

JEFF REASOR



Fruitful Relationship

Jeff Reasor knows an ‘ugly’ tomato when he sees one. The Reasor’s Foods president not only recognizes an Ugly Ripe Tomato on sight, he counts the heirloom fruit as a best-seller in his family’s more than 15 groceries statewide. But, he contends, there’s more to retail business success than knowing what to sell. Collaboration with key community partners, especially higher education institutions, helps fuel growth.

It’s a practice Jeff’s father, the late Larry Reasor, initiated when he opened Reasor’s Redbud Grocery in 1963. The youngster’s hands-on retail pursuits began at an early age. As an 8 year old, Jeff was a regular in the baseball dugout where players like Ron Cox, Jack Tinsley, and Charlie Wilson waited to step to the plate.

“I’d buy oranges for 5 cents apiece and sell them to the baseball players for 10,” recalls Jeff. “I doubled my money, watched baseball, and stayed out until my mom wondered where I was.”

Today, with stores in Broken Arrow, Catoosa, Claremore, Jenks, Owasso, Sapulpa, Tahlequah, and Tulsa, and two more in the works, Jeff and his executive board look to Northeastern State University to help

grow the next generation of industry leaders.

“We’ve made big inroads with the College of Business & Technology,” he explains. “We’ll have about 10 paid internships, on an ongoing basis, to offer across a variety of disciplines, including computer operations, management, and human resources.”

Jeff and his team are also partnering with the university to explore real-world opportunities for future retail executives.

“Schools like Northeastern provide all the working knowledge a student needs,” he adds. “Reasor’s wants to put that knowledge to work in a real-world experience.

“Students and graduates have to start somewhere. If they have the knowledge, gumption, ability and understand what we’re trying to do, we’re more than happy to work them through the process.”

It takes different people and approaches to make collaborations work, notes Jeff. And sometimes, for the community and the school to grow, it takes a tremendous investment.