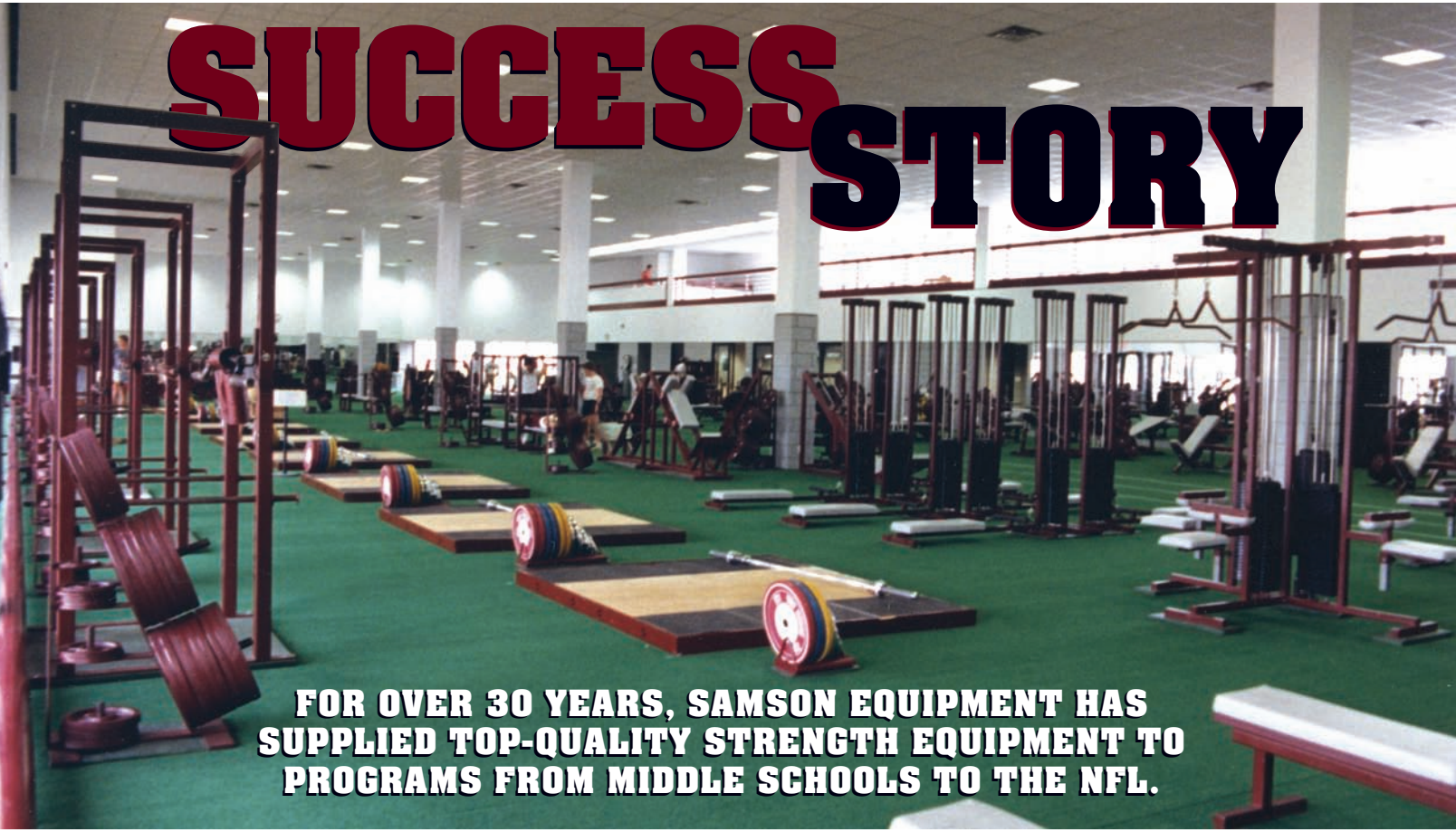




SUCCESS STORY



FOR OVER 30 YEARS, SAMSON EQUIPMENT HAS SUPPLIED TOP-QUALITY STRENGTH EQUIPMENT TO PROGRAMS FROM MIDDLE SCHOOLS TO THE NFL.

Texas A & M's weight room was a breakthrough deal for Samson in 1985.

Dave Schroeder faced a common dilemma among high school coaches in the 1970's – how to create an effective weight training facility with a limited budget in an era when equipment was very expensive and would frequently last only a few years. As a coach of football, wrestling and track and field at the high school level in Texas and New Mexico and a former lineman and graduate assistant at New Mexico State, Dave was a pioneer in incorporating weight training into his athletes' training regimens. His philosophy was shared by his wife, Linda, who coached swimming, gymnastics and field hockey at New Mexico State. "Both Linda and I recognized that strength training gave our athletes a competitive edge," recalled Dave. "But there were no companies at that time catering to our needs: affordable, well-designed equipment that was built to last."

So, in July 1976, Dave and Linda decided to invest \$2,000, create a company that would build equipment that was tough, durable, and priced right; perfect for the growing school market. Samson Weight Training Equipment Inc. was born – in the Schroeder's garage.

Without a marketing budget, Dave had to rely on word-of-mouth advertising and networking with football coaches in the early years. "I was a one-man show," said Dave. "Every time I made a sale and delivered equipment, I'd stop to visit every school along the way to meet with football coaches I knew from playing and coaching." Gradually the sales did come. Dave points to one particularly important new customer in 1985 that kick-started Samson's business with major football programs – Texas A & M.

"At that time, A & M was building what was said to be the largest weight room in the country," Dave remembered. "On a recommendation from one of our customers, their strength and conditioning coach Bert Hill contacted me. In those days, it was actually easier to sell our equipment to someone who was more knowledgeable and Bert knew all the right questions to ask about how our equipment was built and the quality parts we used. He was also concerned about the equipment being suitable for all A & M athletes, from a 4'10" gymnast to a 7' basketball player and was pleased that all of our equipment was adjustable. After he visited our facility in Las Cruces and saw our manufacturing process, we got the business."

It wasn't long before Dave got a call from Texas' strength coach

Dana LeDuc, who's now with the St. Louis Rams. "We got the job at UT to outfit their new weight facility with one condition," said Dave. "That was that their equipment was different from A & M's." In short order, the two Texas deals were followed by another at BYU, again on a personal recommendation from a coach.

Steady, solid growth characterized the next 22 years for Samson. Dozens of D-I universities, hundreds of high schools and even 23 NFL teams have become Samson customers. Not to mention 11 NBA teams, five NHL teams and 16 MLB clubs. Today, the company is a multi-million dollar enterprise. You'll find Samson equipment in countries all over the world, and even in the White House. "President Bush used to train on our equipment at the University of Texas when he was Governor," explained Scott Schroeder, Dave's son and



Samson founders Dave and Linda Schroeder.

Samson's Sales Manager. "So he could train at home, he ordered a home gym unit for the Governor's mansion. Shortly after he was elected President, we received an order from the White House for the same type of unit."

Scott and brothers Brian and Brad grew up around Samson Equipment, assisting with a wide variety of tasks and learning the business from the inside out. "We basically did everything that needed to be done," according to Scott. He and Brian, however, left Las Cruces for college and each eventually landed jobs as strength and conditioning coaches; Scott at Texas State University in San Marcos and Brian at the University of Hawaii. Today, they're both back at Samson, managing sales and marketing. "The work we did when we were young really helped prepare us for the custom jobs we handle today, which is such a big part of our business," said Scott. Brad, who's a systems analyst in the New Mexico Governor's office, finds time to design and maintain the company website. With Scott, Brian, Brad and their parents all involved in the day-to-day operations and management of Samson, it has remained very much a family business.

There have been many milestones in the 31 years since Dave and Linda Schroeder founded Samson. But regardless of how much the company has grown, they've never varied far from Dave Schroeder's original business philosophy – build solid equipment using the best materials available, make it affordable, back it up with a powerful warranty, and put the focus on customers. ▲



Lakeside School in Seattle.

CUSTOM WORK LEADS TO LOYAL CUSTOMERS

A hallmark of Samson's business is customer loyalty – many strength and conditioning coaches have remained Samson customers for years despite switching programs. Take Mike Durand.

Head Strength & Conditioning Coach of Lakeside School in Seattle, Durand believes in sticking with a good thing. That's why he has been a Samson customer for over 10 years. Samson's Strength & Conditioning High School Coach of the Year in 2006, Durand has held positions at high schools, colleges and even the NFL. At every stop, he's chosen Samson, in particular for their ability to customize their equipment to meet his specific needs.

"I first purchased from Samson when I was at the University of Utah back in 1997," recalled Durand. "Samson made six custom 10' tall power racks with interlocking dip attachments and custom pull up bars. I've purchased something from Samson everywhere I've worked. From single pieces of equipment at the University of Kansas and the Oakland Raiders to fully equipped weight rooms at Eastern Michigan University and Harvard-Westlake School to my current position at Lakeside, where Samson just completed an entire custom weight room for us."

When Durand needed a new piece of equipment to perform a specific task, Samson was there. "I had an idea about a custom piece of equipment, and Samson showed me how they could make it work," he said. Just as important, according to Durand, is making equipment that maximizes the space in your facility. "They can customize any piece of equipment to fit your weight room, regardless of floor space or ceiling height."

Samson's willingness to customize their equipment sets them apart from many of their competitors. "Customer satisfaction is our number one goal," according to Scott Schroeder. "Often, that means building equipment that's sized to fit the exact dimensions of a room."

Mike Durand offers potential customers some useful advice. "If you are outfitting an entire weight room take the time and meet with Samson and go over every detail of your wants and needs. The last two weight rooms we have outfitted I have gone down and met with Samson at their facility and spent an entire day covering every detail. There is no better way to do it and there is no better company to do it with."