

MARSDEN BUILDING MAINTENANCE

One Philosophy One Mission



SKIP MARSDEN

By Lisa Kopochinski, *Services Editor*

MARSDEN BUILDING MAINTENANCE (MBM) HAS achieved great success since its inception in 1952 in St. Paul, MN. The company, along with its eight cleaning and security entities under the Marsden Holding, L.L.C. umbrella, comprises one of the largest privately owned building services company in the United States.

Marsden Holding provides a variety of services such as routine and specialty janitorial services, facility maintenance services, uniformed guard and specialty security services.

With an annual sales volume of more than \$200 million, 43 offices nationwide in 28 states, and more than 8,000 employees, it's all more than founder Adrian "Skip" Marsden could have ever visualized. Marsden, 80, started the company 57 years ago – out of the trunk of his car – with one mission: to fully satisfy customers with excellent value and responsive service. "The philosophy was to treat the employee fairly and treat the customer fairly. That was the philosophy then and that's the philosophy today."

Giving Back

"We are committed to giving back to the community and actively seek opportunities where our clients and employees live

and work," he says. "When people work together, great things happen." Indeed they do. The company gives back to the community in many ways. Besides the 10 percent of its pretax profit donated to various charities, MBM donates time and salaried staff to help repair homes for the elderly and the disabled through the Hearts and Hammers Project in the Twin Cities among others; makes afghans for homeless children; and is heavily involved in Ronald McDonald Christmas gift donations.

"Our goal is to enrich and build a stronger community by creating educational and economic opportunity, particularly for people who are economically disadvantaged," explains Marsden. "We work with community partners who understand the need of individuals, families, and organizations, and match our resources with those community needs."

Besides Goodwill/Easter Seals, MBM is also involved in numerous other organizations such as the YMCA, and many educational facilities such as the Hope Academy; Minneapolis Grandview College in Des Moines, IA; the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; the Carpenter Nature Center in Hastings, MN, a private non-profit preserve and environmental educational facility; Hope for the City in Minnetonka, a charity that uses corporate surplus as a tool to fight poverty, hunger and disease worldwide; Lutheran Social Services in Minneapolis; Minneapolis and LifeTrack Resources in St. Paul, a community-based service organization to help people overcome multiple obstacles such as physical and mental disabilities, poverty, lack of education, trauma and isolation; and CornerHouse, an Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center in Minneapolis.

Humble Beginnings

It would have been impossible for Marsden to have foreseen his great success when he started out in the early 1950s. A native of St. Paul, he was the sole owner and employee of MBM at that time. His first accounts included International Harvester on University Avenue in St. Paul. His second account was Skelly Oil, which was his "showplace" at the time due to the tile floors in the entrance that he kept very shiny. "I was the inventor of spray buffing," he says. "That's how I kept the floors so shiny!" After that, spray buffing became the international standard to maintain resilient and terrazzo tile floors.

Marsden also says that it was his early experience as a bellhop – where he relied on tips – that provided a great learning ground for starting his own company. "We kept our first account for 46 years," he says. "I only lost it because they went into bankruptcy and someone else bought them out. I also have one customer I've had for 50 years. Our product is really our people. If you work hard and treat your employees and customers fairly, you can't help but be successful."