

## Century celebration

### King Jewelers marks 100 years

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After working as a watchmaker for the Waltham Clock and Watch Company, Forrest King, Sr. founded King Jewelers in Lexington in 1921.

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**Valerie King**  
Granddaughter

“Upon his early retirement, the Waltham Company awarded him with a magnificent wall clock that is the focal point in our store today,” said Forrest Sr.’s granddaughter, Valerie King. “His proficiency in watch making was the base of his jewelry shop services.”

He moved with his family to the South Shore in 1945 and reopened his jewelry shop, F.E. King Jewelers, on Front Street at Scituate Harbor.

His youngest son, Forrest King, Jr., upon returning home after serving in the U.S. Air Force, studied watch making and subsequently took over the business, renaming it King Jewelers.

One hundred years after Forrest King, Sr. started the business, King Jewelers remains thriving and within the King family.

Valerie credits the continuing success of the business to the love and respect of three generations of King women.

“Success has many different meanings to different people,” she said. “Our family believes success is a balance of family and work, the triumph over adversity and the creativity of your craft.”

#### Leading by example

Under Forrest Jr., King Jewelers became more of a family engagement.

His wife, June, started working at the store, and in the late 1960s the couple took their three young daughters - Valerie, Victoria and Vanessa - to the New York Jewelry Show on a



Vicki King, Melanie Roake, June King, Sarah Whalens and Marie Sorensen are some of the people behind King Jewelers in Cohasset which is celebrating its 100th year of business in 2021. ROBIN CHAN/WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO

buying trip.

“It was an amazing experience to see such magnificent jewelry, and the seed was planted,” Valerie said.

She attended a jewelry show in Boston in 1971 and was given a small budget so she could choose a new costume jewelry line for the store. She displayed and marketed the line she had chosen in a small section of King Jewelers.

The business had moved to a bigger space in Cohasset in 1962, and it was around that time that Forrest Jr.’s leadership ability became truly apparent.

“With no business association in place or Chamber of Commerce in town, Forrest took it upon himself to get things in order,” Valerie said.

In 1978, Forrest Jr. and a small group of Cohasset business people came together to form the Cohasset Chamber of Commerce. Forrest headed up the first Cohasset Community Christmas to bring together the downtown village area with the Route 3A businesses in a huge holiday celebration which included Santa landing by helicopter and greeting excited children to camel rides on the common.

Forrest Jr.’s three daughters all worked in the store while in high school, but Victoria would eventually go on to study at the prestigious Gemological Insti-

tute of America in California. After graduating at the top of her class in 1982, she began her career as the in-house gemologist for King Jewelers.

#### A family legacy

In May of 1985, Forrest Jr. was killed in a car accident.

Valerie, who was raising two daughters, joined her mother and sister, Victoria, at the store. They all made sure the business and the family legacy would continue to prosper.

“It was a difficult time but with the love and support of the community, and the knowledge and lessons from our father, we not only survived but grew,” Valerie said.

The business moved to the Stop & Shop Plaza in 1990, and after 15 years there they had the opportunity to purchase the property at 812 Chief Justice Cushing Highway (Route 3A) and build a store there.

The Forrest E. King Memorial Award was established and given to the Cohasset business person who best exemplified the integrity, leadership and civic responsibility Forrest King accomplished during his 23 years in the town of Cohasset.

Additionally, the King family has continued to contribute to the community through their support of various local business, education, sports and arts

organizations/foundations, and have been involved with Habitat for Humanity and the annual Daffodil Days campaign for the American Cancer Society. They also developed the D.O.V.E. pin for the Domestic Violence Ended organization.

#### Looking back, moving forward

Jewelry tastes and trends have certainly changed in 100 years.

Popular jewelry gifts in the 1950’s were friendship rings for girlfriends and watches for men, Valerie said.

“The late 60’s and 70’s saw a surge in costume jewelry and peace sign jewelry. The 80’s were the years of opulence, and more expensive gemstone and diamond jewelry purchases of all kinds were made. Heavy gold chains and bracelets for men and women, diamond tennis bracelets, diamond Riviera necklaces, impressive colored stone rings and earrings with diamonds were among the most popular.”

The 90’s were a bit less indulgent and clients became more interested in unusual or one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry which continues today, she said.

“Custom design jewelry is probably 35% of what we do now, especially for engagement rings. Diamond earrings and

necklaces are also our most popular categories. We have also seen resurgence in pearl necklaces and earrings, and colored gemstone jewelry, especially rings.”

Forrest Jr. manufactured and patented the earring jacket in 1969 and his design remains a standard in the jewelry industry, Valerie said.

Valerie and Victoria work creatively with their clientele to design jewelry to reflect each person’s individuality and personality. They also strive to invent the next jewelry innovation.

Both women enjoy building relationships with their customers who often become friends, as well as continuing the relationships established by their father and mother, Valerie said.

They are also making way for the next generation of Kings to take over.

“I would say the secret to our success is the ability to change and grow with the times while remaining steadfast and true to our principals of integrity, trust, caring and community.”

For more information on King Jewelers visit [kingjewelersinc.com](http://kingjewelersinc.com) or find them on Facebook and Instagram under King Jewelers of Cohasset.

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