

## Chamber Centarians

### STATE CHAMBER MEMBERS CELEBRATE THEIR 100TH YEAR IN BUSINESS

» It must have been an exciting time to start a business 100 years ago. 1919 saw the end of the First World War, the death of Theodore Roosevelt, enactment of prohibition and the passing of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. The first automated pop-up toaster was invented, and the Grand Canyon National Park was established that same year. In the local markets, average pricing for three pounds of chicken was 19 cents, a pound of butter was 39 cents and the price of a U.S. postage stamp rose from 2 cents to 3 cents. Many important things happened a century ago: history was made, groundbreaking ideas were born, and businesses were launched. We caught up with six State Chamber members who celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2019.



#### Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce

The year 1919 saw the establishment of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC), originally incorporated as the Dover Chamber of Commerce. In the 100 years since then, the CDCC, created as a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian, apolitical corporate entity, has become THE essential resource for the development of businesses in Central Delaware. Through its 76+ programs, activities and events in the areas of

education, marketing, networking and legislation, the CDCC has continued to advance the balanced economic development of Central Delaware by promoting civic, industrial, commercial, agri-business and social interests of the community, and by strengthening the freedom of private business to operate competitively for profit with minimal governmental regulation.

While no one is certain of what the next 100 years will bring, we do know that the CDCC, the only 5-star Accredited Chamber in Delaware, will continue to serve middle Delaware, creating connections among leaders in the business community and encouraging them to grow and thrive. Visit [www.cdcc.net](http://www.cdcc.net) to learn more.



#### Easterseals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore

All Abilities. Limitless Possibilities. Easterseals has built a one-hundred-year legacy as a powerful advocate and innovative provider of disability services. Easterseals began in 1919 after its founder, Edgar Allen, lost his son in a streetcar accident. Troubled by the lack of adequate local resources, Allen dedicated his life to creating community-based services for children with disabilities. As a result of his vision, and with the help of a nationwide partnership with Rotary, a network of organizations who change the world of children and

adults with disabilities and their families every day has grown.

Here at Easterseals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore, we are excited for our next chapter as we continue to grow to serve more children and adults with disabilities, veterans and seniors who need our services. Whether it's helping young children meet developmental milestones through children's therapies, supporting young adults with disabilities in the workplace, helping seniors to remain living in their own home or helping caregivers get needed respite, Easterseals continues to be the "go-to" resource for innovative solutions to help people of all ages and all abilities gain greater independence throughout their lifetime. Learn more at [www.de.easterseals.com](http://www.de.easterseals.com).



#### GE Aviation

GE Aviation celebrated its 100-year anniversary in July 2019. The local Newark, DE facility traces its roots in the community and technological innovations back to 1987. In 2007, the facility became part of the GE Aviation family. Over its history, the site has played a key role in "reimagining flight," the 100-year anniversary's slogan, through their production of Silicon Carbide (SiC) Ceramic Matrix Composites (CMC).

Today the site of 300+ employees produces 100% of the SiC CMC material for GE engine applications. If it's a SiC

CMC in a GE Aviation engine, then it was made from material manufactured in Newark, DE. The site also produces hardware used in GE engines during FAA certification testing and for many commercial and military applications.

GE Aviation is honored to be a part of the Delaware community. GE Aviation - Newark is proud of the role it plays to advance materials technology for commercial and military aviation.



#### Junior Achievement of Delaware

Junior Achievement of Delaware is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of Junior Achievement in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1919. Modeled after 4-H, Junior Achievement began as a way for teens to learn first-hand how to be productive workers in the shops and factories of Springfield by understanding how business works. Today, like 100 years ago, young people all across the country and around the world run their own student enterprises in the JA Company Program®.

Infused with technology and lean start-up methodology, the new JA Company Program is engaging over 1,000 Delaware students this year at corporate host sites like CSC and Microsoft; CBO's like Christina Cultural Arts Center; high schools like Delmar, Sussex Tech, Lake Forest, Caesar Rodney, Dover, First State Military Academy, Smyrna, Middletown, Appo, Freire, Mt. Pleasant, Brandywine, Concord; at Waters, Reading and Meredith Middle Schools; and at Ferris School.

Annually, more than 17,000 local K-12 students engage with JA volunteers at

every grade level, including: JA Finance Park®, which increases student value for education while meeting middle grades Financial Literacy Standards; JA BizTown® introduces students to the world of work and Delaware Pathways; and JA Company Program addresses Delaware Growth Agenda Strategy 1.7 around Youth Entrepreneurship.



#### Keen Compressed Gas Company

Stanley Keen established Keen Auto Parts in 1919 on Market Street in north Wilmington. The company provided car parts and equipment, including the small acetylene cylinders used for headlights in the early days of the automobile. In the 1930s and 1940s the welding supplies and cylinder gases took on greater significance in the business. The company was incorporated as Keen Compressed Gas Company in 1946.

In 1965, J. Merrill Keen, the youngest of Stanley's 13 children, took over as president and ran the business until 2000. He took a more aggressive approach to expanding the business. In 1969, he spearheaded the acquisition of Anchor Welding Supply, tripling the size of the company. Over the next few decades, Keen became a major regional distributor with 14 branch locations that supply welding machines, welding supplies, industrial, medical and specialty gases to the Mid-Atlantic region.

Today the company is managed by third generation siblings, Kim, Jon and Bryan Keen with many other family members involved as well. In 2019, Keen completed a \$6MM expansion,

including a new gas fill plant. The plant expands the company's capabilities and will keep them competitive with bigger competitors. Their "Total Customer Satisfaction" motto and new plant has Keen positioned for success leading into their second millennium. Visit [www.KeenGas.com](http://www.KeenGas.com) for more information.



#### Kuehne Company

Kuehne is very proud of attaining 100 years in the chlor-alkali business. In 1919, Karl Kuehne started the business making bleach in his Newark, NJ bathtub selling it door-to-door in his neighborhood. Through his hard work and focus on fostering relationships, the business continued to grow and in 1965, with the help of his son and our 2nd owner Peter Kuehne, Kuehne built its first chlor-alkali plant in Elizabeth, NJ. This started a period of rapid growth and M&A activity where the company moved to Linden, NJ in 1972, purchased the Marzhal Company in Kearny, NJ in 1979 (our current home base), and then in 1989 purchased the Chloromone Company and their facility in New Castle, DE. This led to ambitious investments building a first of its kind Brine to Bleach (BTB) electrolysis process in Delaware in 1998. Under our 3rd and current owner, Ronda Kuehne, the company has continued to expand constructing its 2nd BTB plant in Kearny in 2015, and then our most recent M&A acquiring the BTB assets of New Haven Chlor-Alkali in New Haven, CT in 2019. With this growth, we proudly service the Mid-Atlantic region with these chlor-alkali products from Maine to Virginia. Learn more at [www.KuehneCompany.com](http://www.KuehneCompany.com).