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Remodeling and Improving Neighborhoods

Students Learning a Skill to Build a Career

Brotherhood in Business

Questioning Some Experts About Remodeling and Building

JOY RAMPY

The Joy of Home Building

JOHN C. BUTTERFIELD
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Homing Instincts

BY VICKY LORENCEN

"Building a new home is a long time dream for many people. You build friendships with people while you build their home. It's exciting to be a partner in that process."

"I was shocked, but very happy to think that I had been awarded when there are so many men builders in the group." That was Joy Rampy's reaction when she learned she had been named the Home Builders Association of Jackson's 2004 Builder of the Year.

"I feel that sometimes there are men who don't think I'm capable of handling a situation, but with my years of experience, I know I can."

Indeed she can.

Joy Rampy, company president and licensed builder, has been involved with the construction business since the early 1970s. She's been a member of the Home Builders Association for a decade and has served as a local director, as well as state and national director. Joy Construction is an active participant in the Parade of Homes. In fact, one of her homes, built for the Todoroff's, was given the People's Choice Award in 2002. She also received "Life Spike" status from the National Women's Council.

Marv Jester, current President of the Home Builders Association of Jackson, says, "As a past Builder of the Year, I know how wonderful it feels to receive the recognition of your peers. In my case, and I'm sure in Joy's, it came just at the right time . . . when you needed a pat on the back. We appreciate all that Joy is doing. She's very active in the association. Joy does an excellent job and has done some beautiful

Joy with her Construction Supervisor, Sid, helping a client review her selections.

Joy with Don & Charlotte Marsh whose home was in the 2004 Parade of Homes

homes, for example at the Sanctuary. She's done upscale homes and standard structures. Joy is versatile and builds the whole spectrum. She has a very good eye."

A Woman's Touch

Would Joy ever encourage a young woman to enter the field of construction?

She says, "Yes. You can make good money. It's a creative field to be in."

Like his mother, creativity is Sid Rampy's favorite part of the building process. Sid has been Joy's business partner since 1990. He likes to experiment with structural designs, kitchen and cabinet design work and entertainment centers. Joy is the one who adds the "woman's touch."

Sid says, "One thing I've learned from my mom is to be more focused on the needs of our female customers. A typical male doesn't have the same interest in the details of the home. Really, we don't build the house for the man, structurally yes, but for everyday livability, it's for the woman. A woman sees a home as an extension of her personality."

He adds, "Working with my mom has allowed me to find out how a woman thinks-what they want and what excites them about their home. My mom is more talented and creative when it comes to colors-paint, tile, wallpaper, and floor coverings-than I am. I'm a typical guy. Thinking about the structure of the home is more my forte."

Sid opened a second Joy Construction office in Seneca, South Carolina in September of

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2004. Residential and commercial construction is booming there.

Sid admits that the knowledge he's gained from his mom will "give me a huge market advantage in South Carolina. Other companies will have to bring in a third party, an interior decorator, but we already have those abilities on board."

Source of Inspiration

As a woman in a male-dominated industry, Joy looks to other businesswomen for inspiration. She's encouraged to see Julie Fielek of Fielek Builders named as 2005 president of the Michigan Association of Home Builders. She is the association's first female president.

Joy names her long-time former employer, the late Dorothy Blakely, president of Tompkins Johnson, as an influential businesswoman in her life even before she became involved in construction.

"Dorothy inspired me as a woman in business."

She's also been deeply influenced by Jackson's Faith Small, energetic President of Dawlen Corporation.

"I admire Faith's strength and ability in the way she runs a business. I'm inspired by her knowledge. I hope I can be as strong as she is when I'm her age."

Apparently, the admiration is mutual.

Small, a former client of Joy Construction, says of Joy, "She's a go-getter. She doesn't leave a stone unturned. If I needed something she'd do the research and have it for me the next day. A man might say you can't have that. As a woman, Joy knows what it means if I want something. Joy's word is good. If she says something is going to be done, it is."

Faith appreciated Joy for the way "She'd take the time to go shopping with me and help me in making building and interior decorating decisions."

More than a client, Joy has developed a six-year friendship with Faith that's still going strong. Faith says, "Joy's everything you'd find in the dictionary that describes a friend."

In addition to befriending her clients, Joy has also made it a

Greg & Donna Waite's home when it was midway in construction on Sid Drive in Northwest Hills development

priority to be a friend to Jackson. At Christmas time she likes to volunteer her services as a host in the AWARE Shelter's home tour, and with the Foote Hospital Auxiliary. Joy Construction has also been involved in community service projects such as the Builders Care Projects and Habitat Build.

A Team Approach to Dream Building

Teamwork is a vital component in the Joy Construction business philosophy. Not only do Joy and her son Sid work as a team, they understand the critical importance of having a positive team atmosphere with their subcontractors. Each person brings a unique skill that will contribute to the overall success of any project.

Joy Construction specializes in residential construction with an emphasis on interior decorating with the addition of Kitchens and Interiors by Joy. The company also does some remodeling.

As her business partner, Sid oversees construction projects from start to finish, in addition to taking care of bookkeeping and doing estimates. Sid is a "hands on" project manager who likes to be personally involved with the rough framing of a new home as well as the finish work. Sid and Joy work as a team to share the workload.

Of course, the team concept extends to the partnership that takes place between Joy and her clients. "My women clients relax with me because they know, as a woman, I understand the importance of home. I try to do things the way I'd want them done for myself."

Joy prides herself on the high level of personal involvement she offers her clients. She acknowledges that while building a new home is exciting, for some clients, it can also be stressful. Besides the substantial financial investment, there is a myriad of decisions-large and small-that must be made. With that in mind, Joy enjoys making herself and her expertise accessible to her clients.

"I like to let people take samples home and live with them for a while. For example, I'll give a client doing a kitchen remodel time to see how a cabinet door looks in different light. It really helps when it comes time to make a decision."

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Faith Small selected Joy Construction to build the home of her dreams

She also makes herself available to clients by taking them to showrooms, providing them with information on the latest industry trends, and helping them to make the best choices to get the results they want.

"People come to me with their scrapbooks, clippings, and ideas, plus more and more now, people have done their homework on the Internet. Building a new home is a long time dream for many people. You build friendships with people while you build their home. It's exciting to be a partner in that process."

Whether she's teaming up with her son, her clients or her community, Joy Rampy is adding a woman's touch to Jackson. And from all indications, her homing instincts are hitting the nail on the head.

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