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## **Robert H. Lord Company celebrates 50 years - by Ronald Paolillo**

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Shown (from left) are: Peter Lord, VP of sales; Robert Lord, founder; and John Lord, president and CEO.

Photograph by J. Fioreck Photography

You might ask how a relatively small family business thrives in a time of e-commerce and large national sales companies. The answer is simple: adaptation. Over the past 50 years, the Robert H. Lord Company (RHL) successfully adapted to the ever-changing educational furniture and architectural products market and in doing so, has morphed into a leader in several niches of this market throughout New England. Robert “Bob” Lord started his classroom furniture dealership in the basement of his home with the support of his wife, Nancy, and a few neighbors as his “office staff.” A significant opportunity soon presented itself: representing a major manufacturer of classroom furniture. This boost allowed Bob to grow the business by adding classroom and science lab case goods, folding walls, and operable partitions to his product offerings; moving the business to his first office in Glastonbury, Connecticut; and increasing staff. Changes that gave RHL a strong foothold in Connecticut’s K-12 educational furniture market.

Bob realized that continued growth would require continual changes. In the early 1980’s Bob turned over the Connecticut territory to his son, John Lord, and began to call on the rest of New England. Reaching beyond Connecticut was not an easy task but knocking on doors and stopping at local gas stations for directions paid off. Soon enough, Bob hired account executives located in those states. Product offerings grew to include Hussey Seating (telescopic bleachers and auditorium seating) and Porter Athletics (basketball, volleyball and other athletic equipment) By the year 2000 the company outgrew its Glastonbury office and relocated to its current showroom/warehouse in Manchester, CT, which underwent a major renovation in 2014.

Under the current leadership of John Lord as president and CEO, and Peter Lord as vice president of sales, RHL has continued to prosper. While maintaining a strong presence in the K-12 market, the RHL portfolio grew to include private schools, higher education, public libraries and field houses. Teaming with manufacturers like V/S, RHL offers furnishings to support current theories of pedagogy and facilitate new methods of educating people of all ages. Its staff includes people experienced in design, architecture, construction and project management; people with experience

in designing and building educational facilities. By continuing to learn and adapt, the Robert H. Lord Company has transformed into a company with the expertise to create learning environments that support the educator, the student, and the athlete.

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