

# TRIUMPHANT TRIO

## How It All Began

By Brenda L. Holmes

The 1870s were a time of change in Indiana. Population in the state increased from 1.6 million at the start of the decade to just shy of two million by the next Census.

It also brought the beginnings of three iconic businesses that continue to thrive today. We share some of the history of Koch Enterprises (1873), Eli Lilly and Company (1876) and OneAmerica (1877).

### Koch Enterprises

*"Delivering a superior class of automated finishing systems."*

– *The George Koch Sons' Mission*

In 1873, George Koch establishes the George Koch Tin Shop in Evansville. He was supported by his family that had immigrated from Albig, Germany. George and his wife, Mary, welcomed three sons: George, Louis and Albert.

Mary takes over as president in 1903 when her husband dies. She and her sons incorporate the business and it becomes George Koch Sons, Inc. (GKS), in honor of its founder, whose philosophy was hard work, quality and innovation.

During World War I, the company struggles but a plan is devised to make it through the difficult economy of the day. Louis, who had nine children, experiments with toy making and plans to produce tin

horns as Christmas gifts. Orders pour in and the company begins production of its first mass manufactured products.

After the war, when the sales of tin horns start to slow, Louis forms a business relationship with Mead Johnson Sr., who owns a company just two blocks away. Johnson's company was having a production problem with its best-selling product, Dextro Maltose, a nutritional drink, and Louis Koch came up with the solution.

This relationship continues through the 1920s and '30s. Any time there was a problem with production at Johnson's plant, GKS would provide the necessary service.

Louis' oldest son, Malcolm, introduces the company to its next manufactured products – metal floral containers. With aggressive advertising campaigns, GKS becomes the largest manufacturer of floral metalcraft in the world.

In the 1930s, GKS grows with the industrialization of Evansville



Koch Enterprises traces its roots back to 1873, when a young George Koch opened a small tin shop in Evansville. He and his wife, Mary, had three sons, (from left) Albert, Louis J. and George W., who all entered the family business.

and it also addresses the need for paint finishing systems. Leadership realizes new companies would need quick-drying and durable finishing paint to be used on their products.

GKS continues to innovate through the decades, adding products such as air conditioning in the late 1930s, military goods during World War II and a \$50 million contract for a sheet metal project in 1952. The 1960s provide GKS with increased technology to

improve finishing systems and a new division to spearhead testing and research in the development of new equipment.

The company enters the global market in 1990 with Page-Koch Europe Limited, now known as George Koch Sons Europe Limited. The venture is dedicated to designing, building, commissioning and servicing paint finishing lines for automobile and major industrial users in Europe.

Currently, GKS helps customers find and implement solutions for their automated finishing systems' environmental, acoustical and thermal requirements. The company is still headquartered in Evansville. Service and technical support is provided from offices in Queretaro, Mexico, and GKS Europe serves Europe and Asia from facilities in Lichfield, England.

## Eli Lilly and Company

*"Take what you find here and make it better and better."*

– Eli Lilly

To understand the history of the pharmaceutical giant headquartered in Indianapolis, one must first learn about Colonel Eli Lilly the man.

Born to Swedish parents, Gustavus and Esther Lilly, on July 8, 1839, in Baltimore, Maryland, Eli Lilly's family settles in Greencastle. He enrolls at Indiana Ashbury University (1852-54), now known as DePauw University.

Lilly becomes interested in chemicals as a teen. While on a trip with his aunt and uncle, he visits Henry Lawrence's Good Samaritan Drug Store, a local apothecary. He completes a four-year apprenticeship with Lawrence to become a chemist and pharmacist.

Beginning in 1861, Lilly serves during the Civil War and even spends time in a prisoner-of-war camp in Enterprise, Mississippi. After his release, he is promoted to colonel and completes his military service in 1865.

Upon returning to Indiana, Lilly establishes his own drug manufacturing operation in Indianapolis with an estimated \$400 in merchandise, several pieces of equipment, a few gallons of unmixed chemicals and about \$1,000 in cash. His lab opens in a rented, two-story building at 15 W. Pearl Street. The year is 1876.

One of the first medicines under production is quinine, a drug used to treat malaria. An innovator, Lilly believes the best way to create

scientifically sound medicines is to hire people to do research. This begins the company's extensive collaborative efforts.

Improvements such as fruit flavoring for medicines and sugar-coated pills, making them easier to swallow, catapult the company's production. In 1917, a *Scientific American* article claims that the Indianapolis operation was the "largest capsule factory in the world" and is "capable of producing 1.5 million capsules a day."

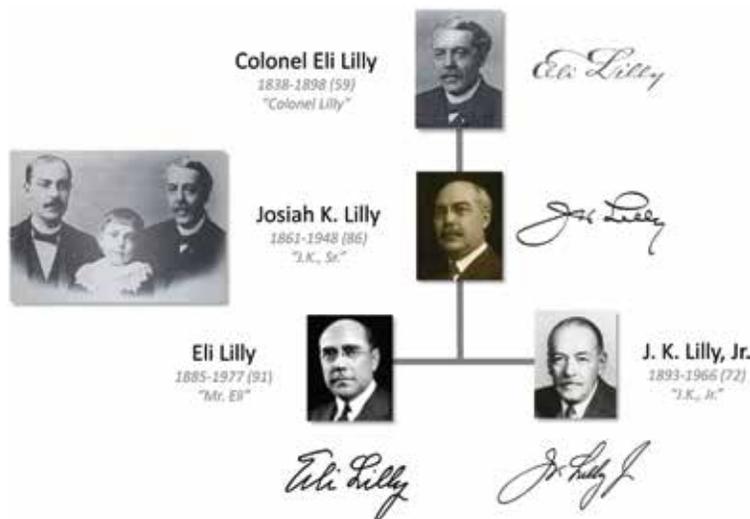
The organization's success with insulin production attracts renowned scientists to join in the effort to discover and create medicines to make life better for people around the world. By 1926, sales reach \$9 million and feature the production of more than 2,800 different items.

A liver-extract product is introduced in 1928 to treat anemia, a life-threatening blood disorder. The Nobel Prize was awarded to the academic collaborators at Eli Lilly and Company who made the discovery.

The 1940s brings the mass production of Penicillin-G, the world's first widely available antibiotic. In 1955, the company goes on to be the first to mass produce the polio vaccine.

With every new decade, more discoveries to improve the lives of people globally are taking place at Eli Lilly and Company.

Today, the company has approximately 33,000 employees worldwide (10,000-plus in Indianapolis) with 7,700 engaged in research and development. Lilly's products are marketed in 120 countries. In 2018, the company reports a 7% increase in revenue to more than \$24.5 billion.



Each of these Lilly men served as president during the company's history (photos courtesy of Eli Lilly and Company archives).



Eli Lilly's first lab opened in a rented two-story building at 15 West Pearl Street in downtown Indianapolis.

## OneAmerica (1877)

Company values are represented by *ASPIRE* – Achievement, Stewardship, Partnership, Integrity, Responsiveness and Excellence.

The Knights of Pythias, a fraternal organization, creates a life insurance program in 1877 that would ultimately be known as OneAmerica. The organization was commonly referred to as FCB, which stands for the Pythian motto, “Friendship, Charity, Benevolence.”

The life insurance division of FCB becomes the American Central Life Insurance Company in 1899. It establishes its reinsurance division in 1904 and is the oldest reinsurance company in the United States.

In 1930, FCB creates United Mutual Life Insurance Company Incorporated. American Central and United Mutual then merge to become American United Life Insurance Company (AUL) in 1936. Combined assets are \$46 million.

At AUL’s headquarters at Fall Creek Parkway in Indianapolis, a signboard is erected in 1958 apologizing for the construction issues caused by an expansion. The sign reads, “What this country needs is a good five-cent nickel.” The signboard and its humorous quips continue to be a fixture in the community today.

Over the next few decades the company experiences steady growth, reaching assets of \$1.1 billion in 1978.

In 1982, AUL moves its operation to a new 38-story building

downtown. After surpassing \$10.6 billion in assets, the company establishes its pension division, later to be known as retirement services.

AUL continues to form strategic alliances, including with The State Life Insurance Company in 1994 and Pioneer Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1998. In 2000, the company reorganizes to form the American United Mutual Insurance Holding Company and OneAmerica Financial Partners, Inc. In 2010, it acquires the Indianapolis-based McCready and Keene, Inc., one of the country’s largest independent actuarial and consulting firms, which specializes in the design and administration of retirement plans.

OneAmerica becomes the title sponsor of the 500 Festival Mini Marathon for the first time in 2005 and celebrates its 15th race last year.

This is just one way the company gives back to the community. In 2014, OneAmerica launches its inaugural Week of Caring to connect associates with United Way organizations for volunteering opportunities. Celebrating its sixth anniversary in 2019, there were 1,100 associates who contributed more than 3,200 hours of service.

A year later, the company announces its largest acquisition, buying the \$26 billion in assets of the retirement service business of BMO Financial Group, bringing with it 200 employees and 830 retirement plans.

Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett declares November 7, 2017, as OneAmerica Day to mark the company’s 140th anniversary. At this point, the company has 2,000 associates.



OneAmerica’s first home was in the Knights of Pythias building at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Pennsylvania Street. In 1958, when the company was headquartered on Fall Creek Parkway, the signboard first became a fixture. The 38-story building built in 1982 remains the corporate headquarters (photos courtesy OneAmerica).

**RESOURCES:** Learn more at [www.kochllc.com](http://www.kochllc.com), [www.lilly.com](http://www.lilly.com) and [www.oneamerica.com](http://www.oneamerica.com)