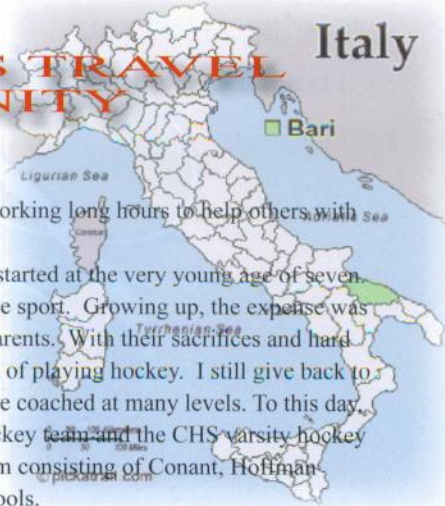




By John Comena

VINCENT CONENNA "VENUS TRAVEL SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR 40 YEARS"!

Italy



Vincent & Son John

On Belmont Avenue just west of Harlem stands a Chicago landmark, Venus Travel. The travel agency, owned and operated by Vincent Conenna, opened in December of 1968. With a desire to live the American dream and to start his own business, 20-year-old Vincent came to the United States in 1948 from the small town of Mola di Bari, Italy,

Starting his career in banking, a young graduate of Northwestern University stayed in banking for many years and opened a small office in one of the original Italian neighborhoods, on Chicago Avenue. During that time, after working a full day at Mid City National Bank on Madison and Halsted, Vincent would spend countless hours at his office on Chicago and Lawndale Avenue pursuing his dream. His true passion was having his own business, starting a travel agency and preparing income taxes.

In 1968 Vincent was promoted to Vice President of International banking. Once again his dream and desire did not stop there. In December of 1968, Vincent opened Venus Travel, located at 7418 W. Belmont Avenue. To this day, Venus Travel is still family owned and operated. Ironically this neighborhood where he opened his office became the neighborhood still known as "Little Italy." In 1977 I joined my father at the agency, at the age of 17. I loved working there after school, delivering brochures, and helping my dad. When I am asked why this small agency on the northwest side of Chicago still survives, I reply, "it's because of my father's dedication and work ethics. He makes you want to strive to be the best." I also have the same dedication and determination as my father. After attending Loyola University and studying Broadcast Journalism, I have proudly carried on the family traits and

values instilled by my father by working long hours to help others with all their family travel needs.

My passion for hockey started at the very young age of seven. To this day, hockey is an expensive sport. Growing up, the expense was almost too much to bare for my parents. With their sacrifices and hard work, I was able to live my dream of playing hockey. I still give back to the sport I love by coaching. I have coached at many levels. To this day, I coach the DePaul University hockey team and the CHS varsity hockey team, a combined high school team consisting of Conant, Hoffman Estates and Schaumburg high schools.

In 40 years Venus travel has seen it all; airline strikes, gas embargoes, commission reductions, and airline bankruptcies all which have taken its toll on the travel industry. The internet has also made drastic changes to the travel industry. So many of our competitors are gone. The reason Venus Travel has stood the test of time is because of two things. First, Venus Travel has changed with the times and has never stood still. The second reason is because of its founder Vincent Conenna. His dedication and hard work has made this place a truly special place to return to when you have personal and business travel needs. You can still find the 80- year old founder at his desk, Monday through Saturday, making sure that his dream never dies.

If you're ever in Chicago and want special expertise on travel or accounting, this place is truly the place to see. It's old world, it is father and son owned, but most of all it is family. We have had our good and bad days since the doors opened in 1968, but the main goal since that day is to serve our customers. Remember when making that next trip to Europe, or that Caribbean cruise, call Venus Travel. With forty years of experience, you can let us worry about the details. Visit our website, www.venustravel.com.

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Marini Ceramics

Metal Art



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