



A Tradition of Excellence

Tyler Equipment Corp. Continues to Serve

By Jim Ross

To understand why Tyler Equipment Corp. (a long time CCA member) has been so successful, to understand how it has remained in business more than 80 years, it might be helpful, paradoxically, to consider a job that wasn't financially beneficial.

This was no ordinary job. Then again, it was no ordinary day. It was Sept. 11, 2001.

The Tyler family, which has owned and operated the business since the company's inception, knew New York City would need equipment in the wake of the terrorist attacks. Sure enough, Volvo Construction Equipment North American, Inc., sent an e-mail that day asking its dealers for a list of available equipment. New York got the list and requested five 30-ton Volvo articulated haulers that Tyler had available.

In an article that appeared later in *Construction Equipment Distribution*, the Tylers explained how their business got the trucks to New York in the days following 9-11.



Two generations of Tylers at the helm. Left to right: William A. Tyler, executive vice president; Brooke Tyler Jr., chairman; and Brooke Tyler, III, president. William and Brooke III are sons of Brooke Tyler, Jr. Photo by Leah Kendrick.



Tyler Equipment Corporation's main office location in East Longmeadow, Mass.



Left to right: M. Brooke Tyler, III, president; Brooke Tyler, Jr., chairman of the board; and Brooke Tyler, IV.

Photo by Leah Kendrick.

They moved the equipment at their own expense, and with the help of highway officials who cut through red tape and allowed the massive pieces of equipment onto the roads. The equipment was used at a Staten Island landfill where debris from the Twin Towers was taken and carefully sifted through.

"We didn't do it for the publicity," said Bill Tyler, executive vice president, during a 2004 interview with this magazine. "There wasn't even a hesitation. When they requested the trucks, that's what we did. I felt proud that we were able to help out."

That horrible day affected us all, and it inspired many people to take heroic action. But there is no doubt that Tyler Equipment went above and beyond the call of duty. That kind of selfless service probably didn't come as much of a surprise to the company's customers, who have come to expect nothing less. Tyler Equipment is a small dealer, but it has a long and rich history of doing what's right.

A company on the move

The company has 53 employees these days. Its territory includes all of Connecticut, and the four western counties of Massachusetts and four southern counties in New York state. It handles sales, service, rentals and parts. On any given day, on any given job site in that area, you can find loaders, excavators, articulated haul

trucks, backhoe loaders, compact excavators, graders or some other piece of construction equipment that carries the Tyler brass nameplate. Some pieces are 30 to 40 years old.

These days, the company represents Volvo Construction Equipment, Bandit Industries, Carlton Stump Grinders, Dynapac Rollers, Rogers Trailers, Allied/Rammer Hammers, Rawson Screening Plants and Sennebogen (a German manufacturer of specialized scrap material handling equipment company) Woodsman Chipper and Genesis Shears.

All this came from modest roots. Tyler Equipment started in 1922, when M. Brooke Tyler Sr. and his wife, Pauline, started selling machines in Springfield, Mass. Fifteen years later, M. Brooke Tyler Jr. joined the company and helped it fight its way out of the Depression. World War II came, and Tyler helped rebuild equipment for the U.S. Army. During the 1940s, after the war, the company built a new shop on Shaker Road in East Longmeadow. It has been there ever since.

About the same time, Tyler Equipment opened its Plantsville, Conn. location. Nine years later, the Connecticut branch moved to Wallingford; in 1992, it moved again, this time to Prospect, where it remains to this day.

That final move was the result of a major change for Tyler. The company

bought a factory store from Volvo, which previously had bought it from a company named Akerman Excavators.

A family tradition

As for leadership, here is the lineup these days: Brooke Jr. is chairman of the board. His son, Brooke III, is president; another son, Bill, is executive vice president. Brooke IV joined the company five years ago. Grant Tyler was vice chairman of the board; he died in 1994. His son, Grant Jr., is the other executive vice president; another son, Thomas, is vice president.

Bill Tyler said the words "relationship" and "trust" explain how the company has enjoyed a longevity that is uncommon in the trade.

"There are very, very few companies that can brag that they have existed this long, having survived the Depression and all the wars and all," he said. "Relationship, I think, is the key word. Relationship with our customers, and relationship with ourselves."

One example: Tyler Equipment represented Volvo Equipment's successor corporation, Michigan, which means Tyler has had a relationship with that line since 1954. Tyler might be the only such dealer still around that hasn't subsequently changed hands.

Doing whatever it takes

Trust is another key word. "Whenever we were in a customer's office or on the

phone or on the job site, we tried to understand our customers' needs and work very, very hard to satisfy them," Tyler said.

Tyler said his predecessor gave him the best advice: "When you are dealing with a customer and a situation comes up, you must put yourself in the customer's shoes for a minute." What would you do if your new machine had a problem? What would you expect of your dealer? "That's what we do. We put ourselves in the customer's shoes."

That guiding spirit influences day-to-day operations. The company prioritizes in its service department. When a man or woman's livelihood depends on a piece of equipment running, "we'll do whatever is necessary to keep his business going," Tyler said. Loan them a machine, rent them one — whatever it takes.

With that kind of history of service, it's no surprise the company responded so quickly on 9-11. Four of the five trucks it sent to New York were new. It got them back eventually, and Volvo provided a degree of compensation. "Volvo deserves a lot of credit for that," Tyler said of Volvo.

He saw some Volvo trucks at Ground Zero, and he knew Volvo equipment from his own business was at the landfill. "You just felt that you were part of the team effort to work through this tragedy," Tyler said.

Since then, the trucks have been sold. They obviously commanded a lower price than they would have when they were new and un-used. But Tyler Equipment handled the sales in a low-key manner. "We did what we did and that was that," Tyler said.

Moving forward

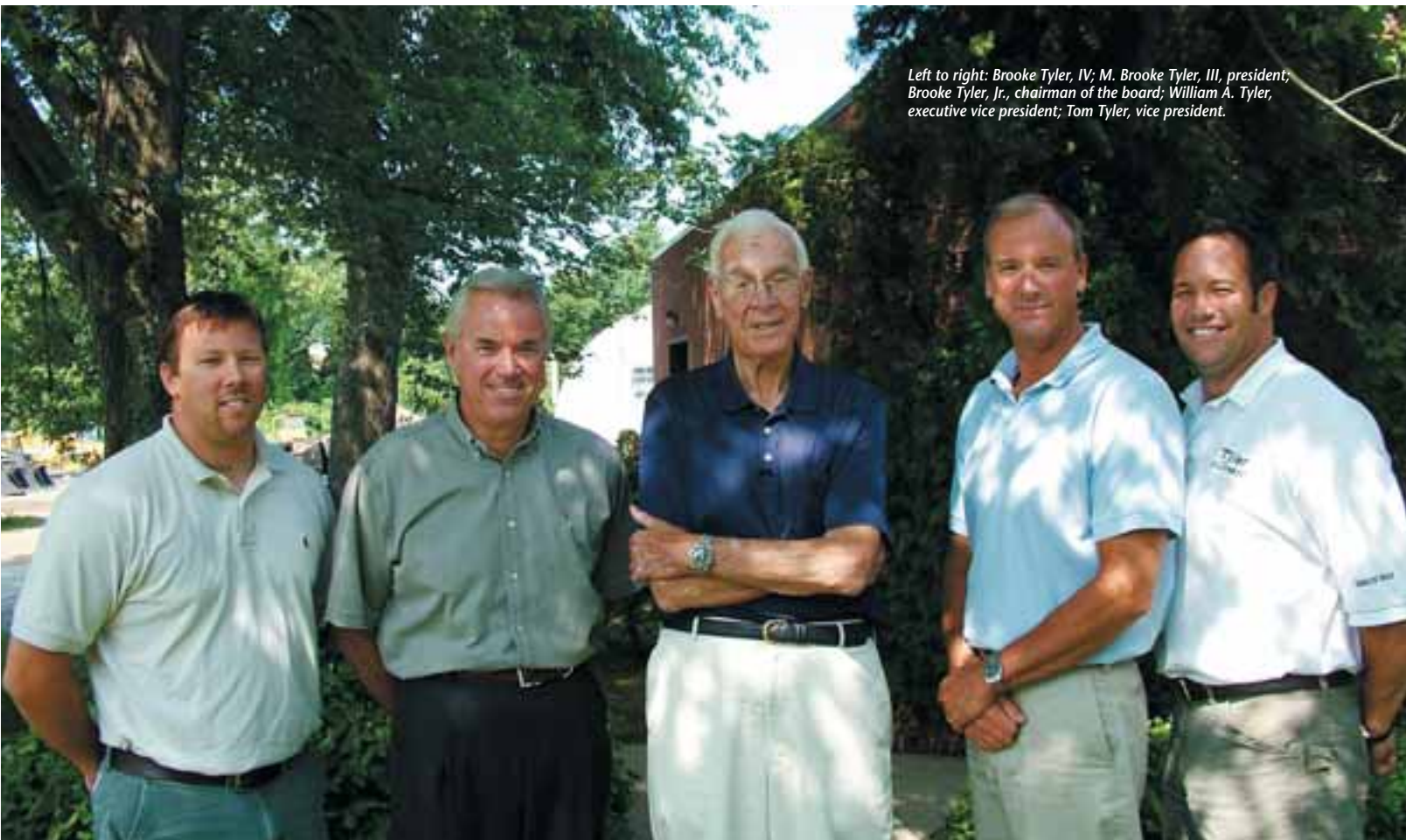
Business continues to be strong. "We've got good competitors," Tyler said. "We get along well with them. We enjoy good, honest competition."

And the employees don't just enjoy the competition—they enjoy their work. Tyler credits his brother Brooke III, the president, for that. "He wants people to have some fun at work. He wants people to enjoy coming to work."

But for Bill Tyler, the best thing happening is that his father, at 90 years of age, still comes to the office every day, even though he's not involved in the day-to-day operations any longer.

"Having him around, with his years of experience, I can still come to him and he has advice for me. That, to me, is probably one of the biggest things. Having him around. It's huge."

From a proud, strong family business like Tyler Equipment, you wouldn't expect anything less. 🍌



Left to right: Brooke Tyler, IV; M. Brooke Tyler, III, president; Brooke Tyler, Jr., chairman of the board; William A. Tyler, executive vice president; Tom Tyler, vice president.