

# Magner Funeral Home Marks 90 Years

## Four generations of service

The Magnier Funeral Home, located at 12 Mott Avenue in Norwalk, is celebrating 90 years of service this year to the families of Norwalk and surrounding towns. The business was founded in 1912 by James H. Magnier, the first-born child of Edward Francis and Mary McCoy Magnier, who immigrated from Castletownroche, County Cork, Ireland via London in 1865. Mr. Magnier was born on the farm of his great uncle, Patrick Maloney of Georgetown, while the family home was being built on North Taylor Avenue in Norwalk, in an area that was formerly known as Bull Run.

Edward and Mary Magnier were also farmers and raised young Jim and their seven other children in Norwalk. He attended local public schools and in 1889, he opened a hotel on Connecticut Avenue. He sold the business in 1894 and then entered the livery business. While so engaged he also learned the undertaking business, serving as assistant to various local funeral directors. He was one of the few men in this city who years ago could drive a four-horse team and was widely known in the community. Mr. Magnier formed his own business in 1912 which he ran until his retirement. He died at his home May 8, 1948 at the age of 81. In an article printed by The Hour in May of 1948, he was remembered as such, "Today, friends were recalling pleasant memories to which "Jim" Magnier contributed. Throughout Norwalk, throughout the valley area to Georgetown where he was born - he was held in high regard. As a livery business proprietor and still more generally as a funeral director, he was known and esteemed. Probably his philosophy of life as much as anything won "Jim" Magnier friends, for he was an optimist by nature, always ready, always determined to see the silver lining.

In 1934 the family business was moved from its store-front shop at 34 Main Street to its current location at 12 Mott Avenue. While on Main Street the establishment was for years located next to the Magnier Florist Shop which was run by Paul F. Magnier. When Jim Magnier retired his two sons, James Cletus "Clete" and Paul carried on his work at the new location. This physical relocation of the business also marked the beginning of a trend toward moving traditional funerals out of the "family home" and into designated private funeral homes. "Wakes" were traditionally held in the home of the deceased and lasted up to three days, often running late into the night. The advent of funeral "homes" now offered surviving families the option of holding wakes outside of the family home, a move that became popular over time and continues today.

With the sudden death of J. Cletus Magnier in 1941 Paul Magnier took over as sole owner of the business. Sometime later the Magnier Floral business was discontinued. Paul ran the business until his retirement to Florida in 1965 and due to ill health, his son, James Paul Magnier, took over the reins. Jim Magnier expanded the business facilities in the early 1960's and the business itself grew as well. He took great pride in maintaining the 120 year-old Second Empire home which had been owned by former Connecticut Lt. Gov. Edwin O. Keeler until the Magnier family converted it to a funeral home. He had a reputation among the construction and service fraternity for demanding the best materials and highest standards of workmanship. He, like his father and grandfather before him, took the family business very seriously. They strove to improve the business wherever possible and to treat all of the families who walked through the doors as if they were close family as well. All were treated with equal consideration and compassion. Jim Magnier died suddenly in July of 1982.

The 4th generation family business continues on and exists today with Jim's sons Michael J. Magnier and James P. Magnier, Jr. in charge. They also take great pride in maintaining the 12 Mott Avenue facility and the standards of business set forth by their predecessors. Michael and Jay have also been blessed with the knowledge and experience in the business of the late Michael Tracey, an employee for 46 years and close family friend and Chester C. Hatch, a funeral director in Norwalk for the past 38 years. Mr. Tracey retired from the business in the fall of 2001 and Mr. Hatch has now been with the firm for close to 14 years. Both have contributed considerably over the years in a very demanding and sensitive business.

The Magnier Funeral Home offers all types of funeral services, with equal dignity for all. Over the past 10 to 15 years "pre-need" funerals have been more in demand, and the staff is well equipped to handle all aspects of pre-need and insurance trusts. This is a great opportunity for families or individuals to come view the premises themselves, go over all of the service options available, and set into place the kind of funeral service that best suits their needs. The Magniers have found that without exception, the families who do come in prior to a death to make arrangements find their experiences quite a bit less stressful than those who are not able to. Whether you have prepared ahead or not the family at Magnier Funeral Home will be there to help with your needs.

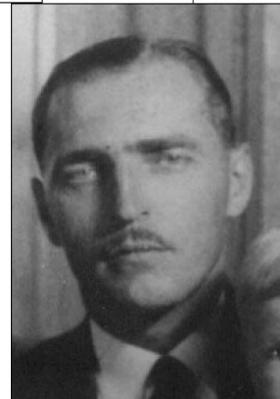
Magner Funeral Home today at 12 Mott Ave., Norwalk



James P. Magnier  
1934-1982



J. Cletus Magnier  
1897-1941



Paul F. Magnier  
1903-1970

James H. Magnier  
Founder  
1866-1948



James H. Magnier Livery formerly of Cross St. in Norwalk. Mr Magnier with family members in various horse-drawn carriages.



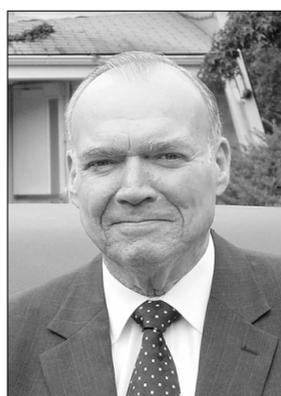
From left, Mayor E.J. Finnegan, Wm. Thompson and Charles Dilworth in the Decoration Day Parade. The carriage driver was Jim Magnier.



Michael J. Magnier



James P. "Jay" Magnier



Chester C. Hatch



866-5553

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