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Polo Park's 50 Year Veterans

Winnipeg, Manitoba, August 17, 2009: 50 years after first opening businesses in what was then the brand-new Polo Park Shopping Centre, three Winnipeg entrepreneurs and their families continue to serve their loyal customers.

About Broadway Florists

Broadway Florists in the Polo Park Shopping Centre was the second location opened by founder Ernest Cholakis (Sr.). A family business from the start, he assigned the task of running the new store to his sons, John, Harry, Paul and Chris.

The Cholakis brothers worked in the shop serving customers for four decades. The family tradition passed to the next generation when Paul's sons, Ernest and Costa, took over the day-to-day operation of the store in the 1990's. To this day, Paul remains an active member of the store's team during key floral-giving occasions.

Still in its original location 50 years later, Broadway Florists and the Cholakis family continue to bring their entrepreneurial spirit and floral expertise to Polo Park and its customers.

About Fashionette Hair Stylists

Helga Valousek and partner Margot Peckett opened Fashionette Hair Stylists in Polo Park Shopping Centre in 1959. The two stylists, well-known in the Greater Winnipeg area, brought with them a strong clientele seeking the latest services in hairstyling, colouring and coldwaving.

Helga became the sole proprietor of the salon in the mid 1960's. Her daughter Peggy joined her mother in running the business side of the salon in 1990.

Celebrating her 50th Anniversary in Polo Park, Helga is still actively styling hair for many of her long-term clients.



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About Mario's Beauty Salon

In 1959, Mario Zava chose Polo Park Shopping Centre as the site for his third Winnipeg-based salon.

Born in Italy, Mario started apprenticing in his chosen profession at the age of 8. After eight years of working seven afternoons a week without pay, Mario was given his first client to style. He had found his calling and has never looked back.

When Mario opened his new salon in Polo Park, he brought to the centre an established reputation and clientele. He was the type of entrepreneur that the fledgling shopping centre needed to get itself started.

50 years later, Mario has not lost his passion for cutting and styling hair. He can still be found in his salon, helping young stylists learn their trade and working with clients.

50 Years in Review

In the 50 years since Polo Park's official Grand Opening on August 20, 2009 there have been many milestones that make up the shopping centre's history.

March 29, 1954 – Simpson-Sears and the Polo Park Centre Ltd, led by David Slater, sign an agreement with J. Speers to purchase the land on which the Polo Park Race Track operates.

1956 – The Race Track is demolished in preparation for the construction of the new Polo Park Shopping Centre.

May 6, 1959 – Simpson-Sears opens a new department store that will combine its retail and catalogue operations under one roof.

August 20, 1959 – Polo Park Shopping Centre officially opens with a three-day, family-oriented extravaganza.



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September 16, 1963 – Cemp Investments /Fairview Shopping Centre Ltd., having acquired controlling interest in Polo Park Shopping Centre, makes a joint announcement with Simpson-Sears Ltd. that they will build a roof to enclose the shopping centre’s common area plazas. It is the first shopping centre in Canada to undertake such an improvement and it will be achieved without disrupting regular shopping.

1966 through 1969 – The concrete sidewalks are resurfaced with terrazzo style flooring.

1968 – Polo Park undergoes its first major renovation and expansion to make way for a two-level Eaton’s store. The two existing grocery stores, Dominion and Loblaws, are moved to new locations constructed on the east side of the shopping centre.

1978 – A renovation puts “the park in Polo Park” with the addition of skylights, 18’ trees, an abundance of hanging plants and a new Centre Court pool with a feature fountain.

1984 – Polo Park Shopping Centre celebrates its 25th Anniversary.

August 13, 1986 – A second level has been added to the Polo Park without customers having missed a single shopping day. The achievement is celebrated with a Grand Re-Opening.

2007 – Polo Park embarks on a renovation and expansion that adds 20,000 square feet of additional space over two levels.

August 20, 2009 – Polo Park celebrates its 50th Anniversary.

Editor’s Note: Photos available upon request.

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