



*Celebrating 40 years of Excellence!*



## **Chem Clean Limited: A brief history**

**C**HEM Clean Limited (CCL) celebrated its 40th Anniversary on April 1st. A family-owned business, CCL was founded by Birgit Reid and Krimhilde Johnson (dec), the wives of two businessmen. In those days, the women operated the business from their backyard and Liquid Lye, Drain Clean and VilaClean V were among the first products that they formulated.

Once they realised how successful their wives were in business, the husbands of the two women decided to invest more into the venture. CCL

eventually grew out of its modest backyard space before, moving around a little to different locations, before settling at Trincity Industrial Estate in Macoya, its present base.

CCL is now run by Birgit and husband Eddie's daughter, Renee Zamore, the current Chairman and Managing Director of the company. There are currently three generations of women from the Reid family employed at CCL, Birgit, who at 81 is still very involved in the company, her daughter Renee and her two grandchildren Amielle Zamore-Pierre and Zoë Zamore.

CCL's team of innovative managers support the vision and mission for the company, of which the hard-working and dedicated staff is perfectly aligned.

Currently, the company is one of Caribbean's leading manufacturers of specialty cleaning and sanitising chemicals for the hospitality, food processing, hospital, janitorial, energy-based petroleum and petrochemical industries. Under the license for ECOLAB Inc, USA, CCL manufactured and distributed a range of ECOLAB products for the Trinidad & Tobago

market for over a decade. Subsequently, the company developed its own proprietary product range, customised for the Caribbean region. CCL has also widened its reach by distributing, not just locally, but to other Caribbean Islands such as; Antigua, St. Lucia, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada and St. Vincent.

CCL maintains a strict, international standard of quality control procedures. Its history of innovation and experience with international and local partners, allows the company to offer comprehensive technical advisory

and training programs to customers. CCL also offers the additional value of equipment repair and maintenance services for laundry, ware-washing and kitchen equipment.

Its technical advisory service provides equipment procurement in which CCL can assist in the specification, selection, supply, installation and commissioning of a range of laundry equipment, ideally suited for the Caribbean and Latin American markets. CCL has also incorporated contract manufacturing for some well-known brands within the Caribbean.



## Renee Zamore—Chief Executive Officer

**Essiba Small**

IT'S not every day that a daughter gets to sit in a corporate chair that was once occupied by her daddy and do his job. But that's just how it happened for Renee Zamore, CEO of Chem Clean Limited (CCL) when she took over the reins from her father in 2013, after being under his mentorship for many years prior.

"It has been an absolute honour and privilege to be the head of this company," Zamore declared.

"I take pride in the fact that they (her parents) trusted me to take over the helm."

For Zamore, it just made sense to run her family's business rather than work for another. She wanted to continue her parents' legacy, she said, and ensure that the company that they built from the ground up, continue to live on.

"Not just for me and my children but hopefully for my children's children."

Zamore joined the company in 2008 after serving



Renee Zamore, CEO of Chem Clean Limited.

on the board of CCL for five to six years.

Under her leadership, some things have changed at the company since her mother Birgit and friend Krimhilde Johnson started the company 40 years ago.

"Things were purely about functionality in my parents' day. Presentation was not key, so we have since been trying to polish up our image and improve the look of our products, while ensuring that we maintain the great quality we always had."

"We now have a new cohesive look to our products as well as the introduction to social media and more focus on branding."

Heading up a company is often seen as a work/life struggle for women, especially those with children -- of which Zamore ticks both boxes. Despite this, she actually

wants to see more women at the helm.

"It's not that it's any more difficult than any other job that a woman has. I would like it to be more common to see women at the helm of companies. A healthy support system helps to make it work."

For many businesses, Covid-19 has been a challenge; CCL is not excluded.

"With a dedicated staff and the will to succeed, we persevere through these tough times."

"We have been able to reach customers who never even heard of us before, as we have been manufacturing products like hand sanitisers, hand soaps and other cleaners that can kill bacteria and viruses like Covid-19, long before the world even heard of Covid-19."

"We felt great to play our part in helping to keep the virus at bay. It gave us an opportunity to shine and show off what we do."

To ensure that their customers and staff are safe during this time, CCL has implemented several changes, while continuing its essential business. In-person consultations have been replaced with online meetings, and online platforms and powerpoint presentations are used by staff to showcase the company's products."

"We have also added more products to our repertoire, in line with the current need for more sanitising-type merchandise."

"Contract manufacturing has also increased. We have the skill and capability there and we can help others grow their business whilst growing our own."

Asked what it takes for a company to reach 40 years, Zamore said it's a "never say die" attitude and spirit, of which her parents had plenty.

"There were many junctures in the business, particularly in the earlier days, where all looked lost, but they simply would not allow it to fail."

Her advice to struggling businesses is simply this: "When one avenue gets blocked, learn to pivot and come up with a new plan and forge a new path!"

Zamore is grateful for the team of

people she gets to work with every day. It's this team, she believes, sets CCL apart from its competitors.

"Our service is second to none, we know manufacturing."

"We continuously ensure our quality is up to par and our research and development team ensures that we are always on the cutting edge. Quite simply, we have the best team!"

It was hoped that the hard-working and dedicated staff would get to celebrate the company's 40th anniversary in a grand way, but Covid-19 had other plans.

"We had to scale things down quite a bit and had a simple, socially distanced, quiet celebration. We hope to be able to properly celebrate someday soon."

"We thanked our customers with some Chem Clean branded tokens and free products."

Reflecting on CCL's company milestone, Zamore is full of gratitude.

"I am thankful to have been mentored by the best; my dear departed father, Eddie Reid. I am grateful to still have my mother by my side on this journey, up until recently she still reported to work everyday! Now with the current Covid-19 situation, she is unable to do that for her own safety."

"I am proud to have my two daughters working here, learning the business."

Forty years onwards, Zamore sees Chem Clean Limited as a business that is synonymous with quality cleaning and sanitizing solutions.

"Our vision for Chem Clean is to be the leading provider of cleaning and sanitising solutions in the Caribbean, thereby creating a safer and cleaner environment, whilst ensuring the growth and development of our employees, customers, partners and shareholders."

# HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY CHEM CLEAN LIMITED



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# Birgit Reid – Founder of Chem Clean Ltd

By Essiba Small  
essiba.small@trinidadexpress.com

**W**HEN she founded Chem Clean Limited with her friend (now deceased) Krimhilde Johnson, Birgit Reid admits that their goals were far from lofty.

"I was a housewife with two children and I wanted to find something to do that would keep me busy when they became teenagers," Reid recalled.

Her friend Krimhilde, who was in a similar position in her life, was only too happy to join in on her entrepreneurship journey.

It helped too that Reid's husband, Eddie, had access to caustic soda (sodium hydroxide), from his affiliation with another business, so the two women friends came up with an idea to make products that use caustic soda and call their company Chem Clean.

Forty years later, the same caustic soda continues to be the base of most Chem Clean products.

"I was 40 years old when we started Chem Clean, I had no experience but I had a good mentor in my husband... it's never too late to try something new!"

"Some of my fondest memories were back in the day when Krimhilde and I were chief, cook and bottle washer. We literally did everything, from collecting the caustic, mixing the products, filling the bottles and delivering to customers... we did it all," Reid recalled. "Later on, when we grew to the point of having staff, the fond memories were about spending quality time at the Christmas parties and afterwork limes."

Today, at 81, Reid can finally admit



Birgit Reid, founder of the Chem Clean Limited and her late husband Edsel Reid.

that what started out as a small business venture to keep two mothers busy, has blossomed into a business that went well beyond her simple expectations.

"I could never have visualised this success for the business at that time, but with each passing year we grew from strength to strength," she said.

Perseverance, she added, is the key to the Chem Clean's success. She believes that the company has remained relevant all these years because of the key role her husband played back then and the hard work of her daughter and staff at the company, who, Reid said, "constantly re-evaluate the needs of the market."

Reid could have easily retired from the business a long time ago, but she chose to keep working for the same reason that she started Chem Clean in the first place,

to keep busy.

"I'm not ready for my rocking chair yet," she said with a laugh.

Working alongside her daughter is another bonus of staying on the job.

It has not only been a great bonding experience for the two but Reid said the business has also brought them closer together.

Birgit Reid sits on the Board of

Directors at Chem Clean Limited. She also manages the company's receivables, among other things.

"I keep myself very involved," she said.

## Long serving employees...



Ramesh Ramdial has been employed with Chem Clean Limited for 21 years.



Louvina Fernandez has been with Chem Clean Limited for over 28 years.



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## Our staff Hardworking and dedicated

**T**HE staff at CCL is quite unique. Not only is its Managing Director a female, but female staff out-number the males, with some of them positioned in key roles. The HSSE officers, Technical lead, Filling line lead, Procurement and Chemists are just a few positions that these female employees occupy. For more information on our products visit <https://chemclean.solutions>



Chem Clean Limited chemists Shandell Best, left, and Sara Ikhichou (assistant).



At Chem Clean Limited, female staff out-number the males.



Admin staff at Chem Clean Limited - From left to right Nikitia Khan, Usha Ramsook, Reshma Samaroo, Chris Ramlochan.



## Our CSR Initiatives

**A**T Chem Clean Limited, we take our Corporate Social Responsibility seriously. The company has donated thousands of cleaning and sanitising chemicals across the country to those less fortunate. Staff members at Chem Clean have also displayed compassion to their fellow countrymen by donating their personal vacation time in exchange for food hampers, which they happily donated to those greatly affected by the pandemic in the last year.

Elicia Williams, Filling Line/Packaging Operator

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## Our Products

# The Best Sellers

**C**HEM Clean Limited (CCL) products are critical in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all and keep the Covid-19 virus at bay. In light of this, CCL was deemed an essential business during the initial lock-down protocols as the company manufactures essential products for many of T&T's frontline organisations. For more information on our products visit <https://chem-clean.solutions>



# CCL's Covid Champions



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