

# NEIGHBORS

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The Herald



PHOTOS BY CARL JUSTE/HERALD STAFF

**SHARED INTEREST:** Husband and wife team John and Anne Knowles are the second generation of a family that started in the printing business 50 years ago.

Maybe it's in their genes. Or it could just be a fascination with photos, design and printing.

Whatever it is, though, has kept the Knowles family in the same business for three generations.

Today, the second and third generations are planning the 50th anniversary of Photo Offset at 4545 Ponce De Leon Blvd.

After five decades of ink and presses, there isn't much in the printing industry that the Knowles family can't deal with.

Want digital printing? You got it. Want traditional printing? You bet. Want graphic design? No problem.

Add to that what the family calls a secret ingredient that bolsters its steady business base:

"We treat our customers the way we like to be treated," John Knowles said. "We like to develop long-term relationships with our clients."

He still has some of his father's

customers from 30 years ago.

The company's longevity, John Knowles says, is also due to its willingness to invest and take risks with new printing technology.

"I am proud of the business," Knowles said.

When he was a kid, he loved hanging out at his father's shop, playing the inquisitive floor sweeper.

But he never planned on being captured by the world of photography and printing.

An accountant by training, Knowles was "just helping out" at his dad's business 22 years ago.

But he never left.

Neither did his wife, Anne Knowles. Now she is the bookkeeper; daughter Pamela is a graphic designer; and son John Jr. is the production manager.

"It's been wonderful that it has always been a family business," Anne said.

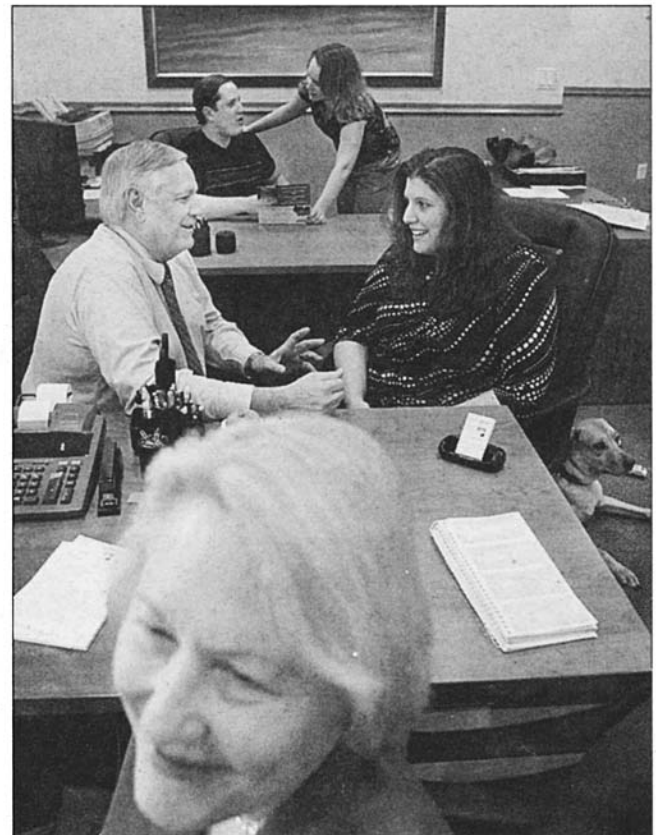
## MIAMI-DADE

# After 50 years, family not ready to stop the presses

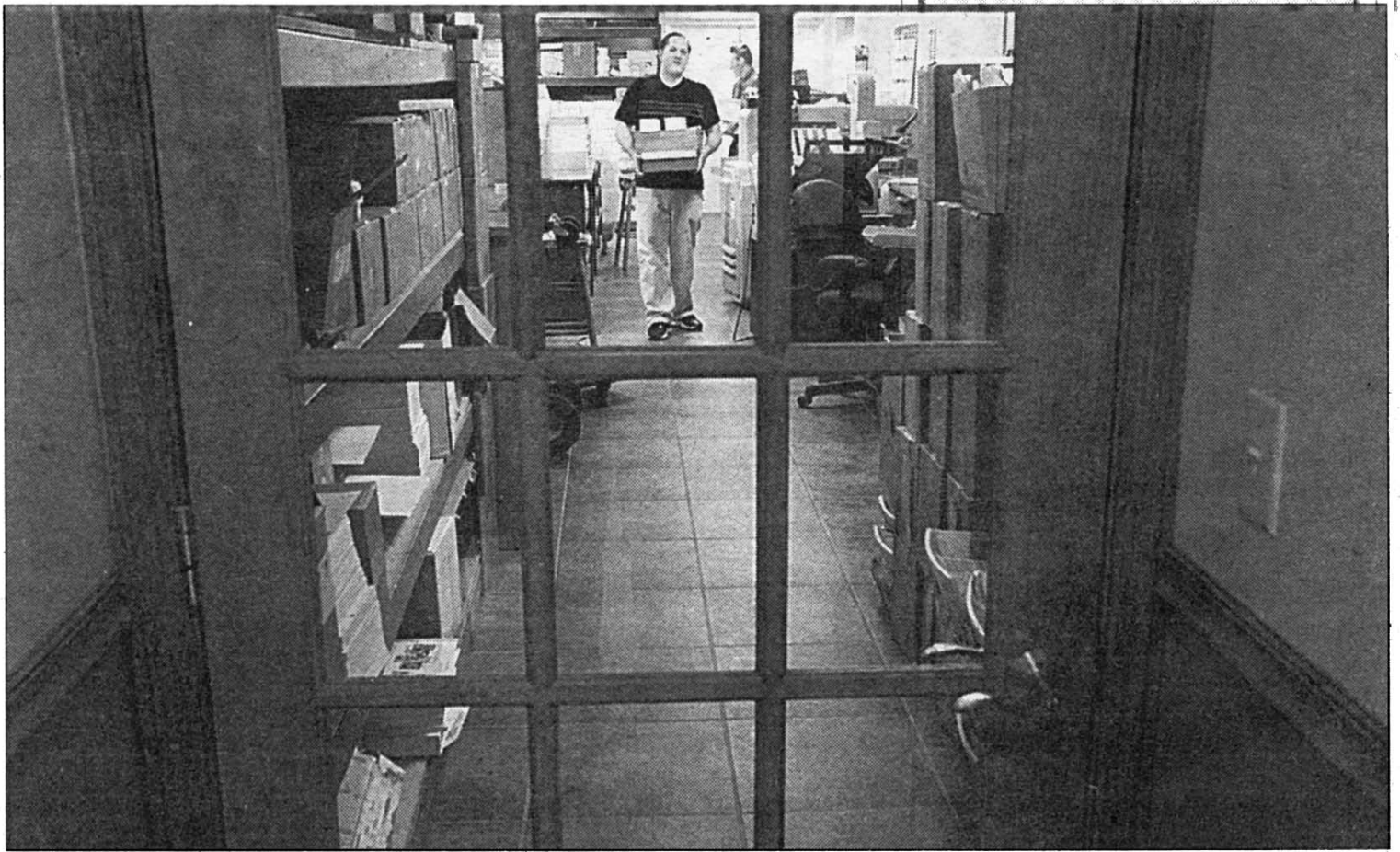
When the presses first started at Photo Offset, Dwight D. Eisenhower was in the White House.

BY NINVE DALLALCHI

Herald Writer



**CALLING THE SHOTS:** Photo Offset is family-run. From left, starting at foreground, are Anne Knowles, husband John with Mindy Mones; John Jr. and sister Pamela Knowles.



**NEXT GENERATION:** John Knowles Jr. is the production manager of Photo Offset, 4545 Ponce De Leon Blvd., now in its 50th year.

Like their father, Pamela Knowles and John Jr. started helping out sporadically and never left.

John Jr.'s fiancée, Mindy Mones, works as a graphic designer.

Pamela Knowles met her boyfriend, graphic designer Sean Pickett, at Photo Offset -- so out of 12 employees, six are family and soon-to-be family.

"I'm happy here now, so we will see how things go," Pamela said.

Another thing the family has in common is its excitement over constantly changing technology.

Next year, they want to incorporate something called "direct to plate," which will send an image from a computer straight to a metal plate.

The plate will come out with an imprint and be ready for inking.

The process eliminates the need for film and makes printing about 10 times faster -- it skips five to six steps that required an employee.

The new technology is costly, but the family knows it will bring more

clients and more revenue.

John Knowles remembers when his father had to spend a lot of time getting a plate ready for imprint. He had to pour a chemical called coding on a piece of zinc and let it dry.

Coding reacts to light, which is what brings out the image on the plate.

Back then, his father had about 50 customers, and jobs sometimes took a while.

Today, thanks to technology and the speed it brings, John Knowles can service about 500 regular clients and another 500 who need different jobs completed at different times.

One regular client is Pearce Financial Group -- Photo Offset does all of its printing.

Pearce Senior Vice President Howard Kane said John Knowles and his employees are creative and easy and fun to work with.

"He does a great job, and he is not expensive," Kane said. "He is phenomenal."

The Riviera Country Club in Coral Gables is another satisfied client. For seven years, Photo Offset has printed the club's brochures, event and party invitations, fliers and postcards, said membership and social director Elisa Swaebe.

"They treat their clients like family," she said.

Clients aren't the only happy folks at Photo Offset.

Pressman German Carrillo said he wants to work there for the rest of his life. He wakes up in the morning and looks forward to work.

"This is my second home," he said.

Anne Knowles said it is important that employees are satisfied, because it creates a better ambience and it makes everyone work better.

Anne and John Knowles say they are looking into retiring in two years and - - what else? -- planning to leave the business in the hands of their children.