

## MODERN AUTOMOTIVE

In October, 1933, O.T. Fowler, Sr. and R.E.L. Morefield, Sr. purchased a struggling Chevrolet dealership at 148 North Main Street in Winston-Salem, changed its name, and began operating as Modern Chevrolet. The company survived the Great Depression and grew to become a successful dealership with approximately 75 employees.

In 1942, with the United States involved in World War II, all automobile production stopped. Mr. Morefield, Sr. died in June of that year, leaving the dealership in the hands of O.F. Fowler and Mr. Morefield's son, R.E.L. Jr. With no new automobiles to sell due to the war, the number of employees dropped to 19, mostly service and parts personnel. When the war ended the business quickly grew again as there was tremendous pent-up demand for new cars and trucks.

To meet this new demand, the company built in 1947 a state-of-the-art, architecturally striking dealership at 800 West Fourth Street, which became a landmark in downtown Winston-Salem. Fred Fowler joined the business full-time in 1963. By January 1977, Rob Fowler was employed as well and the Fowler family had purchased the ownership interest of the Morefield's. The Chevrolet building underwent major renovations in 1988 and 1995, before moving to the current University Parkway location in 2004.

During the last two decades, Fred and Rob Fowler greatly expanded the number of franchises represented by Modern, beginning with the purchase of Modern Nissan, located in Winston-Salem, from Flow Motors in 1989. Modern Toyota, also in Winston-Salem, was purchased in 1990 from Bill Jackson Toyota. The Modern Infiniti dealership in Greensboro was purchased from Rice-Marko in 2000 and Modern Infiniti of Winston-Salem was started in 2001. Modern Nissan of Concord was also purchased in 2001 with Gary Frazier as a partner. In 2003, Modern opened Nissan of Lake Norman and Modern Hyundai of Concord started operation in 2006.

Today, the Modern Automotive Network employs more than 650 people and sells more than 12,000 new and used cars annually. The philosophy of creating a family atmosphere for both customers and employees, while offering great service and value for our customers, has served Modern well for 75 years and will continue to guide us in the future.



**Front Row (left to right)**

**Omnia Fowler**, General Manager – Modern Toyota

**Edwin Welch, Jr.**, President – I.L. Long Construction Co., Inc. and 2008 Chairman, Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce

**Fred Fowler**, Co-Owner – Modern Automotive Network

**West Fowler**, General Manager – Modern Chevrolet

**Second Row (left to right)**

**Jim Williams**, General Manager – Embassy Suites

**Terry Barber**, Director of Catering – Twin City Quarter

**Peggy Low**, Senior Vice President, Technology - Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce

**Mike Miller**, President & Publisher– The Winston-Salem Journal

**Third Row (left to right)**

**Amy Egleston**, Senior Vice President, Community Relations - Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce

**Gayle Anderson**, President & CEO – Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce

**Steve Kenney**, President - QC Engraving