

# Family Business

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## A name that's synonymous with Boston seafood

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SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

The name Stavis has become synonymous with high-quality seafood in Boston and beyond. The wholesale seafood food company has been distributing shrimp, lobster and fish from the Boston Waterfront since 1929.

Originally called Stavis Ipswich Clam Company by its founder, Isadore Stavis, a name change to **Stavis Seafoods Inc.** in 1967 ushered in a new era for the company. That's when Isadore's sons, **Ed** and **Fred**, took over the business. Today, the third generation of Stavis' are running the company, with its 105 employees and four name brands.

Under the familiar names of BOS'N, Boston Pride, Foods From the Sea and Prince Edward, Stavis ships more than 32 million pounds of fresh and frozen seafood each year. That's a far cry from its early clam digging days in New England and Canada. Now, **Richard Stavis**, the current president of the company,

has new innovations in mind.

"Over the past couple of years we've been working on the concept of what I call value-added commodity," said Stavis, 43. That value-add translates to quality. A pound of Stavis shrimp, he explained, isn't short two ounces, nor does it include a half a pound of broken pieces. This strategy makes Stavis shrimp less of a commodity, or, as Stavis puts it, "a shrimp is not a shrimp is not a shrimp — there are differences."

Stavis is dedicated to trumpeting those differences industry-wide. He serves as vice president of the board of the **Boston Marine Park Business Association** and his cousin, **Stuart**, is the

### Stavis Seafoods

**FAMILY:** The Stavises

**LOCATION:** Boston

**AWARD:** Finalist in the medium-size co. category of the Mass. Family Business of the Year



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president of the **New England Seafood Processors Association**. It's all part of an ongoing effort to boost quality and educate consumers.

For all the challenges in the seafood industry, Stavis doesn't count working with family members among them. Sure, Stavis said, there are sometimes differing opinions on business decisions, but there is also power in unity. Every day, Stavis works with his sister, CFO **Mary Fleming**, and his cousins, executive vice president **Stuart**, and **Emily**. His Uncle Ed is training cousin Emily in the role of shrimp buyer.

"I'd be thrilled to have my cousins and sister on the team even if they weren't family — they are very talented," Stavis said, noting that his children, at ages 7 and 9, won't be joining the family business any time soon.

By then, the company will have met some of its current goals: to transition from a commodity company to a value-added commodity company.

**Family members of Stavis Seafoods Inc. are, clockwise from top: Stuart Altman, executive vice president; Richard Stavis, president and CEO; Mary Fleming, CFO and Emily Stavis.**