the extensive warranties behind them. Compared to one-year warranties on labor from big box stores and five-year warranties from many competitors, “we are the only company in the Greater Toronto Area to offer a lifetime warranty on the original window installation and the windows,” says Palmer. There is a similar warranty for roofing. What makes these warranties possible is a strong emphasis on proper training. All installers have completed industry training courses, such as Window Wise or the GAF

Master Elite Roofing program.

“We have watched many of our competitors come and go over the years, leaving many customers without proper warranties. Our commitment is to quality installations and to providing our customers with the best products on the market,” adds Palmer who points out that more than 80,000 installations have been completed since the doors were opened.

Today, the company offers home improvement services for the entire Greater Toronto Area from Peterborough to Uxbridge, to Oshawa, Newmarket, Orangeville, Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Brampton, Woodbridge, Mississauga and Etobicoke.

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Doors supplied by George Kent Home Improvement, Mississauga, Ontario

It all began in 1949, a year of celebrations, from a Stanley Cup at a national level to the start of a small company at a very local level. This year will be remembered, among other things, for two momentous milestones, a double-header of sorts, linked by longevity and success. Company founder George Kent, a new member of the elite group of nonagenarians, celebrates ninety years of life while the company he founded, George Kent Home Improvement, celebrates sixty-five years of service.

