

# Happy 50th anniversary, W.R. Rayson!

This year, **W.R. Rayson Co., Inc.** will celebrate 100 years in the beauty business

for the **DiMartino** family, who founded the company, and 50 years under the W.R. Rayson name. Known primarily for its end wraps, the Burgaw, NC-based manufacturer also sells accessories, including hi-lite wraps, protective wear, towels and wipes, waxing supplies and other products for the salon, spa and pet industries. The

company also offers a private-label option for its products.

The DiMartino family patriarch, **Alberto DiMartino**, immigrated to the United States through Ellis Island at 16 years old in 1893, leaving his entire family behind in Gragnano, Italy. Through a series of events, he started to train at the McAlpin Hotel in New York City as a shave cup boy. Eventually, he learned how to perform all types of hair services for both men and women, and became a well-known hairdresser for the Ziegfeld Girls, as well as many other Vaudeville and Broadway stars.

**Ray DiMartino**, Alberto's son, a star football player at Manhattan College and a Major in the Army Air Corps, flew B-24s during WWII. After the war, he returned home, started a family and began working as a salesman in the industrial paper products

industry in New York City. In 1952, Ray was the first person to introduce a lightweight, wet-strength tissue paper for use as an "end wrap"

for the new cold-wave salon perms.

In 1969, Ray's son **Michael DiMartino**, who is still the company's president and CEO today, returned home after his tour of duty in Vietnam to start what is now known as W.R. Rayson Co., Inc. with his father, Ray. They began in a small, 5,000-square-foot garage building in South Brooklyn, near the docks. After years of hard work, W.R. Rayson

moved to Shirley, Long Island, to a much larger factory, and **Mary** and **Meg DiMartino** joined the family business in sales positions. Today, Mary serves as national sales manager, and Meg left the company to open a luxury spa in Georgetown, TX.

The question is often asked, where did the name come from? Here's the answer: When Ray and Michael formed the company in 1969, Ray thought DiMartino was too hard to pronounce. So, the W.R. represents the initials of Michael's mother—**Wilma R.**—while Rayson stands for Ray and son.

What about the next 50 years? "Rayson will continue to provide quality products and excellent customer service to beauty industry professionals, as we have done for the past 50 years," says Michael. "As a small business, we are more adaptable to the constant changes within the professional beauty industry, and we work continuously on new product development."

The company is planning a 50th Anniversary party at its headquarters in Burgaw, NC, in October. Michael has established a trust to carry Rayson into the next generation. As he always says, "Friends are the family we choose."

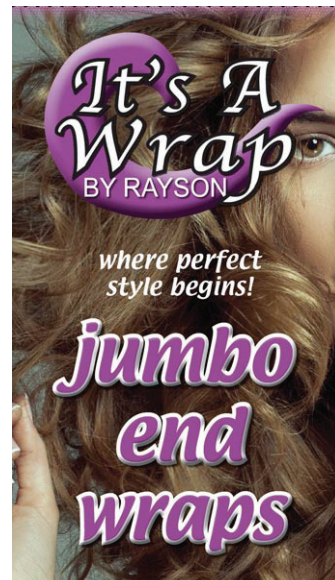
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*Alberto DiMartino, the DiMartino family patriarch, was a famous hairdresser in New York City.*



*left: Ray DiMartino and his son Michael, who continues to run W.R. Rayson today. right: Michael's parents, Wilma, after whom the company is named, and Ray DiMartino.*



*W.R. Rayson's signature Jumbo End Wraps are a staple in salons around the world.*