

# "I started it and Steve's finishing it,"

— FRANK MONROE

"I started it and Steve's finishing it," Monroe said.

LaDuke's introduction into the business came when Monroe stuck him in a crawl space to check out a unit when he was 14 years old.

It was important to Monroe to pass along the trade, company and the benefits of the business to his family, and LaDuke said the kindred atmosphere is shared by the employees and with customers.

"When you can keep it in the family, I think there's more continuity," LaDuke said.

Frank Monroe Heating & Cooling definitely has grown since its Beeler Street debut.

The establishment first relocated to Vincennes Street before finding its current home at 595 Industrial Blvd. in 1974.

It certainly was a different landscape back then, as the business was the first to locate inside the industrial park.

"We took the risk," Monroe said.

And the chance paid off, as the business grew its customer base. Monroe would like to credit the company's success to more than just happenstance.

"I found out the more you worked the more luck you had," Monroe said.

Blazing a new path was hardly a new concept to Monroe. He sold gas furnaces back when water heaters were the common choice, as Monroe said he realized an opportunity to capitalize on the new concept.

Monroe said he never considered moving his business out of New Albany.

"I liked the people around here. Everybody was honest," he said.

Ninety percent of deals were finalized with a handshake back in the business's early day, and LaDuke said not much has changed.

"We're certainly blessed with good customers and good jobs," he said.

The heating and cooling industry, like many businesses, is changing rapidly with technology.

"In our industry, there's probably been more change in the past 10 years than in the past 50," LaDuke said.

The company splits its time pretty much evenly between repair and replacement jobs. Monroe Heating & Cooling has also worked on some notable projects in the area including handling the HVAC for the restoration of The Villages at Historic Silvercrest, and heating and cooling work on some of the homes that were refurbished through the Neighborhood Stabilization Project in New Albany.

Almost all of the company's customers are in Southern Indiana. LaDuke said they don't seek Louisville business, and added that residents in Southern Indiana don't have to call on companies across the Ohio River for quality service.

"The big city technology, whatever that may be, is right here," LaDuke said.

The company has 12 employees, and many

of them have been with the business for decades.

Ed Crosier, supervisor and vice president of Monroe Heating & Cooling, has 41 years of tenure with the company.

"You always hope you'll stay somewhere that long," Crosier said. "I just really like the people I work with a lot, and the challenges that come with the job."

Carla Johnson, the secretary-treasurer and service manager for the company, echoed similar comments about Monroe Heating & Cooling.

She's been an employee at the business for 27 years, and her son has worked there the past four years.

"It's like a family here," she said. "Frank's always insisted on it."

On the web

• [www.frankmonroe.com](http://www.frankmonroe.com)



Frank Monroe Heating & Cooling sits on its location along Industrial Boulevard in New Albany. Staff photo by Christopher Fryer

SOUTHERN INDIANA

NOVEMBER 2013

# business

## the Family Business issue

### FORCED RELOCATION GRAY & WELLS MOVE EQUALS BUSINESS BOOM

### FRANK MONROE HEATING & COOLING:

{ COOL  
CUSTOMERS  
60 YEARS OF  
FAMILY BUSINESS

### INVESTING IN FAMILY

COMMITMENT BINDS  
MARRIAGE, BUSINESS



# Cool Customers

Frank Monroe Heating & Cooling celebrates 60 years of family business

STORY BY DANIEL SUDDEATH  
PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER FRYER

The materials Frank Monroe called upon for his air conditioner consisted of ice, a bath tub, and a fan almost big enough to create its own jet stream. While the mechanism certainly generated cool air, the fan was so large and powerful that it nearly sucked clothes out of the windows inside Monroe's house. Chasing flying garments around their home wasn't the most enjoyable experience for Monroe's wife, but to create a successful family business, everyone has to make sacrifices.

Frank Monroe Heating & Cooling is a staple of New Albany, and the business remains true to its 60-year-old roots as a family-owned establishment with a focus on Southern Indiana.

Monroe launched his business inside his Beeler Street home in 1953, and from the start, he relied on the support of his family.

His mother-in-law co-signed for a \$500 loan to jump-start Monroe's operation, as he needed the money to purchase sheet metal to construct covers for furnaces.

Monroe — with his signature suspenders and quick wit — is still an integral part of the business, but his grandson, Steve LaDuke, has served as president of the company for more than 18 years.

continued on page 22

