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# Western Contractor

*of the Year*

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W.J. Maloney has a long history at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, including the \$590 million renovation of Terminal 3 scheduled to be complete in 2020. W.J. Maloney photo

## 'We've been around..'

If you're Western you are born knowing certain things: Southern California is going to burn in the autumn; Washington is going to be awash in apples come January; and that Phoenix can be one of the hottest places in the country in August. Even at 8 a.m., a short walk across a parking lot on a mixed commercial street a few miles north of the city's epicenter can leave the un-acclimated a little less than crisp.

W.J. Maloney Plumbing, since 1964 a family-owned and operated

residential and commercial plumbing outfit, is the owner of said parking lot. The company has seen a lot of change and growth in the city since its genesis. Not so immediately apparent is the role the company has played in making the city what it is today. The W.J. Maloney commercial projects list reads like a city directory, with everything from municipal facilities, colleges and high schools, hospitals, restaurants and sports facilities represented. Coupled with its heavy PHCC involvement and its

leadership's can-do philosophy, the company was selected to be the first-ever Reeves Journal Western Contractor of the Year.

The company began when William Joseph "Duke" Maloney, father of current president Kathryn "Kitty" Maloney-Langmade, got frustrated with trying to make a living farming in Nebraska and the family moved to Phoenix. And why not? "Duke" Maloney's father was a plumber in Omaha back in the day so he grew up around the business much like his daughter was destined to do.

"The first project that he did was the Squire Apartments. He built the Squire Apartments in North Central Phoenix," Maloney-Langmade said. "He and my mother, Mary, did that immediately when they first moved to Phoenix. My dad drew up the plans. They bought the land. Dad did as much as he could himself. Mother picked out all the flooring and finishes, did the accounting and kept track of all the expenses.



Dad did the plumbing and laid the brick and probably had people working under him. But he's very hands on. He did as much as he could himself."

Throughout the 1960s, the company did the plumbing for a number of local schools and office buildings. Tenant improvement work evolved into a full-fledged residential operation. The 1970s saw a period of growth and improvements to the property the company still owns in the form of new warehousing and a plumbing parts store.

"I think that's one thing that resonates with Duke. His incredible work ethic, drive, hands on approach and exceptional skill level in the field," Maloney-Langmade said, noting her Dad casts a long shadow over the business even today, nearly 10 years after his passing. She said that work ethic remains a company tradition that sees the company through tough economic times and the other challenges associated with running a business.

"I think that we remain successful in spite of the economy and all the things, the intrusions and the difficulties against smaller companies that don't have some of the tools to fight against huge conglomerates because we have that work ethic and we have that tradition of quality and the people. So, it kind of has been passed down," she said. "When people

hire Maloney Plumbing to do the plumbing in a high rise or a stadium, they know that they're going to get it right. It's not somebody that's entered into the field five or ten years ago."

### Work ethic

The 1980s was a transformative decade for the company as it landed the first of a long string of major commercial projects. The first being the original Phelps-Dodge building, a project that marked the company's first use of prefabricated plumbing units for each floor.

The company continued to grow with "Duke" and Mary at the helm. A new Maloney — their daughter Kathryn — came to work at the company in 1996 after college and a career in advertising, marketing communications and printing. Her transition into plumbing was a natural progression, having worked at the company in her earlier years.

"So, on the weekends I would come up here and people would come in the store and want to buy parts and I would try to help them a little bit. It wouldn't be uncommon for my dad to leave and then my mother would work the counter. She knows a lot. My mother knows a lot about plumbing. She could sell parts," Maloney-Langmade said. "So, then I picked a little bit of construction up from being around it. But I think it was more also the work ethic

RJ's first-ever Western Contractor of the Year, WJ Maloney in Phoenix

By Jack Sweet





The W.J. Maloney management team. (L to R) Alan Boughton—vice president, construction; Kathryn “Kitty” Maloney-Langmade—president/owner; Neil Van Wie—controller. RJ photo

and understanding that Dad would get jobs, and go out on the job. If jobs got behind, he would be there on the weekends. So, if we went on vacation, we didn’t know if we were going to be able to leave town. In high school, it wasn’t uncommon for me to deliver materials to job sites once in a while or go to supply houses. I ran errands for my folks.”

Maloney-Langmade took over as president of the company in 2009 from her mother, Mary, who led the company after “Duke’s” passing. She now serves as secretary/treasurer for the company. Even with the growth and leadership changes, the company has continued to prosper. It’s the coming together of a lot of elements — “Duke’s” work ethic in particular — that makes up that success.

“I think what we have though is we’ve assembled a great team. Every company will say that,” Maloney-Langmade said. “But I truly think that your success is the people you have here, they learn to work with each other. They cover each other’s weaknesses. They flourish on their strengths. I just think

we’re lucky to have—anybody that’s good that comes into your company, you feel like you won the lottery. Your success is by the people that you have. They come to work every day and they’re engaged and they’re happy and they’re passionate.”

#### Changing Cityscape

As the city grows and changes there’s a need to work to preserve historic features and support the increasing loads bigger populations put on infrastructure. W.J. Maloney is a full-service contractor that offers residential service and repair. But the company has made a name for itself lately in the market segment it first explored in the 1980s — commercial. The company has been involved in a number of high-profile-type projects around Phoenix.

“We have our commercial new construction division and then we have our service division,” Maloney-Langmade said. “There is the commercial new construction division, which is really 90 percent of our business. So, the commercial new construction division is involved in, like you said, the

whole myriad. We’re very fortunate. We’re doing the renovation of the Terminal 3 at [Phoenix Sky Harbor] airport, which is a fantastic job for us.”

That job will see the company provide plumbing contracting services for Component I of the \$590 million renovation of Terminal 3 at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The three-stage renovation project is expected to be completed in 2020. W.J. Maloney is providing design-assist plumbing services, with HuntAustin, a joint venture, serving as the general contractor for the overall project.

In July the company started work on a \$40 million renovation of the landmark, historic Monroe Hilton Garden Inn downtown. The company is installing all of the building’s plumbing, including complete water and natural gas piping, replacing the storm water system, and replacing and adding new fixtures in both the common areas and 170 guest rooms.

Spring training baseball facilities dot the countryside around Phoenix, and the company lists highlights such as the Chicago Cubs’ Sloan Park and a remodel and expansion of Surprise Stadium, the spring training facility shared by the Kansas City Royals and the Texas Rangers in Surprise, Ariz., a fast-growing city in the Phoenix metroplex, on its resume. And the list goes on to include the Copper Springs Hospital in Avondale, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality all the way down to Westgate City Center and jobs aboard Luke Air Force Base.

“My dad used to do a lot of work out at Luke. We still do. We’re doing some work out there now,” Maloney-Langmade said, reluctantly agreeing with the idea that finding Phoenix commercial establishment that hasn’t been breathed on by W.J. Maloney at some point might be a tough task.

“We’ve done a lot of solid work here. CityScape. [A downtown mixed-use high rise — Ed.] That was a really neat project for us,” Langmade said. “We enjoyed being downtown and the revitalization of downtown. We worked on all the phases of that. We did the Mariposa Land Port of Entry [A 115,840 square foot complex



A \$40 million renovation of the historic Monroe Hilton Garden Inn downtown will see W.J. Maloney installing all of the building’s plumbing, including complete water and natural gas piping, replacing the storm water system, and replacing and adding new fixtures in both the common areas and 170 guest rooms. W.J. Maloney photo

of buildings and inspection booths on the U.S./Mexico border in Nogales, Ariz.—Ed.] That was something completely different. I think that was a great project for us, completely different. So, we’ve been around and we’ve done a lot of office buildings and schools and high rises and stadiums.”

#### The future

There’s a new service department with a new team and the company’s new construction department seems to be “taking off,” and there’s no shortage of optimism, particularly with strengthening market conditions in the company’s area of operations.

“I see a little bit more commercial new construction. I think what’s driving it is you see more home new construction. That seems to be the indicator that people always talk about that things gradually pick up,” she said. “With

the commercial construction division, you want to get new accounting software and you want to get better product management things. You have a great team of people but you need to get newer iPads or whatever and then the service department, I really want to grow service and spend more time. I have a new service manager that I’m really excited about and we’re doing training every day now.

“Hopefully when you work together at Maloney plumbing or a company, if you provide an atmosphere where people get along with each other and there is some camaraderie and people want to go to work, they’re engaged—of course, they have to have a balance with their personal life—then you do better when you’re here,” she said. “You want people to want to come to work. You don’t want people working here who don’t want to be here.” RJ



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