

## Young Entrepreneur Moving Quickly

**BY HAL STOKES**  
**POTSDAM**—Recession, stagflation, tight mortgage money, inflation. All are words that might send chills up the spine of any small-businessman, whether he lives in the North Country or not.  
 More and more in today's economy the business that are prospering and growing are the ones that are run by bright, perceptive individuals who know their market, are quick to spot a trend, and are equally quick to respond.  
 There is one entrepreneur who has done those things with particular success in the Potsdam and Canton areas. He is Richard Cassara, a native of the Bronx who came to Canton 10 years ago as a graduate assistant at St. Lawrence University, bought his first business in 1973, and has since parlayed his earnings into several other ventures.  
 Never heard of him, you say? Did you ever hear of the Tick Tock restaurant in Canton? That's his. So is the North Country Manor Apartments in Potsdam. So is the Alpha Chi Rho fraternity house in Potsdam. And the apartments and storefront that used to be Toastie's Ice Cream Store in Potsdam. And Morgan's Soup and Sandwich restaurant in Potsdam. And Morgan's Soup, Sandwich, and Ice Cream Factory in Canton. And so on.

During 1979 in particular, he acquired a number of pieces of property in the Potsdam and Canton areas.  
**"Hard Work"**  
 Just who is Rick Cassara and how does he do it? "It's hard work; a lot of good luck," he said during an interview. Basically, as he explained it, he has successfully accomplished what many businessmen seek to do: invest in ventures that return enough profit so that he can turn around and invest in other things. It's apparently the free-enterprise dream: money making money.  
 The 37-year-old former coach and teacher talks in a rapid-fire staccato, like a man who has a lot of things on his mind and a lot to say.  
 "I've got a lot of money invested in this area, I've committed myself to the area," he said.  
 Indeed he has. According to St. Lawrence County records, he owns something like 20 parcels of property in the Canton-Potsdam-Colton area and pays over \$13,000 in property taxes annually. In the 5½-month period between May 2 and Oct. 15, 1979 he bought five parcels for an estimated outlay of \$319,800, according to rough figures in the county clerk's records.  
 Cassara doesn't really like to talk

about what he owns or what it is worth, but he will admit, "As an individual I pay a lot of taxes in Potsdam."  
 And while he attributes his success to "a matter of being in the right places at the right time," he does not discount the fact that he works at it. "Nobody that knows me would say I'm not a worker," he said with a smile.  
**"I Determine My Own Destiny"**  
 He obviously enjoys the responsibility of being his own boss. "When I came here in 1969, I didn't have enough money to get my furniture off the truck," he said. But he worked at it. "I have great faith in myself," he continued. "I determine my own destiny," and he added, "Anybody has the chance to do it."  
 Educated at high school in Eldred, N.Y., and in college at St. Bonaventure, he worked for a time as a teacher in North Country before coming to Canton and St. Lawrence University as a graduate assistant in the football and basketball programs. He was varsity coach at SLU until 1973, the same year that he purchased the Tick Tock from Tony Scatena. Cassara also bought five parcels for an estimated outlay of \$319,800, according to rough figures in the county clerk's records.  
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things for myself," he said.  
 Today, the Cassara family lives at 6 Stillman Drive in Canton. His wife, Patricia, is also from Eldred and used to be manager of the computer center at Clarkson College. Their children are a daughter, Sybil Lee, 4, and a son, Morgan, 6.  
 It is after their son that the two Morgan's restaurants were named. Cassara opened Morgan's Soup and Sandwich in Potsdam first, then on Aug. 13 of last year he purchased the former Ralph's Restaurant in Canton and turned it into Morgan's Soup, Sandwich, and Ice Cream Factory. A great deal of community attention was focused on his progress with Ralph's because he removed a blue and orange facade that had hidden for years the brickwork of the original building. That came at a time when a consulting firm was examining the appearance of Canton's downtown storefronts and recommending returning to the original Victorian look. Of that move, Cassara said, "I'm not an antique buff," but he indicated the renovation was an effort to make his place more conducive to business and to cater to the tastes of his customers.  
 Are we likely to see a third Morgan's or possibly a chain of Morgan's opening in the county? Cassara dismissed that notion, but he added, "I'm not saying we wouldn't open another one if the opportunity arises." In the meantime, he continues to improve upon what he has. At Morgan's in Potsdam, for example, he recently opened the downstairs "Saloon," a concept designed to provide his customers with a late-night, after-hours bite to eat and a place for parties and banquets.  
**Business Climate**  
 Taking a look at the business climate in St. Lawrence County, Cassara said that small businesses today are facing great pressures and high operating costs. "Potsdam isn't what it was ten years ago," he said. "I think only the strong are going to survive."  
 But he finished on an optimistic note. "There's always a place for any smart person... especially if you're the best. We think we're the best."



**SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN**—Rick Cassara, owner of Morgan's restaurants and several other income properties throughout the county, is shown here outside his Potsdam establishment. "Hard work" and "good luck" are his two basic ingredients for success, he says. (Hal Stokes Photo)

## Potsdam State Sets Sights High

**POTSDAM**—Under a young and vigorous administration, State University College at Potsdam marches optimistically into the 1980s bearing a new name, upholding a new motto and waving a new flag.  
 The final year of the seventies brought considerable progress and acclaim to "Potsdam College of Arts and Sciences," as it will now be known formally, or "Potsdam College" for short.  
 Events like the winning of second place in its division in the nation by the men's basketball team and the selection of the college's Crane School of Music to provide all ceremonial music for the 1980 Winter Olympics are doing much to spread Potsdam's name as a quality institution throughout the United States and beyond.  
 Dr. James H. Young, who launched his second year as president of Potsdam College in the fall, has made it known that Potsdam College's goal is to become "the best college of its type in America" and to make its quality known throughout the land.

excellence" which now graces the college seal and college flag.  
 The primacy of academics at Potsdam was underscored by Dr. Young when he changed Dr. Thomas Hegarty's title from "vice-president for academic affairs," to "vice-president and provost."  
**Financially Better**  
 The year 1979 was one of the better years for Potsdam College financially, with minimal budget restraints imposed by Albany during the year. As 1979 ended, however, Potsdam and all units of the State University of New York, began looking for ways to accommodate impending budget cuts which have been threatened over the next two or three years. Such outlooks, Dr. Young has pointed out, underscore the need for the college to focus on planning and development of additional and more fully utilized resources of all types.  
 In his first address to faculty and staff members of the new decade, Dr. Young recalled that in the 1950s and 60s, higher education embraced "bigness" and "grandness" as the greatest objective and resources seemed limitless. The financial difficulties of the 70s demonstrated the short-sightedness of such an outlook and taught the value of longrange and careful planning, Young noted.  
 He said that the type of intensive evaluation and planning in which Potsdam College has been engaged for the past year and a half will be its guarantee of "quality" in the 1980s. Quality is becoming "the standard" again, he added.  
 The college is also striving, as Dr. Young expressed it, "to remove all possible irritants to learning" from the campus environment. A major step in this direction was taken through the reorganization of the former division of student affairs into the division of environmental and student development, merging the facilities office with the offices which deal directly with student needs. In addition, most offices within this division have been, or soon will be, moved to Sisson Hall to make them more accessible within the residential portion of the campus.  
 These moves and others yet to come are tied closely to outcomes of continuous intensive planning strategies involving all segments of the Potsdam College community since President Young's arrival in 1978. The college completed its "Campus Mission Statement"—a statement of what the college sees itself being and becoming—and is well into the development of its "Mission Action Plan"—an outline of the ways it will fulfill its mission over the next five years or so.

freedom of an environment, relatively free of irritants to learning.  
 Pledging that the college will free its educational offerings of "the clutter of outdated and outmoded programs and courses, purging those ingredients that are no longer useful, while strengthening those which fit the definition and enthusiastically adding those which offer enrichment."  
**Aeon Distributors Notes Good Year For Insulation**  
**POTSDAM**—As the cost of heating the house continues to rise, people will undoubtedly become concerned with insulating their dwelling, and perhaps upgrading their heating systems.  
 And that should be good business for Aeon Distributors, Outer Market Street, Potsdam, a family business that specializes in home and commercial insulation, installation of residential and commercial heating systems and sales, rental, and servicing of water softeners.  
 Incorporated in 1959 by husband and wife Win and Fran Murray, Butternut Ridge Road, the business now includes their sons Rod (he is the manager) and Bob. The couple have a third son, Richard, who is operating a farm in this area and two married daughters, Ruby Minozzi of Rochester and Rose Straszynski of Princeton, N.J.  
 "The trend is toward wood," said Mrs. Murray of the current heating situation in the North Country. Aeon Distributors keeps up with that trend by offering wood-burning furnaces and combination wood-oil or wood-gas furnaces. The firm also sells and installs all other types of heating systems, such as oil, gas, and electrical. They install wood stoves, as well.  
 Another major factor in Aeon's business is home insulation. They feature blown-in wood fiber of a high grade that has proven effective for insulating older homes as well as new dwellings. Aeon will also rent insulating equipment for the do-it-yourselfer.  
 The third segment of their business is the rental or sales and service of water softeners. They also do business with boilers.  
 Last year was "a relatively good year," said Mrs. Murray. She said she expected 1980 to be a good year for business, too. "People are insulating more of the older homes," she commented. Aeon generally employs two or

three crews to fulfill its various contracts throughout this area, and at times over the years had employed upwards of 30 people.  
 Win and Fran have been working in this type of business since 1951, when they still lived in Buffalo. Aeon Distributors was incorporated in 1959. For a time, the couple also ran a fabric outlet, but that venture has been discontinued.  
 Win and Fran both earned their pilot's wings in 1964 and get in their flying time on Aeon's airplane.

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## Family Fabrics Opened In '79

**POTSDAM**—Family Fabrics opened its doors Aug. 8, 1979 at 8 Market St. in Potsdam. Owned by Roberta Culver, Family Fabrics is operated by Mrs. Culver and her daughter, Donna.  
 The store features fabrics, sewing notions, Butterick patterns and a selection of religious books by Logos Publications.  
 Fabric selections include pure silk, Naugahyde upholstery material, tablecloth material and fake fur, as well as cottons, wools and polyester blends.  
 Mrs. Culver noted that the firm will be doing its spring fabric buying in February. "We're looking forward to shopping for spring fabrics," she noted. Family Fabrics also will special order fabrics for its customers, she said.  
 Available for spring sewing will be polyester interlock, a soft dress and blouse fabric in spring colors.  
 Family Fabrics also specializes in calico and materials for making baby quilts, including batting and polyfill.  
 One of the area's newer businesses, Family Fabrics is looking forward to 1980.

reorganization  
 As a bold step in demonstration of his convictions that this is possible, during 1979 the college underwent a through administrative reorganization, including a new division and vice president for college advancement. Among the goals of this new division, headed by Vice-president W. Michael Born, will be the pooling and enhancing of currently available resources—financial and otherwise, the acquisition of new resources, and the enhancement of communication within the college and between the college and various external constituencies.  
 "Promotion" is not the primary emphasis of Dr. Young's thrust, however. "Quality," or "excellence" is. During 1979, Dr. Young gave the college a new motto: "A Tradition of Excellence."  
**Measuring Quality**  
 Titled his speech, "The 1980s: Potsdam's Hallmarks for Excellence." President Young laid out 10 "quality indices" or "hallmarks for excellence" by which the college will gauge its progress in this new decade.  
 "The first such hallmark will be the 'facilitation of learning through inspirational teaching, access to opportunities and support, and main-

tenance of a business climate in St. Lawrence County, Cassara said that small businesses today are facing great pressures and high operating costs. "Potsdam isn't what it was ten years ago," he said. "I think only the strong are going to survive."  
 But he finished on an optimistic note. "There's always a place for any smart person... especially if you're the best. We think we're the best."  
**Duciewicz Plans To Build Addition**  
**POTSDAM**—Duciewicz's Spring and Radiator Service, located on Route 11B, just past the Potsdam Airport, specializes in spring and radiator work for cars, trucks, and all heavy equipment as well as welding, custom fabricating, and machine shop work in their complete facilities.  
 Owned by Joseph and Otto Duciewicz, the company employs five persons including the founding duo, who were the original workers when the store first opened in 1962. Formerly located on Water Street in Potsdam, the company moved to its present location in 1970 as a result of urban renewal projects within the village.  
 Springs and radiators were all that the company handled during the first few years, with welding and custom fabricating being later additions to the Duciewicz trade.  
 A new addition to the existing Duciewicz building is planned for the very near future. The new building will allow additional space for the company's present operations.

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