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A HISTORY OF HOSPITALITY

Brothers keep tradition alive

■ The Dora family has been involved in hotel management, construction for years.

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If every hotel developed by the Dora family were named the Dora Inn, travelers in Indiana would find the name as familiar as other famous chains, such as Holiday and Ramada.

Still, to those in the know in the industry, the Dora name

FISHERS

means hotel, even if it isn't visible to the motoring public.

In a family with a tradition of hotel development, brothers Timothy J. and Robert W. Dora have followed prolifically in their father's footsteps.

Their 13th hotel, an upscale Best Western, is under construction Downtown, a block west of their Comfort Inn, both near the RCA Dome.

In addition to those two, their 14th facility, a Hilton Garden Inn, is set to begin construction in the fall on the southeast corner of U.S. 31 and 131st Street in Carmel.

Since 1986 they have also developed three hotels in Fishers, and one each in Anderson, Plainfield, South Bend, Shelbyville, Evansville, Fort Wayne and the Illinois communities of Algonquin and McHenry.

"We always say, 'That's probably it.' Then we say that's not it," said Bob Dora.

Their father, two brothers and an uncle didn't hold back, either, rearing about two dozen other hotels in the two generation family tradition of lodging development.

Bob and Tim Dora were unlikely business partners, considering they grew up years apart, only becoming close in their adult lives as they ventured to create hotels.

"When I went away to college, Tim was 10 years old," Bob Dora recalled. Tim followed in Bob's path to the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Bob Dora of Fishers is 50, married and has three children. Brother Tim, of Carmel, is 42, and married with five children.

Their Dora Brothers Hospitality Corp.'s main office is in Anderson, where Bob spends much of his business time.

But Tim Dora mostly works from their Holiday Inn just northeast of I 69 and 96th Street in Fishers, and only steps away from their Holiday Inn Express and Sleep Inn Northeast.

The brothers grew up in Vincennes, where their father operated the Covered Wagon Lodge.

"I started carrying bags at the Covered Wagon Lodge," Bob Dora recalled of his childhood.

Over time, the brothers absorbed the hospitality tradition, as did other relatives.

Their father, the late Robert Dora, developed the Holiday Inn Airport, East, South and Northwest



Rich Miller / staff photo

Need a Room? Bob (left) and Tim Dora have the hotel business in their blood. They run the Holiday Inn Express in Fishers, among others. Construction will begin in the fall on the brothers' 14th facility, a \$7.7 million Hilton Garden Inn (top) at U.S. 31 and 131st Street in Carmel.

in Indianapolis and Holiday Inns in Beech Grove, Terre Haute and Columbus, plus hotels in Key Largo, Fla., and Birmingham, Ala.

Their uncle, James Dora, developed Crown Plaza Union Station, Holiday Inn Select North, Holiday Inn Express South and Homewood Suites Keystone in Indianapolis, and hotels in Kokomo and La-fayette. A brother, John Dora, built the Hampton Inn in Southport and another brother, Joe, built a hotel in Kenosha, Wis.

"I don't think there's any family in Indiana comparable" in the number of hotels and involvement in the industry, said John Livengood, president and chief executive officer of the Indiana Hotel and Lodging Association.

"The industry is better off because they are a part of it," he said. "Their properties add a lot to the mix."

Amy Vaughan, executive director of the Hamilton County Convention and Visitors Bureau, agrees.

"They're recognized for building and maintaining very high quality hotels," she said. "They're very respected within Indiana's hospitality industry."

Bob Dora takes pride in tracing his family's lineage in America directly to Jean-Baptiste Richard, a French pioneer who became the first European settler in Indiana.

Before he was killed by Chickasaw Indians on the Ohio River, said Bob Dora, Richard exhibited the first inkling that hospitality would be in the Dora blood.

Richard imported brandy to Indiana under a license issued by the governor of Quebec.

"In terms of hospitality," said Bob Dora, "we go back to 1718 in Indiana."



Submitted Photo