Silver, gold, diamond – how fitting for a jewelry firm to have observed all three anniversaries. And now ten years after its 75th celebration it is about to be honored on a special occasion.

Roberts Jewelry has been a Harlingen mainstay since 1922. In that year its founder, Roy Bertrum (R.B.) Roberts, opened a store in what was to become the historic S. Lozano & Son Building that had opened seven years earlier. While R.B. promoted himself as "Optometrist and Watchmaker", he did serve his customers seeking to purchase jewelry by offering them pamphlets and brochures offering such items. In 1925 he was one of the founding members of the Harlingen Kiwanis Club, the first of this organization to be established in the Valley.

In doing research on this article the question arose whether R.B. was related to T. P. Roberts, the pioneer merchant who had come to Harlingen in 1904, the same year that the railroad reached here, and who in 1915 established a general store. T.P.’s son Joseph R. Roberts was to take over this business in 1918. Educated in Uvalde Joseph would later become vice president of a Harlingen bank, president of the Harlingen Development Company which was owner of much property in the city, and two term mayor of the city. Perhaps some reader can shed some light on this question.

Following World War II and a short apprenticeship at Reynolds Jewelry in Mercedes, R.B.’s son, Bert Lund Roberts, came into the business. His specialty was the repair of "inheritance" watches requiring repair. With his wartime experience with timing and navigational instruments Bert was able to pick up business from both the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads. With their division offices here in Harlingen he inspected and synchronized clocks, pocket watches, and wristwatches so important to railway employees.

Bert acknowledged the potential for jewelry by increasing his stock. He carried the Krementz line of good-quality costume jewelry and Bulova watches. As his business grew he relocated the store on September 1, 1961 to 119 S. Second Street. On April 1, 1978 he again moved, this time to its present location at 216 E. Jackson. He was civic minded and helped to establish the Lion's Club in the city, participated in the Harlingen Businessmen's Association and the Downtown Merchants Association, as well as being active in the Harlingen Elks Lodge.

Bert's stepson, Brett Nelson, at the urging of Bert attended studies on jewelry repair and was certified by Paris (Texas) Junior College in October 1978. Soon after Brett commenced an active role in the family business. He would complete the transfer of the business to his name on January 25, 1989. He has continued his education by taking seven years of correspondence courses with the Gemological Institute of America. He is one of the few certified gemologists in South Texas.

Today Brett and his wife Cindy carry on the family tradition of strong reputation for quality and excellent service to patrons and legal entities handling appraisals and estates. The firm has well served the community also. It has supported the Muscular Dystrophy
Association, American Heart Association, United Way, the Harlingen Boys and Girls Club, and numerous other charitable and civic organizations. The Nelsons are committed to revitalizing Downtown Harlingen and have been a participant in this area of concern for many years.

On Friday, November 9 at 11:00 a.m. Roberts Jewelry will receive a singular honor. It will be presented with the Texas Treasure Business Award by Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. This prestigious award honors Texas businesses in existence for more than 50 years and which have contributed to the economic growth and prosperity of the state. The Texas Historical Commission administers this tribute. Roberts Jewelry is the first jewelry store in Texas to receive this award. The public is invited to attend the award ceremonies in which the mayor and other dignitaries will also play a role.