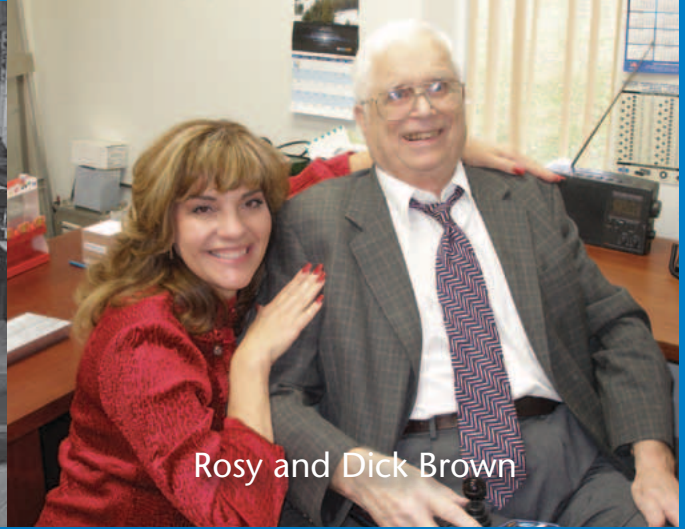


Founders Rick and Dick Brown



Rosy and Dick Brown

Rasco Industries, Inc.

... The Bug Blocker® Product Family

Many in the door and access systems industry recognize Rasco Industries as being the company with the unusual product symbol...a bug. Although I've known the company for quite a number of years, I, too, thought of them as the producers of screen doors that prevent insects from entering a facility. In November, I traveled to Loretto, Minnesota, and met with the company's Chief Operator Officer, Rosalee Brown, better known to us as Rosy. After spending a few hours with Rosy and meeting the people of Rasco, my perspective of the company changed dramatically. Minnesota is known for its friendly people and are often referred to as *Minnesota Nice*... the people of Rasco are perfect examples.

As for Rasco Industries, there are at least two stories that should be shared with the readers of *International Door & Operator Industry*. The most important story relates to the people of Rasco, with the second focusing on the company's impressive line of products. Most of us remember the late Rick Brown, the man with the vision who, working with his father, Dick, developed the first bug screen door back in the '80s. To me, Rick was a great guy and always there to support IDA, especially the IDA Scholarship Foundation. He was an interesting man with a unique product, but beyond that I didn't really know him.

As an example, I didn't know that prior to forming Rasco, Rick was an executive with Motorola. I certainly didn't know how he came to be the president of Rasco. His widow, and now company CEO, Rosy, filled me in. She told me that in the early 80's, while still with Motorola, Rick was talking with one of his clients about having problems with bees. It seems

that the bees were being attracted to his factory and stinging the employees. Now, these were not your typical honey bee variety, nor were they killer bees. Rather, they were drunken bees. That's correct. It seems that the bees were coming from a nearby area where fermented apples were freely available for the bees' consumption and pleasure. These intoxicated pests were causing significant problems.

After conducting research and not finding any products to prevent entry of insects into loading dock areas, the creative genius of Rick kicked in, and the entrepreneur spark was lit. He enlisted the assistance of his father, Dick Brown, who already had 30 patents in his name. Together the two men became partners and the testing of various door systems began. Although the Bug Blocker® was actually designed and produced in the 80's, it wasn't until 1992 that a profit from the product was realized. That is the year that Rick and Dick recognized as being the initial year of Rasco Industries. It is interesting to

RASCO INDUSTRIES, INC.

The company's Mission Statement reads, *Doors of Excellence.*

note that Rick, like many door dealers, initially operated his business out of a garage (his father's) before moving into what is now the company's sixth manufacturing facility.

Talk about entrepreneurship. How many of us would be willing to risk a lucrative executive position with an internationally recognized company to pursue the business of blocking insects from entering buildings? No doubt Rick made this leap of faith because he was confident in the market and more importantly his ability to create products to meet market needs. It was Rick's business knowledge, marketing and sales skill, and Dick's engineering genius that allowed them to create a new industry and fulfill customer needs.

Rosy got to know Rick while working with him at the IDA Expo in Nashville, and marrying him during the IDA Expo in Las Vegas the following year. For those who attended the Expo, I'm sure you'll recall seeing the beautiful bride and proud groom as they staffed the Rasco display. Rosy and Rick even had a small wedding reception at the Reno Regional

show with a cake provided by CODA members. And, most recently, she states, "The IDA community has helped me so much in this great loss of my beloved husband Rick who passed away in April of 2009. Members have gone out of their way offering support, sharing their experience and expertise, and helping me step into the position of President of Rasco Industries. Thank you."

During their very first Expo experience, they were having extreme difficulty in setting up their display. That year Rasco was located right next to Napoleon/Lynx. "Seeing our dilemma, the Schram family came over and helped us set up," stated Rosy. "We decided that whatever those guys were selling, we would be a customer for life," she added. According to Rosy, through happy and sad times the IDA membership has been a community of caring and helpful people. What a great testament to the power of an association and especially the IDA. For many who were in Vegas that year, you'll no doubt remember the lady who wore the unique bumblebee

oufit. It was none other than Marion Brown, Rick's mother. So if anyone ever wondered why they give away bees at the IDA Expo, now you know.

Actually it was through the IDA-produced International Garage Door Exposition, and various regional meetings, that Rasco formed relationships with door dealers and fellow manufacturers. At first, dealers weren't that enthusiastic about the products, but that changed with time. Today, the door dealer and installer are the heart of their business because the door dealer is usually the first to introduce Rasco's products to the end user. They are the company's representatives and the installers of their products.

In many cases Rasco supplies the lead for dealers. The company shows their products in a number of trade shows, and as an example, in one month created 1,000 leads. Once the lead has been created, dealers are needed to call on the prospect, and measure their doors for an installed

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price estimate. Rasco helps from the initial sale, installation, all the way through the life of the door.

Since the early days of Rasco's development, the company has expanded its product line extensively. Today, the firm manufactures: Overhead Loading Dock Screen Doors (known as Bug Blocker® doors in our industry), Stainless Steel Expanded Metal Security Doors, Chain Link Security Doors, Service Door Screen Inserts, Air Inlet and Louver Screen Panels, Industrial Screen Doors, and Concession Stand Screens. Each of these products is hand crafted to the exact specifications of the customer. Because they are individualized products, Rasco has a serial number affixed to every door that is produced. If a door is damaged by a fork lift as an example, the dealer only needs to call in the serial number and precise replacement components will be manufactured and promptly shipped.

Rasco certainly hasn't been complacent and satisfied with the original Bug Blocker®. They now provide security, ventilation, and pest control for their customers, and have seen explosive growth since 9/11. The security aspects of their doors have sparked the interest of consumers and federal agencies including prisons. Commenting to their dramatic growth, Rosy stated, "We help companies comply with many new government guidelines and regulations." She shared that some dealers don't realize that their custom doors can be quite large, but in fact one of their doors was recognized by the IDA in the association's Monster Door Contest. While I was talking with her, she called attention to an order received that very day for three, 20' wide by 14' high doors. According to Rosy, if you can put a sectional door in the opening, they can engineer and produce a screen door for it.

Rosy acknowledged the point that some dealers may think that these products are difficult to install. Regarding this, she commented, "There



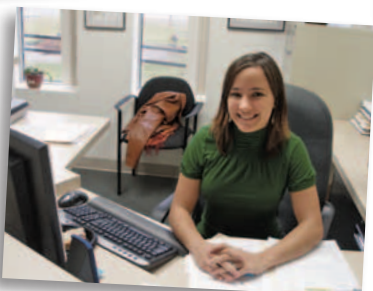
Rasco certainly hasn't been complacent and satisfied with the original Bug Blocker®. They now provide security, ventilation, and pest control.

seems to be the idea among some that our products are hard to install. Well, twenty years ago that might have been the case, but now we have simplified the steps and can help installers through the process." "If you can install a sectional door, you can install one of our products," she added.

The list of companies using Rasco products for security purposes is impressive and includes: Budweiser, Pepsi, Sony, Coca-Cola, Pillsbury, and Best Buy. These companies recognize that the screen doors offer a green alternative to Homeland security issues for their numerous distribution facilities, but also value the fact that the doors restrict entry of not only human intruders, but also bugs, birds, and even rodents. Another major user of Rasco products are airports. Apparently the FAA tests the security of airport freight, luggage, and general use doors by placing a package at the door with a telephone number to call. The agent records how long it takes a person to find the package and call. Serious fines can result if violations are identified.

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While touring their facilities, I was shown a video that effectively demonstrated the strength of their products. In one scene, a man strikes the door screen with an axe, and can't gain access to the building. It is quite impressive. It was interesting to learn that the doors can be manually operated or motorized, and even high speed. By viewing the video, I can certainly understand why so many industries are investigating the use of these products.

According to Rosy, she, like many others, sees the residential market as remaining flat for a while longer. She encourages dealers to expand into new market sectors such as commercial door and service. "Our products can help door dealers expand into markets they've never tried before," she stated. "Also, commercial door dealers are able to call back on existing customers to show them our helpful line of products," she added.

"Our products can help door dealers expand into markets they've never tried before..."

The company's Mission Statement reads, *Doors of Excellence*, and I don't doubt that for a moment. However, as I walked through the offices and manufacturing facilities and met with the people, I quickly realized that this company is very special. I was proud to shake the hand of Dick Brown, P.E., Vice President of Engineering, and Rick's father. These are the two men who took a vision and made it reality.

I spent time with Rosy's father, Harry Coffin, Production Manager. A retired airline pilot captain, Harry agreed to give Rosy some support for a temporary period, and now is a permanent employee. Harry is not only a pilot, but also builds remote controlled airplanes...some really impressive ones. I also enjoyed spending a few moments with Mike Ingemansen, Application Engineer and his delightful wife, Karen, and Victoria Scully, Inside Sales Manager, and Tyler Schmakel, IT Specialist. I was impressed with Sophia Carlson, an Administrative Assistant, who volunteers her time with the Russian sector of her community. The entire team was focused, friendly, and dedicated to their respective responsibilities.

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“through happy and sad times the IDA membership has been a community of caring and helpful people. What a great testament to the power of an association and especially the IDA.”

Oh, yes, a little more about the woman at the helm. Prior to joining Rasco she was in the art business representing artists, and owned a company that employed six people. She has her pilot’s license for single engine aircraft with nearly 400 flying hours. Rosy speaks fluent Spanish and is a former runway model...as a matter of fact her resume lists that she is a former International Runway Model of the Year.

When asked if she would like to address the readers with a specific comment, she replied, “I would like to thank the industry for 20 years of support. I want to also encourage door dealers to expand their product lines, and add another arrow to their quiver so that they can hit the mark with their sales goals. Rasco Industries can help dealers do just that. Our product line is unique in that we can custom make our doors to exacting requirements...small or large. We offer much needed green products for your customers. Get to know us...working together we can accomplish great things!”



Rosy and Dick giving away gifts at IDA Expo.



Rick, Dick and Marion Brown fenced in at Expo.



IDA Monster Garage Contest Winner.



Marion our Queen Bee.



Mike Ingmansen winning IDA Monster Garage Contest.



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