

To Come Full Circle
By Shelly (Tarson) Wolfe

The phrase to “come full circle” is the first thought I have when thinking about my family’s business in 2009. The economic climate is tough, but for some, hard times bring opportunity. We may not recognize this at first, but the time to begin a new career, or to pursue a long desired dream may be right now. For many it will also be the time to begin a business of their own. That was the case with my grandfather, Francesco Taurrazzo, aka “Frank Tarson” over seventy-five years ago.

An immigrant from Italy, my grandfather began our family business during the Great Depression. It began simply as one man mixing bleach in a bathtub in his home on Burnet Ave., and delivering it to housewives on the North Side of Syracuse. At the time he was an out of work auto mechanic with six kids to feed, and he was determined to provide for them. Tough time demanded hard work and he was the quintessential entrepreneur.

My father, Bob Tarson, grew up with this work ethic, and joined his father in the business when he was very young. In his early twenties, my father added paper products to the growing list of laundry items, and the business, known as “Tarson Supply”, grew from there. My mother, Joan, joined the business when she married my father in 1954, and her ideas and skills propelled the small company even further. She added swimming pool chemicals to our product line, and set up our first tiny store in the late 1960’s, right next to where my father grew up.

Our business grew rapidly after that, and now many people recognize the name “Tarson Pools & Spas”. We have six pool stores in Central New York, along with “Tarson Paper & Janitorial”, the business that started it all.

During the current economic climate I think about how my grandfather persevered, and turned hard times to his advantage. I know my family must now do the same to compete in a world that is so different from where he began. It is our strength as a family that has seen us through to the fourth generation, and keeps us evolving and changing with the times.

I don’t think he could have predicted it, but I know my grandfather would be proud.

As published in the New York Family Business Center inaugural edition of *Relatively Speaking* (June/July 2009)