



*Black, Starr & Frost*  
AMERICA'S FIRST JEWELER SINCE 1810

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### **NEW BOOK REVEALS RICH HISTORY OF AMERICA'S FIRST JEWELER**

#### ***Black, Starr & Frost's 205-Year-Story Offers Colorful Snapshot of American History, Pioneering Luxury Brand***

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. (July 22, 2015) – What did Hollywood megastar Elizabeth Taylor, the Prince of Wales, the Guggenheim family and former first lady Mary Todd Lincoln have in common? Each had a penchant for finely crafted jewelry, and were notable clients of Black, Starr & Frost, America's First Jeweler Since 1810, today based in Newport Beach and distinguished by a rich and colorful history.

History buffs can now delve into all the details behind this storied brand in "1810: Celebrating Two Centuries of American Luxury," a new hardcover book published by Black, Starr & Frost that depicts the provocative personalities and iconic jewels that are all part of the rich history of America's first jeweler.

Founded in 1810, Black, Starr & Frost originally opened as Marquand & Co. in New York City, making it the oldest continually operating jewelry firm in the United States. A jeweler to celebrities, privileged American families, captains of industry and royalty, the firm's saga is set against the very beginning of American history, the extravagance of the Gilded Age, the turbulence of the Reconstruction Era, the vibrancy of the Jazz Age and more.

Known for many firsts, America's first jeweler is one of America's oldest companies, was one of the first companies to be traded on the New York Stock Exchange, created the first choker necklace and was responsible for the invention of the safe deposit box system, plate glass windows (1833) and fireproof buildings (1860). Additionally, the iconic jewelry firm built the first apartment building in New York in 1876 and was the first commercial entity on New York's venerable Fifth Avenue, mecca to luxury today

From the early days of Black, Starr & Frost, its fine jewelry, sterling silver, timepieces and clocks have gained fame for high quality and intricate craftsmanship. To complete the new book, historians, researchers and authors were commissioned to dig deeply into the company's more than 200-year history, a painstaking process that took seven years and revealed some fascinating anecdotes and historic milestones, among them:

- The pioneering jewelry company was the first retail venue to introduce plate glass windows, which allowed merchandise to be shown to the outside of the building and spawned the concept of "window-shopping," now a favorite American pastime.

- Among the jeweler's more famous customers: the Prince of Wales, who in 1860 ordered more than \$12,000 in silver and jewelry from Black, Starr & Frost.
- West Point was the first American university to honor its senior class with a class ring, and Black, Starr & Frost crafted the legendary military academy's official class ring in 1837, continuing to make them until the early 1900s. Famous West Point grads who wore rings created by the company include President Ulysses S. Grant, General George A. Custer and General Douglas MacArthur.
- In 1928, Black, Starr & Frost sold the 127.01-carat diamond, known at the time as the largest blue diamond in the world for \$373,000 to Peggy Hopkins Joyce, the first Ziegfeld Girl. Today that diamond is known as the Portuguese Diamond. It is the largest faceted diamond in the Smithsonian Institute's National Gem Collection.
- Marilyn Monroe touted the brand in the famous song "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend," where she notably sang "Tiffany, Cartier, Black, Starr, Frost-Gorham, talk to me Harry Winston, tell me all about it."
- In 1930 the company acquired the diamonds and jewels of New York tycoon "Diamond Jim Brady," a legendary financier known for his voracious appetite and love of fine jewels.
- In 1931 the company acquired the 25-carat "Lucky Baldwin" Ruby – named after gold mining pioneer "Lucky" Baldwin – for \$100,000. That same stone was offered for sale at \$60 million in 2014. The ruby was sold by Harry Winston to Robert Clifford Black, and Winston used the proceeds to open Harry Winston Jewelers in 1932.
- Black, Starr & Frost was one of five legendary jewelers invited to exhibit at the New York World's Fair in 1939.
- The Archduke Joseph Diamond, the largest D-color, internally flawless, Golconda diamond in the world, was sold by Black, Starr & Frost in 2012 to a royal house for a record \$21.5 million.
- The aggregated value of fine jewelry, timepieces, clocks and sterling silver accumulated over the years with the renowned Black, Starr & Frost brand is estimated at \$10 billion.

The new book retails for \$85 and is available at Black, Starr & Frost. For more information or to order, visit [www.blackstarrfrost.com](http://www.blackstarrfrost.com).

### **About Black, Starr & Frost**

Founded in 1810, Black, Starr & Frost originally opened as Marquand & Co. in New York City, and is the oldest continuously operating jewelry firm in the United States – catering to the American elite throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and accruing iconic jewels and legendary clients including the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Carnegies and Guggenheims. Acquired in 2006 by the Molina Group, Chairman Alfredo Molina – an 11th generation jeweler with extensive industry credentials – has revitalized the Black, Starr & Frost name, reinforcing its enduring reputation for top quality design-driven jewels. Operating today from its plush waterfront offices in Newport Beach, Calif., with a second location in Phoenix opening fall 2015, Black, Starr & Frost is known for its gracious service and keen attention to each and every detail. For more information, visit [www.blackstarrfrost.com](http://www.blackstarrfrost.com).

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