



# THE FINISHING TOUCH

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## Duray Plating: A Business Where Tradition Provides for a Successful Future

When most people think of an established business, they envision a company where one, two or even more generations carry on a tradition.

OAMF member Duray Plating, 13701 Triskett Rd. in Cleveland, is a family business with a slightly different twist. The company has a proud tradition going back nearly 40 years, but most of the present members involved are all part of the same generation!

Company owner/president, Ken Roth believes in a structure in which all participate in the daily operations of the company, which specializes in hard chrome plating.

Duray is certified to plate to Military specifications and does work for commercial aviation as well as the defense end of the nuclear industry. The company plates for the medical industry and handles parts ranging from diesel fuel injectors to hydraulic pistons to specialized boring tools. Salvage and general blueprint work on new parts rounds out the company's services. "We make it a point to accept the complicated work that others have previously steered away from," Ken explained.

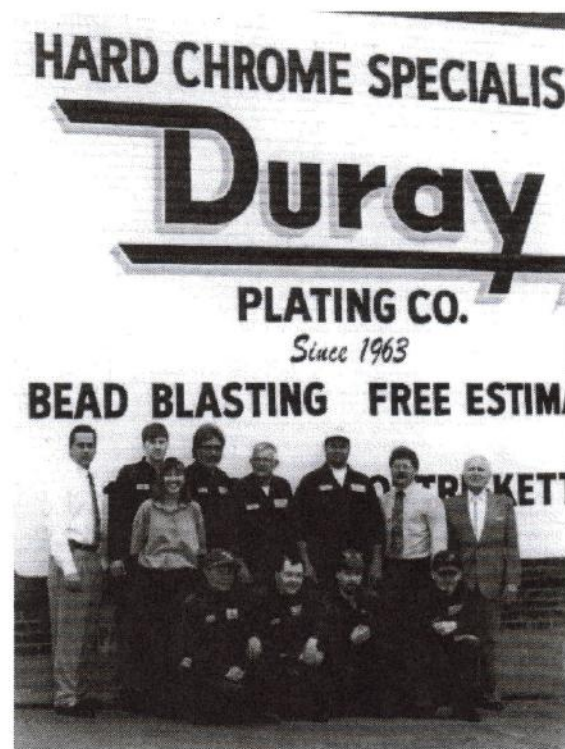
Ken signed the papers which made him owner and president of Duray Plating on November 15, 1984, just a few days before his 22nd birthday. This might seem to be an overwhelming challenge for someone so young, but at the time of purchase, he already had four years experience at Duray. He started working at the company while in high school, as part of an Occupational Work Experience program.

"My friend's father, Les Emhoff, worked here," Ken explained, "and this pretty much steered me to Duray during high school." The company was owned then by Duke Saas and Ray Kuehne. "All three of them really helped me learn about the business," Ken said.

"Les took me under his wing out in the shop and he and Ray really gave me a concentrated education on this industry," he added. "After I bought the business, Ray was really good about taking calls from me late at night when I ran into something I wasn't sure about.

"Sometimes, when we ran into frustrating situations during the late hours, Ray would be called. He would just laugh and put his coat on and come in. We definitely miss his presence.

"Duke's specialty was the administrative and sales end of the business," Ken explained, "and he still gives me valuable advice." Saas is a regular visitor at the company even now. Duke was very active in OAMF, and served as President in 1957-58. At the time he was President of Atlas Hard Chrome.



The Duray crew poses for an official portrait. Pictured front row (kneeling) left to right are: Anthony Casola, Eric Paul, Jack Hilliard and Mark Pandori. Standing (left to right) are: Bruce Roth, Jeff Roth, Stephanie Paul, Ervin McKnight, Bob Oney, Carmelo Rodriguez, Ken Roth and Duke Saas.

When Ken bought Duray in 1984, his brother Bruce already was working there, having joined the company right out of high school. Currently, he spends most of his time on sales, though he can always put his plating experience to good use if needed.

Jeff Roth, Plant Manager, started working at Duray in 1985. In tandem with his Duray career, he has gone to night school, and earned a degree in mechanical engineering from Cleveland State University as of the end of the quarter.

It takes loyal and hard working employees to keep the company successful. Employment at Duray currently is 15, only 5 of whom are Roth brothers, working in three shifts (third shift was added in April, to keep up with customers' needs).

Duray's most veteran employee is Bob Oney, whose involvement with the company dates back almost to its start. "He knows more about the business than most people," Ken said, "and he's our resident expert on the operation and maintenance of our aging but highly efficient boiler." Bob works part-time these days, but Ken believes he's just as valuable as a

full-time employee. "We have three other part-time workers who retired from other jobs," he said, "and they bring a lot of experience and leadership to the company.

"We have a good team here who know their jobs and who care about their work," Ken pointed out. Because the company plates so many specialty parts, employees develop specialized skills, and they are always learning something new. Generally, most parts require highly selective masking and most have to be fixtured individually prior to plating, and Duray's workers are more than able to meet the challenge. The members of the Duray team demonstrate versatility in their ability to handle parts ranging from less than one ounce up to 2000 pounds.

Ken is rightfully proud of Duray's success since November 1984. "We've more than doubled our sales volume since then," he said. He is especially proud that they have kept the customers that used Duray before he bought the company. "We have the same accounts that have been with Duray for 32 years," he said. New accounts have also been added along the way.

One account in particular has grown from a two-man shop to a business with over 175 employees and still relies on Duray for its hard chrome plating.

"Our customers have been very good to us, very loyal," Ken commented. "We believe that quality is a given, that fair pricing is a given, but that service is the mainstay of our business," he emphasized. "We work continuously to improve our service, both in terms of turnaround and in terms of courtesy and consideration." He believes very strongly that these two items are key factors in the customer satisfaction equation.

"The Greater Cleveland area offers us stiff competition in the hard chrome field, both in OAMF and outside the association," Ken said. "But I think we're doing a good job in this market."

While Duray Plating has been in the organization for its 32 years, Ken became actively involved in 1985, and has taken advantage of the membership to learn all he can about the industry specifically and small business generally.

"These days it's a constant battle



*Ken Roth (left) and Duke Saas reminisce about Ken's early days at the company.*

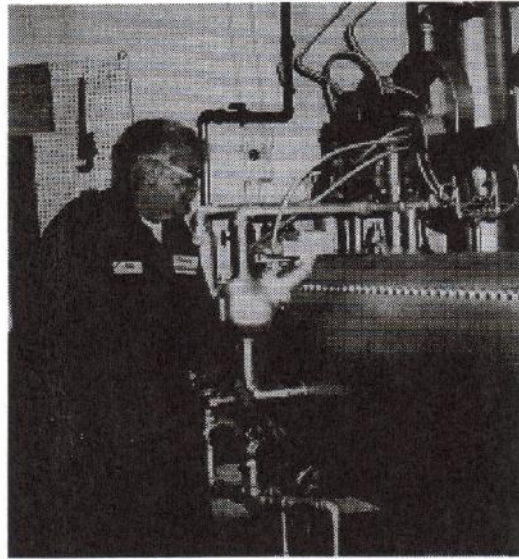
*Jeff Roth (standing) and Erwin McKnight check quality on an F-16 fuel impeller.*

*Bruce Roth and Stephanie Jones review April sales figures.*

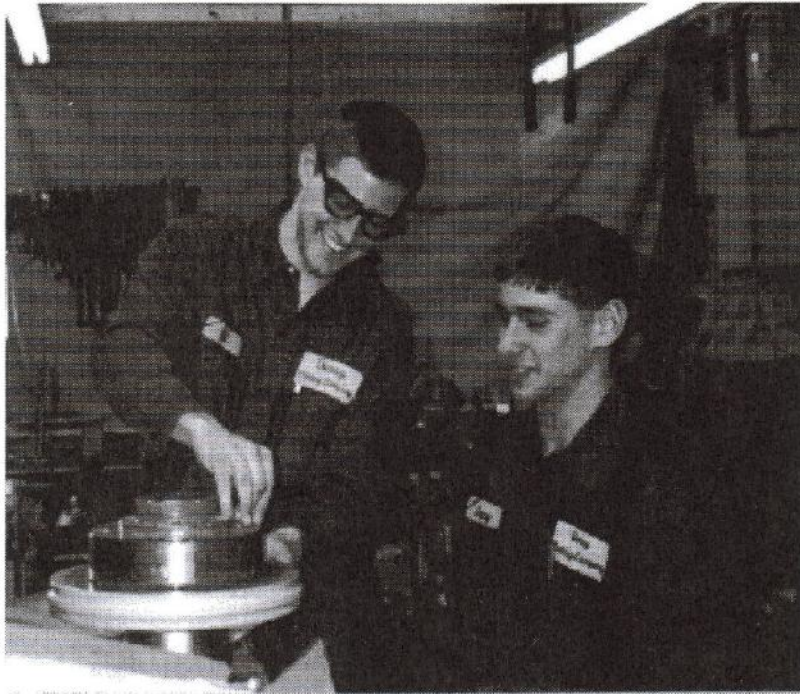
to maintain efficiency to keep prices fair, and still comply with all the regulations," he said. "I've gained a lot from OAMF, especially in terms of meeting and learning from others who are pretty much in the same boat I'm in."

Looking to the future, Ken would like the company to expand, but at a cautious pace. "I'd like to move to a larger facility to accommodate our customers better, but I don't necessarily want to be the largest hard chrome plater in the area. I just want to be one of the best," he said.

For now, Duray Plating Co. is pleased with its accomplishments and welcomes future opportunities.



*"They don't make boilers like this any more," according to Bob Oney, "it's a classic."*



*Ed (left) and Gary Roth handle week-end responsibilities at Duray.*