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McNamara Florist goes independent again **Star report**

FISHERS, Ind. -- McNamara Florist is again an independent, locally owned business.

President Toomie Farris announced today the acquisition of the 54-year Indiana florist in an undisclosed deal with Marsh Supermarkets and its parent company, Florida-based Sun Capital Partners.

Farris said he is the principal shareholder. "We'd better be sticking around for a long time," he said. "I have additional shareholders and principals in the company who are all locally based."

Marsh bought McNamara and its four retail shops in March 2000 from Engeldow Group, which had purchased it in 1990. Bob McNamara began with a single shop in Broad Ripple in 1958.

"What we're looking forward to is building on the relationships we've been working on for years," Farris said.

Farris said McNamara continues to buy and import flowers weekly from every continent except Antarctica.

McNamara will maintain a headquarters in a Fishers warehouse near I-69 and 96th Street. The retail shops in Carmel, Fishers, Greenwood and Indianapolis locations in Broad Ripple, Clearwater Shoppes at 82nd Street and Dean Road, and Willow Lake West near Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School will remain as will a retail store, nursery and garden center in Fort Wayne.

Marsh had closed two floral shops in recent years, including one in Noblesville at Ind. 37 and 146th Street outside Marsh's heralded lifestyle store.

However, the services that McNamara provided to floral departments in Marsh Supermarkets and O'Malia's Food Markets will cease, Farris said.

"We decided to sell McNamara Florist as part of our strategic plan to focus on our core grocery business," said Frank Lazaran, Marsh chairman and CEO, in a statement.

Marsh will continue to use McNamara as a wholesaler, according to the statement issued by Connie Gardner, Marsh senior director of community relations.

McNamara's business employs 130, with 80 of those people working full time. Farris said FTD, the national floral service, ranks McNamara 24th in volume of flowers going out to customers.