

AS SEEN IN

GREATER • BATON ROUGE  
**Business  
Report**

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

## Lyons Specialty Company

ESTABLISHED 1923



(From left) Nicholas Raetzsch, Jane Dunlap, Hugh Raetzsch Jr., Betsy Raetzsch, Matthew Raetzsch, Wilson Raetzsch

### HISTORY

*In 1945, LSU auditor William E. Davis, Sr. began selling 10-cent pecan rolls to local stores from the storage room behind his garage. He named his side business Baton Rouge Wholesale Candy Company.*

*The next year, he purchased Lyons Specialty Company, which had been founded in 1923, from the owner's widow for \$7690.61, leaving Davis just \$75 in the business bank account. He continued operating under the Lyons name in order to keep the company's existing customers. Davis' grandson Hugh Raetzsch Jr. is CEO of the company today.*

### WHAT VALUES OR PRINCIPLES GUIDE YOUR BUSINESS?

For a family to work together successfully, everyone must pull their own weight. When I began working in the business over 30 years ago, I was given an opportunity by my grandfather and my mother, Jane Dunlap. It was my job to make the most of that opportunity. Now that my kids are entering the business, they have the same opportunity.

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO WORK WITH FAMILY?

Early on in my career was a difficult time. There were some strained relationships and even today, there are scars from those times. But over the last couple of years as my two older sons have graduated from college and entered the business, it has been extremely rewarding. I feel very fortunate to see my kids every day and share the successes of running a 100-year-old family business. Not many people get that opportunity. It is truly special.

### HOW HAS YOUR BUSINESS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

So much has changed compared to when I began in the business over 30 years ago. One of our core values is adaptability ... it has been key to our success and the success of our customers. What's important to our customers today is different than it was just a few years ago and what will be important to them five years from now.

### WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR YOUR COMPANY?

We completed an expansion project in 2018 which doubled the size of our warehouse and office. This gives us the necessary space and added efficiencies to more than triple our current sales at our existing facility. We will continue to focus on growing our food service category, growing our MAX12 customer membership program, and growing our Marketing Advantage Monthly in-store marketing program.