

Sgroi celebrates 25 years in business

Family encouraged plans to stay in town

by **CHERYL KRAJNA**

The year is 1971. Richard Nixon occupies the Oval Office. It costs 8 cents to mail a letter. The Buffalo Sabres complete their first season led by rookie Gil Perrault. Joe Sgroi joins Bankers Life, working for the Long and Katzman Agency in the Statler Hilton.

Sgroi, founder and owner of H. Joseph Sgroi, CLU, ChFC and Associates, is celebrating 25 years in business this year with a flourish. He will be honored this morning by the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce and this evening at a reception coordinated by colleagues, family and friends. The latest edition of his company's newsletter, "The Sgroi Financial," details Sgroi's professional and personal accomplishments and simultaneous events in history.

The secret to Sgroi's success is simple.

"I love what I'm doing," he said recently during a conversation in his office in the Union Road building his company has called home since 1981. "People need help financially. I've never met a single person in this business that I could not help, and help dramatically."

His success stems from putting the needs of his clients first.

"We care about our clients. Our clients are our best friends," he said.

Success also can be traced to Sgroi's own beliefs.

"If you had to pick one word to describe our business it's integrity," Sgroi said.

Integrity is no small word when one considers the amount of money clients entrust to the firm for investment.

"There isn't anybody I know that works harder or has a higher integrity level. It's not just who you know but who you know who's a high-quality individual," Sgroi said.

These days it seems as if everyone is relocating to Amherst, yet Sgroi remains in West Seneca.

"Family is the most important thing," he said. He moved the business to West Seneca initially to be closer to family, then decided to remain here. His wife of 30 years, Betsy, and his sons Patrick, 28,



H. Joseph Sgroi

and Jeff, 26, work with Sgroi and Sgroi hopes their other two children, Jennifer, 23, and Greg, 21, soon will come on board.

Would he now consider a move out of town, to those so-called hot spots elsewhere in Western New York?

"I could go to Williamsville or Orchard Park, but if you're good people will do business with you no matter where you are," he said.

Sgroi does not make house calls, no matter who the client, and in fact some clients fly in from as far away as California or Florida to see him.

Even though he works seven days a week he finds time to volunteer in the community. He is a past president and past chairman of the board of the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce; he is a past president and past chairman of the board of the West Seneca Rotary Club; he is a member of the West Seneca Central School District Strategic Planning Committee; he is a consultant for Distributive Education Clubs of America; he has been a West Seneca Youth Baseball coach and manager for 14 years; and is a member of the board and treasurer of the Mercy Hospital Foundation.

He was the 1985 West Seneca Jaycees Man of the Year, the 1988 West Seneca Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year and the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce 1993 Business of the Year.

Sgroi has a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from the University at Buffalo. He is a Chartered Life Underwriter and Chartered Financial Consultant, and before forming his own company in 1971 — which was unheard of back then, he said — he worked in personnel and labor relations for a Fortune 500 company and was promoted to personnel director at age 24.

He holds professional distinctions, as well. He is a life and qualifying member of the Million Dollar Round Table, which represents the top 6 percent of all life insurance producers worldwide. He is a member of the prestigious Court of the Table and the most prestigious Top of the Table.

Often clients come to Sgroi and his associates in a state of financial confusion, Sgroi said. It is rewarding to them to see those clients a few years down the road when their financial situation has improved, to say the least.

"There's no firm in Western New York that does what we do," Sgroi said. "So many people go to work every day and really don't have a product to show for what they do. I change lives."

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