

The Osborne Connection

It's the **SERVICE** that counts

June 2008

Osborne Electric Company Celebrating Our 65th Anniversary

John McCharen, Jr., was one of the early partners in Osborne Electric. Prior to serving in the artillery of the 42nd Rainbow Division during World War II, John McCharen worked at Osborne Electric as an apprentice. After returning from military service in late 1944, he happened to run into Marvin Osborne in the elevator of the old Biltmore Hotel. Marvin asked him to come to work for Osborne Electric and that was the beginning of a great partnership.

In 1945, John McCharen, Glen Murphy and Floyd Smith joined Marvin Osborne as partners. In 1949 Marvin bought out Murphy and Smith. In 1955, John McCharen bought majority interest in Osborne Electric Company. John McCharen retired as president of the company in 1974, remaining as Chairman of the Board until 1984. Marvin Osborne continued ownership until 1975, when he sold his interest to John's son.

John McCharen was born in 1918 and graduated from Classen High School in 1937. In 1940 he married June Mitchell, his high school sweetheart.

John McCharen supported the electrical industry by serving as president, governor and treasurer of the Western Oklahoma chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association. He was a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for more than 65 years and served on the Oklahoma City Electrical Appeals Board.

In addition to his career, he devoted his life to civic responsibilities. He volunteered for several Chamber of Commerce committees and was a founding member of the Downtown Optimist Club. He organized and chaired the Downtown Optimist Christmas tree lot for several years. He was made an honorary life member of the Optimist Club International. He also coached underprivileged 17- and 18-year-old boys in football and baseball, with one of the boys going on to play in the major leagues.

The Oklahoma City Jaycees named him an Outstanding Young Man. The Governor of New Mexico appointed him Aide-de-Camp. The New Mexico National Guard named him an Honorary Colonel for his volunteer work in Red River, New Mexico, where he and June spent summers with their children. He attended St. Luke's United Methodist Church and was a member of the Board of Directors of Central National Bank and Bank One.

John McCharen headed the company through the late 50s, 60s and 70s. He started the company slogan "It's the **SERVICE** that counts," and then lived it.



John McCharen at a meeting of the Oklahoma chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) in the early 50s at the Skirvin Hotel.



Growing with Oklahoma City

Some of Our Projects from The 1950s, 1960s and 1970s



The Globe Life Insurance Building, which we worked on in the 1950s and 1960s. This was formerly the old street car terminal building.



The new Mercy Hospital in the 1970s.



The Oklahoma County Courthouse in 1963.



The new Oklahoma City Post Office in 1966.



Bob Mathews of Osborne Electric and Newton Johnston of General Electric discuss the FAA Center switchboard in the 1960s.

The Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) Mike Monroney Aero Center at Will Rogers Field in the late 50s or early 60s. The CAA later became the Federal Aviation Administration.



Some Unique Projects

Osborne Serving the Community in the 50s, 60s and 70s



The ARSR-1 radar at FAA in 1959.



Oklahoma City First Christian Church as it appeared in the 1960s.



Kerr-McGee uranium plant in Crescent, Oklahoma, 1965.



Kerr-McGee plutonium plant in Crescent, Oklahoma, 1972.



The Owen Stadium expansion at the University of Oklahoma in 1950.

Looking Back at Our Roots

The article below comes from a 1967 Oklahoma Associated General Contractors "Professional Constructor News." The two subjects, Harry House and John McCharen, were good friends and both of their businesses still operate today.

THE OKLAHOMA
**PROFESSIONAL
CONSTRUCTOR**



1967

MEET THE MEMBERS



Harry M. House

Mr. House has been active in Oklahoma construction circles since 1919.

He was born in Iowa and graduated from Iowa State College in 1913 with a BS degree in Civil Engineering.

He was married to Bertha J. Cepel (now dec.). They had five children, two daughters and three sons.

In addition to operating his own construction company, he was at one time affiliated with Reinhart & Donovan Co., Okla City, W. S. Bellows Co., Corpus Christi, Texas, also Benham Engineering Co., and Dunham James & Patterson. In 1943 he and G. Anderson started their present company.

Mr. House served for many years as Chairman of AGC's Building Codes Committee, working closely in the revision of the Okla City Code.

He is a member of the Methodist Church, a life member of American Society of Civil Engineers, a 33 degree Mason and member of Down Town Lions Club.



John T. McCharen, Jr.

Mr. McCharen was born and raised in Oklahoma City. He graduated from Oklahoma City schools, where he met his lovely wife, June.

They have two children: Johnnie, a junior at OU; and daughter Janie, a junior at Harding high school.

He is a veteran of World War II, serving in the Field Artillery, 42nd division.

In 1946 he joined Marvin Osborne in establishing the Osborne Electric Co.

His hobbies include traveling and all spectator sports, especially OU football.

He is active in NECA, having held various offices, including Governor in 1959-1961. He is presently Treasurer of the local Chapter.