

# Tucson Realty & Trust Co. has storied past in Old Pueblo

By Dale Quinn Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Sunday, May 29, 2011 12:00 am

After a couple of members of John Dillinger's gang fled a burning Hotel Congress downtown in 1934, they holed up in a house on North Second Avenue rented from Tucson Realty & Trust Co.

Police sniffed them out and arrested them a short time later, so Tucson Realty & Trust rented out the house again. Within a few days, the new tenants came across a closet that was stuck shut.

They called Tucson Realty and someone went to the house to pry the closet open. Inside was \$57,000 in cash. The money was turned over to the police, according to a company history told by a former executive.

A company that's been around for a century is bound to have some stories that weave it into the history of an area. That's surely the case with Tucson Realty & Trust, which turns 100 this year.

"I'm honored to be part of that great history," said George H. "Hank" Amos III, the company's president and CEO. "And honored to still be here."



The company, characterized by its bull's-eye logo, has done business with some unique personalities in Tucson's history.

There's Nellie P. Covert, who decades ago lived on Park Avenue just north of the University of Arizona. Because of the extent of the mortgage business she did with the company, she expected a higher level of service.

A.E. ARAIZA / ARIZONA DAILY STAR 2009 George H. "Hank" Amos III, Tucson Realty's CEO, shows a sign from the 1930s near the National Bank Plaza at 333 N. Wilmot Road, where the company currently has an office.

She maintained a large flock of hens and when one died, a manager in the mortgage department, a devout Baptist, was expected to go to her home and perform services for the dead chicken.

When Covert's health deteriorated, Tucson Realty eventually became her guardian and the custodian of her estate. The firm hired nurses to care for her, looked after her investments and took care of her chickens.

That kind of dedication from agents, managers and staff - many of whom worked for the company longer than 10 years - has allowed the company to stay alive, said Hank.

When Raytheon Missile Systems, formerly Hughes Missile Systems, made plans to move to Tucson, Hank went to one of the company's divisions in California as part of a residential relocation team. There he found employees wearing buttons with a crossed out cactus.

The message was clear.

"They were angry, they were not happy about it," Hank said.

But he said he was able to work with the employees and help them make the transition to Tucson.

For Hank, there was never really a question about whether he would go into the real estate and insurance business. His grandfather, George H. Amos, started working for the company in 1911, cleaning spittoons, sweeping the office and getting rental houses in shape. Some years later, he was running the place.

Hank's late father, George H. Amos Jr., whom everyone called "Buddy," eventually took the reins of the business as well.

Hank said that through the years he and his family have seen vast changes in the way Tucson does business. He remembers when people would go to the Old Pueblo Club downtown for lunch, have a couple of drinks, shoot pool and talk business.

Times have changed since then. People got healthier and stopped drinking during work hours in the early 1980s, he said.



At one point, Tucson Realty & Trust had about 600 employees. Now it has 50. But the company, which has survived economic downturns in the past, will continue on, said Hank. It's getting ready to move to a new location at 2525 E. Broadway at the end of June.

DAVID SANDERS / ARIZONA  
DAILY STAR 1987 Tucson Realty's  
George H. Amos Jr. welcomed the  
headquarters to its new location at River  
and North Campbell.

But the current downturn has been tough. In the past, when the real estate market declined, the company could rely on its insurance business. This recession has hit on both fronts.

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Real estate

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George H. "Hank" Amos III speaking to the effects of the economic downturn on real estate and insurance