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IN PERSON

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QUESTIONS FOR | GREG BLAINE AND GINNIE BLAINE

CO-OWNERS,
CONTINENTAL VAN LINES INC.



BUSINESS JOURNAL PHOTO | Don Schlatter

IN THE FAMILY: Greg and Ginnie Blaine, siblings and second generation owners of Continental Van Lines Inc. in Seattle.

Brother and sister team Greg Blaine and Ginnie Blaine are co-owners of Continental Van Lines Inc., a privately held moving and storage business started by their parents in 1951, with offices in Seattle, Tacoma and Anchorage, Alaska. Continental recently switched its affiliation from Allied Van Lines to being agents for and shareholders of UniGroup Inc.

HOW IS IT, BEING CO-OWNERS OF SUCH A BIG COMPANY WITH YOUR SIBLING?

GREG: We had really good parents who mentored us. We watched them both work here. They taught us that you work together, help each other, and live our lives so that we respect each other, both at and away from work.

GINNIE: Respectful not only of each other, but of our staff as well. We learned you can disagree in private, but always agree with each other in public... And now we have a third generation on board — Greg's 26-year-old son Joseph, who is our operations manager in Seattle and doing an excellent job.

WHAT INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS DO YOU EACH BRING TO THE TABLE?

GREG: My strengths are in the operations side of our business — the trucks, the crews, the management of hard assets.

GINNIE: Sales is a big part of my strengths. Also human relations and communications. What he writes is caustic and I make it nice.

HOW MANY TRUCKS DO YOU HAVE IN THE FLEET?

GREG: We have about 100 moving vehicles within Continental.

GINNIE: And in changing our national affiliation from

Allied Van Lines to being agents for and shareholders of UniGroup Inc., we have just repainted all of our (trucks) from orange to a white background with yellow and green lettering.

WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR AFFILIATION WITH ALLIED?

GINNIE: The parent company of Allied Van Lines had a deteriorating financial condition, and our desire for the long term was to be affiliated with a financially strong, operationally capable domestic van line. We achieved that with UniGroup (Mayflower), and we are not only affiliates, we are shareholders.

DOES YOUR REACH GROW WITH YOUR NEW AFFILIATION WITH THE MULTIBILLION-DOLLAR WORLDWIDE UNIGROUP INC.?

GREG: With UniGroup, which is the parent company of Mayflower and United Van Lines, we add a sizable international moving division. We move people all over the world.

YOU BRING SOME MAJOR CUSTOMERS TO UNIGROUP.

GREG: Some of our biggest corporate customers are Boeing, Eddie Bauer, and Alaska Airlines.

GINNIE: We also have a big residential sales division. And government and military is a huge part of what we do. The distribution of military and government

traffic is very complex.

TELL US ABOUT SOME OF YOUR MORE UNUSUAL MOVES.

GREG: Well, we moved a research scientist from Alaska to Wyoming. He was also a big game hunter. He had killed one of every animal on the planet and had them displayed in his house. It was 75 crates of taxidermy animals alone, and \$100,000 worth of crating.

GINNIE: There were animals from every continent, including a full-sized giraffe. (The job) manager said she's never seen such carnage in her life. It was like moving a museum.

ANYTHING ELSE COME TO MIND?

GINNIE: Over the years we have thousands of stories. But one couple recently moved from their multimillion-dollar, two-floor penthouse in (Seattle's) Belltown to the jungles of Thailand.

GREG: And we have a lot of moves in very cold temperatures, at least 30 (degrees below). You have to be very careful because liquids will vaporize.

GINNIE: If you were to toss a cup of tea into the air, it would instantly turn into ice particles and hit the ground in solid form.

—Interview conducted and condensed by
PATTI PAYNE

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