

**Business Recognition Program: Russell's Fine Furniture  
October 12, 2010  
7 p.m. City Council Meeting**

---

- **Tonight we have the pleasure of recognizing an outstanding Santa Clara business, Russell's Fine Furniture, but first, a bit of history about this family, which has been in the furniture business for many years.**



- **Richard Rusnak's family operated the Rusnak Bros. (Brothers) furniture stores in the Chicago area, stores which they founded in 1892. Past issues of the "Chicago Tribune" newspaper report that in 1939, the highly successful Rusnak Bros. opened their fifth furniture store in this family-owned chain of stores. It is remarkable that generations of this family have been in the furniture business for more than a century.**
- **Richard Rusnak grew up working in his family's Chicago furniture business. When Richard and Eleanor Rusnak left Chicago and headed west in 1964, according to a newspaper**

story, they faced an uncertain future. They had two small daughters, \$3,000 and were driving a borrowed car.



- When they arrived in the Valley of Heart's Delight, as Silicon Valley was known, Russell's Modern House in Santa Clara was then a small furniture store.

- With the help of a silent partner, Lawrence Schnadig, a well-known Chicago upholstery manufacturer and friend of the Rusnak family, Richard and Eleanor Rusnak scraped together enough money to buy Russell's Modern House.

- The store was then located in Santa Clara on El Camino Real, on the corner at San Tomas Expressway. It is the location where a bicycle store now stands, on the northeast corner of the intersection.



- The Rusnaks soon changed the store's name, and moved it just down the street to 2645 El Camino Real, reopening it in 1965 as Russell's Fine Furniture. This is where you will find the store today, forty-five years later.
- In the 1980s, Richard and Eleanor bought out their partner. In memory of their former partner's financial help, the Rusnaks set up a scholarship fund for their employees, to help the employees pay tuition at local colleges.



Richard even sent all their employees on a Hawaiian vacation.

- The Rusnak family has always been loyal to their employees, and their employees reciprocate that loyalty. During a banner sales year, Eleanor and Richard even sent all their employees on a Hawaiian vacation.
- Through the years, the Rusnak daughters, Debbie and Janet, their husbands and their children, have all worked at the store. Debbie and Janet grew up in this family furniture business, just as Richard grew up in the family furniture business back in Chicago.

- Tonight is not the first time that the City has honored Russell's Furniture. In December, 1984, the City issued a proclamation honoring Russell's as the Retailer of the Year.

- The Russell's Furniture of today is a 70,000 square foot store, filled with furniture selections, lamps, accessories and decorative items that run from classic Americana to sleek contemporary. Trained



staffers will go out to customer's homes to help them choose furnishing, or you can try an online interactive room planner. The family also runs a separate store with discounted

furnishings just outside Santa Clara city limits (in San Jose).

- While the City has been recognizing the accomplishments of local businesses for many years, a more formal Business Recognition Program was

many years, a more formal Business Recognition Program was

**established by the City Council in late 2003, upon the recommendation of a committee of the City Council, the Mission City 21 (Economic Development) Committee. The recognition program is a joint one with the Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce and Convention-Visitors Bureau. We have with us tonight Steve Van Dorn of the Chamber/CVB who will also be making a presentation to Russell's Furniture.**

- **The formalized business recognition program recognizes the valuable contributions that all businesses make to the City of Santa Clara.**
- **Russell's Furniture has very deep roots in Santa Clara, and is one of the oldest, active businesses in our community.**
- **The company is well-respected for their professionalism, customer service ethic, and their commitment of providing good value and good services to their customers.**
- **Congratulations to Russell's Fine Furniture on 45 years of outstanding service to the Santa Clara community!**



- **I would now like to introduce Steve Van Dorn, President & General Manager of the Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce and Convention-Visitors Bureau.**