



Carrie  
Lachman



An "Executive" gift at  
Lachman & Co.

# A Gaggle of Gifts

Lachman & Co. has been a family-owned shopping destination for 110 years.

BY MICHAEL ALLEN

**T**he hum of snowblowers and the whir of defrosting cars and trucks mean only one thing: The holidays are upon us. With holidays, comes the inevitable quest to find the perfect gift for everyone.

That quest always leads to the same revelation: Finding those gifts isn't any easier than it was at this time last year, which is what most everyone figured out last year, too, but forgot until now.

Fortunately for everyone looking for that something special, there's Lachman & Co. in Southfield. The

family-owned business has been a Detroit-area staple for gift-givers for 100 years.

Located just north of Eight Mile on Telegraph Road, Lachman & Co. sells a variety of jewelry, custom awards and executive gifts. Most of its business is corporate, but the company sells to individuals, too.

"I think that people don't realize we deal with the public," says Carrie Lachman, who is the great-granddaughter of the founder, and co-owns the store with three other siblings. "When people come in here for the first time, they say 'I didn't realize

there were so many different things in here. I'm so glad I finally stopped in.' We can create a piece for anybody. We just have a lot of really creative and wonderful things in here."

While the store does sell many stereotypical "executive gifts," such as vases, pen sets, clocks and picture frames, it also sells some jewelry and other specialty items. A stroll through the store can feel like a walk through a vault of crystal and silver, however there are plenty of fine wood and stone pieces available. Most of the gifts can be personalized, and all of the etching is done on-site.

In fact, the ability to do design and produce gifts in-house is one of the tenets of the company, which was founded in 1893 by Joseph Lachman, a Lithuanian watchmaker, who settled in Detroit. He opened his shop on Michigan Avenue selling watches and jewelry and, in a sign of the times, he even had a cow in the back courtyard of the building.

"I'm not certain what the cow was for, but it went away and the courtyard eventually became a parking lot," Lachman says.

Throughout the years, the offerings (continued on page 16)



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and the building grew to encompass three floors. When his son, Sol, took over the business, the company added eyeglasses to the mix because Sol was an optometrist. The company remained at its original location until 1991, when it moved to its current spot in Southfield. While the products and the location have changed, one thing remains: The company's offerings are mostly made on the premises, which allows for a lot of creativity and

personalization. In fact, the company's slogan is "The Unusual as Usual."

"I have a woman who comes in every year and she's written a poem for everyone that she's buying gifts for," Lachman says. "It's like she's giving them a little piece of her every year. She's just amazing."

When it comes to making something memorable, the sky is the limit.

"We've had all kinds of different

things that we've made here," Lachman recalls. "We've had some strange things, too. We once produced a very nice plaque lauding Fidel Castro for his human rights efforts. It was for a civil rights group that was going to Cuba to meet him. It was a beautiful cherry plaque. It was just the inscription that had us shaking our heads.

"We also had members of a club bring in a plastic urinal," she says. "I don't know exactly why, but they wanted us to make it into an award. People will think of anything."

Not only will they think of anything, they're liable to send anything anywhere, she says. Finding and customizing gifts for friends, family or colleagues can be tough enough, but being able to send those gifts can be even more difficult.

"We had someone ask us to send gifts to places that didn't have zip codes or street addresses," she laughs. "We kept fighting with UPS because they said these places didn't exist, but we kept telling them that they did. We got everything sent out. Not everything is quite that difficult, but we're well versed in shipping things just about anywhere in the world."