



# HAT LIFE

**THE LEADING HEADWEAR RESOURCE**  
for 137 Years

Sources, Designers, Fashion Trends, Retailers  
Business Strategies and Newsmakers

2009

## Family Hat Business

### New Era Cap

Ehrhardt Koch was 16-years' old when he started working at Brother's Cap Company in 1902. After 18 years with the company he realized that to get to the top he would have to start at the top.

With a \$5,000 loan from his aunt and 14 employees, Ehrhardt started the New Era Cap Company in Buffalo, NY. They made men's fashion headwear (and the eight-panel Pacer-style "Gatsby" cap).

Ehrhardt's son Harold joined the business, learning from his dad that a quality cap was important in making New Era a success. Harold developed the "No Roll Top Stitch, (a decorative stitch that holds the sweatband even with the bottom, keeping it flat), and the cloth cotton sweatband.

He also added a thin, clear plastic cover on the under-side of the sweatband.

Many of the nuances Harold built into

New Era's headwear were subtle, but the impact of his ideas New Era competitive in the marketplace.

In the 1930's

the Company made caps for American baseball teams - the 59Fifty.

Harold Koch passed away in 1982, and his son David took over the company (selling Major and Minor League

baseball clubs).

New Era grew from supplying a few teams with caps to becoming the exclusive manufacturer and marketer of the official on-field cap worn by every Major League baseball team and their Minor League affiliates.

Christopher, Ehrhardt Koch's great-grandson, became president of New Era in 1992 and David became CEO. In 1996, under Chris's direction, the company embarked on a new brand-building journey.

David Koch passed away in 2002 and Chris Koch became CEO of New Era Cap. The company now caters to all segments of the hat wearing population and is a leader in the industry with retail stores in the US and Europe.

The company is still a privately held, family-owned business and his heirs know for sure that founder Ehrhardt Koch would be proud of the family hat heritage and its impact on the cap and hat business.

Chris Koch runs the company now.

[www.neweracap.com](http://www.neweracap.com)



Chris Koch, CEO of New Era Cap Co.

