

## **Quincy Memorials**

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**Monumental changes**

## ENTREPRENEUR

# Monumental changes

Quincy Memorials Inc.

### Next generation helps drive growth for family-owned business

BY SEAN MCFADDEN  
JOURNAL STAFF

**A**s monument dealers, the Poirier family of Quincy Memorials Inc. has been engaged in the practice of providing lasting memorials for their customers' loved ones for 30 years.

Now, with a new generation firmly in the operational mix, the company — whose products include a variety of monuments, mausoleums, granite and bronze markers, and related services — is also paying close attention to its own legacy.

"They've taken our company into the 21st century," says owner/general manager Yves Poirier, 54, of sons Jeffrey and Bryan, who joined the company on a full-time basis in 2005 and 2007, respectively.

In fact, the brothers are making their own impression on the business in ways that go deeper than the lettering and engraving of stones the company is noted for.

"Our sales were looking like they were plateauing," Jeffrey says, looking back to several years ago. "So, we realized that some changes needed to be made."

Revenue for the eight-person company, which operates retail locations in Quincy, Kingston and Waltham, came in at about \$1.19 million in 2008. The Poiriers estimate the operation served approximately 900 customers last year. This year, they are

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projecting revenue will be between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million.

Jeffrey, 27, who holds a degree in

management from the **Ishenberg School of Management** at **UMass Amherst**, has been focused on business development and is leading a business-to-business networking effort through his involvement with such area organizations as the **South Shore Chamber of Commerce**, **Quincy Business Council** and **Quincy Lions Club**.

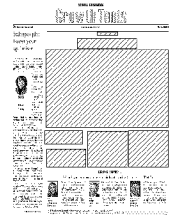
**Peter Forman**, president of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, says, "Jeff understands that, particularly in his business, it's all about relationships. It's not just quick sales. It's about being someone who's a trusted face. He's discovered working with other community leaders is a good way to increase his company's brand identity."

Bryan, 28, who earned a degree in marketing from **Bentley College**, has taken on responsibility for the company's marketing and sales operations.

The Poiriers' marketing endeavors have included adding their faces to their business cards and revamping the company's logo and brochures. They have also made major upgrades to the company's Web site, [www.quincymemorials.com](http://www.quincymemorials.com).

Another initiative concerns the launch of a "pre-need" division last year. That service enables customers to order a monument or memorial in advance of a loved one's death, or as part of estate planning.

"The pre-need division was developed because, in light of the current economy, people realize they can't rely on their earnings throughout the year



to be safe," says Jeffrey. "It helps people prepare for the future."

Sales from the pre-need division currently constitute about 5 percent of their business, say the Poiriers. The family is actively meeting with funeral home directors, estate attorneys and Medicaid

consultants to obtain referrals for that division.

Another possible area for growth concerns the diversification of the markets Quincy Memorials serves with its products: It supplies civic monuments for local, state and federal governments. It also provides pet memorials, signage for businesses and, more recently, executive nameplates and granite mailbox posts. The company has also gotten into more diverse customization options, such as porcelain portraits and custom etchings.

Says Yves, "It's all about building traffic for the future."

Quincy Memorials was founded in 1950 by the **Ricciardi** family. The business was purchased in 1979 by Yves Poirier and his wife, **Donna**.

**John Keohane**, co-president of **Keohane Funeral & Cremation Service**, based in Quincy, attributes Quincy Memorial's longevity to "their personal service and attention to detail. ... They stand behind what they're doing."

While business has remained steady over the years, the Poiriers acknowledge there are ongoing challenges.

For one thing, the brothers say, the company tends to do about 80 percent of its business from March through November. During the typical winter slowdown, the company works on its business strategy.

The Poiriers add there is a high level of competition, with more than 40 other companies operating inside its primary service area within Interstate 495.

Additionally, says Jeffrey, because of the economic downturn, "we're finding that people are either putting off purchasing a monument, or they're price-shopping more often."

A more pressing concern is what the Poiriers have observed to be an increase in cremation.

"We need to educate the consumer about the importance of memorialization," says Bryan. "And, from the smaller pool of people that are getting memorials, we need to get more of those people."

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## FAST FACTS

**Quincy Memorials Inc.** was founded in 1950 by the Ricciardi family. It was purchased in 1979 by Yves and Donna Poirier.

**The Poiriers' sons**, Jeffrey and Bryan, joined the business on a full-time basis in 2005 and 2007, respectively.

**The business served** an estimated 900 customers in 2008.



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The principals of Quincy Memorials include, from left, brothers Jeffrey Poirier and Bryan Poirier and father Yves Poirier.