

Long tradition of looking forward

Anderson Business Technology marks 100th anniversary

By Kevin Smith Staff Writer

PASADENA — When C. Elmer Anderson founded Anderson Typewriter Co. back in 1912, William Howard Taft was the president.

A loaf of bread cost a nickel, homes were selling for less than \$6,000 and the cost of an average car was \$690. Needless to say, things have changed since then.

But the Pasadena-based business — now known as Anderson Business Technology — is still around. Through good times and bad, economic downturns, political uncertainty and about anything else you could name, the company has managed to survive.

On Thursday, Anderson Business Technology held a 100-year celebration at the University Club in Pasadena. The event featured old photos, vintage typewriters and a slide show detailing the company's long history.

A highlight of the event was a speed-typing contest that required competitors to use a 1938 Royal typewriter. And the test? It was none other than the Underwood Expert Typing Test, circa May 1928.

Phil Tran, 29, of El Monte quickly learned that typing on a 1938 Royal is far removed from working on a modern day computer.

"You really have to put some weight on your pinky finger, and it's hard when you're not used to it," he said.

Tran completed 284 keystrokes. But when his many errors were factored in, it resulted in a negative score.

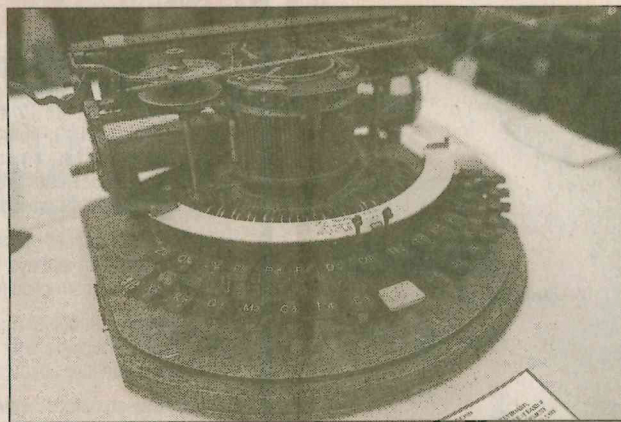
Laurel Martin fared much better, snagging the second-place prize by successfully typing 35 words per minute. But the top prize went to Bob Ral-



Photos by Keith Birmingham Staff Photographer

ABOVE: David Anderson, left, president of Anderson Business Technology along with his father and former President Donald Anderson, center, greet guests as the company marks 100 years during a celebration Thursday at the University Club in Pasadena.

LEFT: A Hammond typewriter from 1893.



ston, who also provided live piano music for the event. Ralston typed 49 words per minute — with no errors.

"I was in shock at how slow I had to go," he said.

Don Anderson, C. Elmer's son, took over the business after his father died and served as company president for many years. He's still

involved, although he spends less time there.

"I only work on Thursdays," he said. "I help out with the financial part of the business and if someone needs a typewriter ribbon changed, I know how to do it!"

These days, Don Anderson's son David serves as pres-

ident of the company. And typewriters? They still have a few on display at their store at 120 E. Colorado Blvd. in Pasadena. But the product line is now skewed toward copiers, fax machines, printers and other computerized products.

"We had to evolve," David Anderson said. "Some of our competitors didn't do that so just didn't advance."

Anderson had initially been working as a geologist after college and was somewhat reluctant to join the family business. But when technology began creeping in, he realized there was a lot there that interested him.

"We've also never forgotten our tradition — take good care of the customers," he said.

Cindy Torres, a principal operations specialist with Pasadena's Human Services and Recreation Department, said her department has contracted with Anderson Business Technology for the past four years.

"We're leasing about six copiers from them," she said. "We like them because they're local and they provide great customer service. They also offer on-site training and training at their store in the use of the equipment."

kevin.smith@sgvn.com
626-962-8811, ext. 2701

"I like the technology but