



Cheryl and Larry Nichols have run their small business since 1976. They have an office in Mobile and one in Southfield, Mich.

Two Firms, Two States, Two Decades of Success

Considering death and taxes are life's only guarantees, **Larry Nichols** chose wisely 40 years ago.

The owner of Nichols Financial Services credits nurturing clients and empowering them to boost their financial literacy while sustaining two separate profitable business models in two states for the past two decades.

Nichols Financial Services is the Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

"Instead of making people feel that they have to have someone's help to accomplish a certain thing, we let them know they are perfectly capable of making sound financial decisions, and we can help by providing the information and being a resource," said Nichols, a Mobile native who launched the firm in Detroit in 1976.

And after 20 years in business in the Azalea City, Nichols said there is no question his clients respond well to not being underestimated.

By 1996, he said the "business climate in Mobile was improving," and he wanted to be closer to his aging parents, so he opted to expand his operation to his hometown and began splitting his time between the two cities.

The transition proved more difficult than he expected.

"When I left Michigan, people were pursuing me

because of my reputation and referrals, for my expertise in assisting individuals in maximizing their resources, specifically in tax planning and preparation and in the area of retirement planning," he said. "When I got home to Mobile, it was just the opposite. I had to, shall I say, establish myself and go out and reach new clients here in Mobile to make the operation profitable."

He spent the first few years back in Mobile handing out flyers and investing in television advertising, while working from Michigan 12 weeks of the year. The company "had to adapt" to the needs of clients in Mobile, he said, such as payroll accounting and income tax services for individuals and small businesses.

These days, he spends only two weeks each June, July and August on-site with the Southfield, Mich., practice. For the rest of the year, he works with his wife, Cheryl, and youngest child, Keturah, in the family-owned Mobile office on Michael Boulevard.

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at 251-431-8652 or
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