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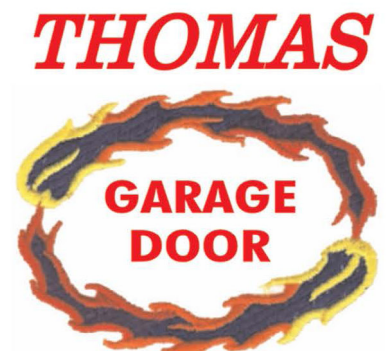
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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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*Feature Story*

## 04 Sims Luxury Builders Exceeds Expectations

**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**



*Brazos County Exclusive*

## 19 Greymark Construction Offers 'Wow' Remodeling



*Inside Story*

## 06 Asking One Question Leads to The Ark Cast Stone's Success

**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**

## 10 Bill Meek: Sculpting Glass with Sacred Geometry Inspired by Nature

**By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID**

## 16 New Bath and Kitchen Products Offer Design Solutions

**By Linda Jennings**

## 18 Business Directory

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

### **Giselle Bernard**

*Publisher/Owner*

Let's face it. Being in business, whether as a sales professional or a business owner, requires making sales.

Builders sell to prospective home buyers. Remodelers sell to homeowners wanting to change their homes. Vendors and subcontractors, on the other hand, sell their products and services to the builders and remodelers.

All are salespersons, and all are customers.

You would think that since builders, remodelers, vendors and subcontractors go through the same sales process, they would be a little more courteous and considerate of each other's time.

Unfortunately, that's not necessarily true.

Selling is a process, a process that is often time consuming and sometimes frustrating. People on the receiving end of the sales pitch feel that if they engage in conversation with the salesperson, then the salesperson will attempt to win them over and seal the deal against their will. They therefore avoid conversation all together to avoid "the confrontation."

It's exasperating when a prospective customer won't give the salesperson the common courtesy of just saying "No, I'm not interested," or "I'm still giving it some consideration," showing consideration of each other's time.

Wouldn't it be great if everyone involved in the sales process could just get on with business? After all, time is money.



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# Sims Luxury Builders Exceeds Expectations

**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**

When Chris Sims started building custom homes in 1988, he was surprised by the market's low expectations of builders. He decided to prove he could deliver a quality home and a quality experience to each of his homeowners.

"Building or renovating their dream home should be an exciting time in our homeowners' lives," according to Chris, who is currently chief executive officer and serves in a consulting role during the architectural design and construction phases.

Added Michael Sims, president and chief operating officer, "Over-promising and under-delivering is a problem in our industry. We strive to deliver an experience that is truly transparent, rewarding and enjoyable for our homeowners."

Michael and his team are determined to rise above the status quo. As an example, seven years ago the company began using a construction management software on each of its projects, allowing clients to view their home's budget, schedule, selections and progress photos at any moment through its easy-to-use app.

Based on his own experience in the field, Michael saw a

need for a project manager and a construction manager to work collaboratively on each home. These project teams handle between two and four houses at a time, depending on complexity, location and duration, taking into account that a home takes 10 to 24 months to complete.

"Years ago, we operated similarly to other builders with a field superintendent who functioned as his own little island on his projects. Over the last decade, we've shifted to a team approach because we've seen that it delivers a better home and a better experience to our homeowners," Michael said.

Construction managers focus on project schedule and supervising construction, ensuring quality control and preventing pitfalls that could result in warranty issues for their clients. Project managers focus on keeping the budget in line, vetting proposals, ordering materials and coordinating selections. "Besides our weekly project team meetings, which are designed to proactively identify issues before they snowball, communication is constant between these two partners," Michael said.



A focus on client education also sets Sims Luxury Builders apart from its competition.

“We really try to educate our homeowners about the building process through in-person conversations, our website ([www.simsbuilders.com](http://www.simsbuilders.com)) and our blog. Everyone wants to understand the path ahead, and they feel comfortable when they see that we are focused on listening and helping as much as possible.

We’re able to tell from their first-hand feedback that our process works well. Taking that approach of helping first has allowed us to become trusted advisers for our homeowners,” Marie Sims, client success manager, stated. Married to Michael, Marie joined the company 10 years ago. Her current focus is helping prospective clients and continually improving the company’s processes.

However, the company’s 10 staff members see their roles in an even larger context. According to the company website, “When you hire Sims, you’re not just hiring a contractor. We are advocates, negotiators and stewards of our

*Continued on page 12*





# Asking One Question Leads to The Ark Cast Stone's Success

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

“What else do you need and want?”

That was the question that Harry Durham, general manager and co-owner of The Ark Cast Stone, asked his builder clients over and over as he “tried to find something that would get us a steady income.”

How builders answered that one simple question led Durham and his partner Brian Penso to expand beyond bird baths and concrete animals (hence its name The Ark) to manufacture concrete splash blocks, then address blocks, then keystones, then window mouldings and sills, then balustrades, fireplaces and columns, and now all things cast stone, including building facades.

The Ark's craftsmen can create molds onsite, thereby being able to produce any custom product – whether residential or commercial – no matter what the size. The staff can also arrange for installation for a complete turnkey job.

Although The Ark employees produce only one or two pieces of concrete animals or birdbaths each year, they keep the distinctive name because it sticks in clients' minds, Durham explained.

During its 28 years in Houston, the company has grown

from two to 30 employees and from a 3,000-sq.-ft. to a 30,000-sq.-ft. showroom, manufacturing, warehousing and office facility, according to Durham. Those employees include a mold maker, an estimator, three salesmen, three deliverymen, seven office workers and 15 plant workers.

Nowadays The Ark also provides pieces in cut natural stone (including limestone). Its products are most likely found in homes costing more than \$750,000. Residential cast stone now accounts for about 60 percent of the company's business, he added.

But commercial entities, such as Restoration Hardware, are also customers. Restoration Hardware became a customer 10 years ago when The Ark was able to match a specific color for its Houston store columns. It now supplies four to eight 20-foot x 20-inch columns whenever Restoration Hardware opens a new store. Those columns are currently in 12 of Restoration Hardware stores, with The Ark contracted to provide columns for two more new stores, thanks to its attention to detail, Durham said.

Penso, who grew up making concrete animals and bird baths in his father's business (which was called The Ark), knows how to work with concrete and cast stone better than





most after more than 40 years of total experience, with 18 years working in cast stone.

“Cast stone is a little bit different technology than concrete. There is not any detailed written technology on how to manufacture cast stone products. It’s a bit of a mystery,” stated Durham.

Cast stone, “a refined architectural concrete building unit manufactured to simulate natural cut stone, used in unit masonry applications, can be made from white and/or grey cements, manufactured from natural sands, carefully selected crushed stone or well graded natural gravels and mineral coloring pigments to achieve the desired color and appearance while maintaining durable physical properties which exceed most natural cut building stones,” according to the company website, [www.arkconcrete.com](http://www.arkconcrete.com).

Exceptional customer service is a core value of The Ark. “We took a real hard look at our competition years ago. We used similar quality products. We had similar pricing. We decided what we could excel at and control was customer service.

*Continued on page 8*

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*Continued from page 7*

We take pride in our customer service as well as speed of service,” Durham said. “Each piece is handmade and quality inspected before leaving our plant, but problems happen.

We ship extra pieces, such as 52 in an order of 50, at no charge because we know pieces break or come up missing, and we don’t want the builder to stop production. If a truck backs up over a pallet of pieces, we put that replacement job at the front of our production line and get those pieces out the door in two to three days. Then we worry about who’s going to pay for them. We work that payment out after the pieces are on site and production is not stopped.

All of our salespeople take calls on weekends because building goes on seven days a week. We want builders to know if there’s a problem, we’ll handle it immediately,” Durham stated.

Although the trends in the building industry change, the one question The Ark employees will continue to ask is the same one they’ve always asked: “What else do you need and want?”

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# Bill Meek: Sculpting Glass with Sacred Geometry Inspired by Nature

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

Glass.

We see it every day in windows, buildings, mirrors, furniture, room dividers, altars, cars and tableware. Glass is, after all, just a mixture of sand with soda, lime and other ingredients to create products that we use every day. In the hands of the right person whose mind revolves around the creation of beauty... “glass is magic, miraculous, transformative and spiritual.”

It is easy to see that sacred and fractal geometry, so prevalent in Bill’s work, is in every aspect of the universe and nature. It is quite frankly, the hand of God at work.

When I met with Bill and his wife Valerie in their studio, I noticed the obvious sacred geometry, inspired by nature; but it had also become free form with the medium of broken glass that is glued on one side with a dichroic lens material from Nasa. The effect is a reflective rainbow of colors.

Bill’s career has spanned forty-one years. His interest in glass came from walking the beaches of Huntington Beach as a fourth grader, and finding shards of glass that had been kissed by the ocean’s healing power and turned into a thing of beauty. It was in those moments that Bill decided his life’s work would be in sculpture.

Valerie is much more than Bill’s business partner/office manager or “face” of the business. She is the love of his life, and the mother of his two talented musician sons, Buck and Dylan. Valerie brings order to what could easily become passionate chaos. Together, they are literally Yin and Yang, life’s perfect balance.

Throughout his artistic life, Bill has had many mentors that not only guided him; but let his creativity soar. Most notably, the doyenne of Houston design, Mary Ann Bryan, as well as Suzanne Dell, Sarah Eilers. Sandy Lucas, Sharon Staley, Donna Vining, Diana Walker and Jennifer Loh.

Bill’s work is in the homes of many of the movers and shakers of Houston, such as Tilman Fertitta, and Bush 41 for the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station, as well as many high profile corporate, oil and gas companies.

Bill feels a strong connection to the work he did for the synagogue Beth Yeshurun, where his largest body of work



exists in one building. He created twelve large-scale, sand-blasted murals of stories of the Bible. Not only did he read the Bible numerous times to capture the true nature of the story; but also the Torah.

Throughout his work is a running theme... “like broken glass, life is fragile and must be well cared for.” One of his most striking pieces is called, Tree of Life. It’s like looking through the lens of a telescope at a rainbow and seeing every pixel of color and reflected bandwidth of light that exists.

Bill and Valerie have given of much of their time to Houston’s philanthropy scene. Notably, Carolyn Farb’s fundraiser for Marvin Zindler’s Million Dollar Dream for cancer research at MD Anderson where Bill created 110 angel sculptures. They raised a record breaking \$1,380,000. Carolyn Farb, a Houston Treasure, will soon present Bill with the honor of Houston Treasure at a dinner in December with Scott Evan and Warner Roberts of the Social Book officiating.

*Continued on page 15*



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*Continued from page 5*

homeowners' resources. We are teachers, sounding boards and think tanks. We are mentors to the trades, problem solvers and quality controllers. We are project managers, motivators and expeditors. We are optimists in the face of constant challenges. We are team builders."

Clients of Sims Luxury Builders include young professionals as well as empty nesters. After 31 years in business, the company is getting repeat customers. Marie shared the story of a family who built a custom home with Sims 18 years ago and recently hired the company again to build a patio home as their family downsizes. Other builders may experience the same sort of repeat business, but the unique element in this situation is that the young family who bought the original home also hired Sims for a whole house renovation. "It is humbling to have both of these families trust us with their most important investment, and we hope it speaks to how pleased our homeowners are with their completed homes as well as their experience working with us," she noted.

Sims Luxury Builders' projects may be as small as 4,000-sq.-ft. garden homes or as large as 30,000-sq.-ft. estates, ranging from \$1 million to \$10 million. Typically the company has 8-10 new construction or home renovations in progress at a time.

Capacity is a concern for the company's leaders when it comes to growth. They refuse to undermine quality or diminish their standards by taking on more projects without adding just the right team members to handle them.

The company builds in the neighborhoods of West University, Tanglewood, Memorial Villages and River

Oaks, although for the right project it will travel beyond Houston's inner loop and Sugar Land, where it is headquartered.

Although the team most enjoys working directly with clients to build their dream home, they will occasionally build a speculative home depending on the team's capacity, lot availability and current market conditions. It has a spec home in Tanglewood going on the market in January.

Sims builds in all architectural styles, priding itself on creating well-proportioned homes and getting both the interior and exterior details just right. "If a detail is especially complex or we suspect there may be a better way to execute it, we take the time to get it right. Chris, Michael and our construction managers will spend hours making sure the smallest issues are not ignored or rushed through but instead solved using the best possible path forward," Marie said.

Already a multi-generational company, Sims Luxury Builders intends to continue building high-end, single-family custom homes for years to come. Those homes are its passion and its strength, according to Marie. Why mess with success?

***To contact Sims Luxury Builders,  
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# New Bath and Kitchen Products Offer Design Solutions

By Linda Jennings

Kitchen and bath remodeling has never been easier, thanks to clever innovations in shower bases, farm sinks and bath vanities. These products offer great design solutions, making even the most challenging remodeling project a snap!

## Simple Shower Solution

MTI Baths makes bathroom remodeling a lot easier with its clever new MTSB-6036SOHD shower base. At first glance, it appears to be a standard model drain – until the cover is removed to reveal an offset drain. This allows the base to replace an original narrower base or tub without the hassle of repositioning the drain plumbing – saving time and effort.

Measuring 60 x 36 inches, the base is crafted from exceedingly durable Lucite®, a cross-linked cast acrylic made in the USA. This design is quickly becoming popular with metropolitan remodeling and building professionals.

## Spice It Up

M19 metallic tones are one of today's hottest design trends, and the unique colors offered by Ruvati's new Terraza Collection of modern farmhouse kitchen sinks are exactly on point. Choose from Brass Tone Matte Gold finish, a stunning Copper Tone Matte Bronze or a sophisticated Matte Black Gunmetal. Using a nano-PVD finish, the 16-gauge T-304 grade stainless-steel sink is overlaid with a colored finish that is amazingly durable and stain resistant.

Available in 30-, 33- and 36-inch sizes, the Terraza Collection allows homeowners to coordinate their sink color with their fixtures, cabinetry hardware or colored stainless-steel appliances for a truly cohesive look.

## Metal Muse

ICERA brings a cool contemporary vibe to the bathroom with its Muse vanity. The freestanding vanity is the latest addition to the company's popular Muse Collection, with basin, bidet and toilet all available for a cohesive bathroom.

The practical Muse offers three generous drawers, including a tilt-out top drawer to maximize usable storage space and keep small items easily accessible. The vanity is available in traditional finishes from walnut brown and matte white to bolder options like ocean grey, blue and black. Trendy metal feet coordinate with the decorative trim and elevate the vanity for a feeling of spaciousness, even in compact bathrooms.



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the Anti-Defamation League and countless others in both live and silent auctions.

Bill and Valerie Meek have drawn attention to Houston's diverse art scene; they have created an example for all artists in our community to follow. So, hurry down to

*Continued on page 18*



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*Continued from page 11*

Bill and Valerie's contribution to the Houston's philanthropy is generous. Bill has created gifts for Laura Ward and Child Advocates, Zina Garrison for her tennis program for kids. He sculpted 70 Cats and Dogs for Citizens For Animal Protection, Celebrity Paws Gala. Fifty-four sculpted dancers for Cystic Fibrosis. He's created sculpture for organizations such as Multiple Sclerosis, Amfar, Diabetes, The Houston Grand Opera, The Houston Symphony, Theatre Under The Stars, The Women's Home, Mission of Yahweh, Austin City Limits,



# Mic check: Four vital questions to ask your team

By Burk Moreland

Before I get on stage for any event, the audio visual crew at each venue hands me the microphone I will be using. Then one of them asks me to walk around the room – especially in the areas I will be talking from – and just “talk.” The crew calls this process a “mic (microphone) check.” I have to tell you, it feels really silly. Those of us preparing for a presentation end up saying things like “Testing...1...2...3” or “Can you hear me now?”

Because it feels so silly, and 99 percent of the time everything already works just fine, it is tempting just to skip these mic checks. I mean, how bad would it be if the mic didn’t work, right?

Let me give you an example from my own experience, and you decide. One time in San Diego, California, I was scheduled to make a presentation to an audience of 300 people. Although we had done the required mic check, for some mysterious reason, my microphone suddenly quit working about 10 minutes into my 90-minute talk.

Talk about “Oh, crap” moments. . . . Luckily for me, my voice carries well enough without using a mic. I just kept talking for the 10 minutes it took to fix the mic, but I can assure you that my blood pressure climbed a few points during that technological mishap.

The only thing that might be worse in that kind of situation is a mic that works sporadically. Then, the presenter either sounds like he’s whispering (every time the mic cuts out) or yelling (every time it starts working again). Trust me, if you ever want to see a presenter sweat, watch closely when his/her mic cuts in and out during a very important moment in the presentation.

I can assure you that after an experience like that, mic checks don’t seem nearly as silly. After all, the whole point of a presentation is to communicate, right? If your audience only hears part of what you say, the communication will be incomplete and, therefore, far less effective.

Just like the A-V crew at a public speaking venue, you should check the lines of communication in your company frequently. These company “mic checks” should be used to evaluate the clarity of communication within your company. Do your team members clearly see and

understand the vision you need them to see in order to fulfill their piece of that vision?

Specifically, you should go to key team members and ask the following:

1. Are we communicating enough with you? Would you like more or less communication?
2. What would you like more information about?
3. How would you like to receive the information? (Memos, emails, blogs, video messages, social media, in person, in meetings, etc.)
4. What do you see as opportunities for us to improve our communication channels or messages?

Once you have collected all of this new information, sit down with your leadership team and decide how best to use what you have learned. As always, when you collect data, report back to everyone who was involved in the “survey.” Tell them all about the information you got and what you are going to do with it. When your team members see that you value their input and are taking action based on that input, they are likely to give better and more honest information moving forward.

Remember, a faulty communication system, whether it is a microphone or a manager, can cause a negative ripple effect in any system. So, before you start working on changes for the New Year, make sure the lines of communication in your company, like the microphone at a presentation venue, are in top working condition.

Ask yourself these questions. Are the lines of communication open? Are you getting the feedback you need? Are your employees willing to tell you what you need to know (even if it isn’t pretty all the time)?

One final word of warning. If things are quiet, don’t assume that all is well. Instead of signaling peace and harmony, the silence around you may well be the proverbial calm before the storm. Don’t wait for the first drops of rain – start improving your company’s communication today.

*If you are ready to take your company to new heights, let us help you get there. Connect with us today at (832) 356-4585, [burk@burkmoreland.com](mailto:burk@burkmoreland.com), or [www.burkmoreland.com](http://www.burkmoreland.com).*



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**BY ANN SACKS**

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The wealth of color variance moves from deep to grassy greens, slate grey, deep sapphire blue and soft to midnight shades of black, broken by creamy white veining that ebbs, pools and flows throughout the dramatic field. The result is a visual effect that promises showstopping results.

Suitable for all wall and floor applications, Scala is offered in 4"x8", 16"x16", 12"x24" and a 30"x72" slab that makes it an excellent choice for countertops and vanities. Additional sizes are available by special order to bring a customized option to any project. Scala is an inventoried marble housed at its Portland, Oregon facility and competitively priced also making it a savvy choice for large scale commercial or residential installations.

Outdoor installations are subject to climate and method of installation. As with all fine natural stones, it is

recommended that Scala be sealed with a penetrating sealer and periodically cleaned and resealed to keep the vivid colors beautiful for years to come.

Founded in 1981, ANN SACKS has built its reputation with inspiring designs in tile, stone, plumbing, lighting and accessories. Based in Portland, Oregon, the company, along with sister brands, KALLISTA plumbing and Robern mirrored cabinetry and vanities, is a division of the Kohler Co. Decorative Products Group, and a wholly owned subsidiary of Kohler Co.

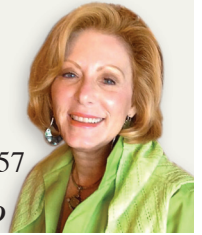
Founded in 1873 and headquartered in Kohler, Wisconsin, Kohler Co. is one of America's oldest and largest privately held companies. Kohler is a global leader in the manufacture of kitchen and bath products, engines and power generation systems, cabinetry, tile and home interiors, and international host to award-winning hospitality and world-class golf destinations.

*For additional information regarding Scala or other ANN SACKS products, consumers can call toll-free 1-800-278-TILE or visit the ANN SACKS website at [www.annsacks.com](http://www.annsacks.com).*

Continued from page 15

the studio located at 1903 Spring Street and Silver in the heart of Arts District Houston. Bill's pieces sell fast, and there's always a line forming at the door of his studio for commissioned pieces. You may contact Bill and Valerie at MeekStudio@gmail.com or 713-259-9226. Website: www.meekgallery.com

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Greymark Construction Offers  
'Wow' Remodeling

Greymark Construction | Houston, Texas



# Greymark Construction Offers 'Wow' Remodeling

Refrigerators have special significance for Leslie King. As a college student selling (or leasing?) dormitory refrigerators, they gave Leslie her first “real” income. Now, as owner of Houston’s Greymark Construction, a design/build firm, refrigerators and their placement are a focal point for a business that specializes in kitchen, bathroom and whole house remodeling, improving the livability of a home.

King prefers remodeling “because we get to go in and do the fun stuff. We get to do the ‘wow’ that the homeowner couldn’t afford when they built the house.” Greymark does about 40 projects a year.

With the average cost of a kitchen at \$75,000 without appliances and the average cost of a bath at \$35,000 for a home that sells for \$500,000, homeowners get more than their money’s worth at re-sale with remodeling, she said. For example, Greymark just increased the value of a \$1.2 million home to at least \$1.4 million by renovating the kitchen and whole first floor for \$185,000.

Being a woman can be an advantage in the male-dominated construction industry, King said. “I understand how a kitchen should work because I cook. I ask things like if someone is right- or left-handed so we can place the dishwasher in the best spot. I also ask How many pairs of shoes, purses, belts or scarves do you have? (when doing a closet). Men don’t think of things like that.”

King said she is likely to get jobs when the wife makes the

decision on a remodeling project, but is likely to lose a job to a male competitor when it involves “engineering,” such as an addition to a house, when a man makes the decisions.

But King is comfortable competing against men because she’s been doing it for most of her professional life. After earning her degree in marketing from Sam Houston State University, Leslie determined that she wanted to earn \$1000 a month and be able to set her own hours. Her dad encouraged her to look to the oil fields for opportunity. With two job offers, she joined IMCO which was a division of Halliburton., in September 1979 where she was one of 10 women among a couple of thousand men on the payroll. She also sold recycled pipe thread protectors for a while and worked as a restaurant management trainee for Marriott Hotels for two years.

But it was her year selling real estate that really shaped her future. Divorced, with two small daughters to support, King started buying older homes in 1992 to remodel and resell while selling properties for others. She learned construction techniques from the “two old codgers” she hired as carpenters. Although some men presumed that she couldn’t understand technical elements of construction because she didn’t wear a tool belt, she asked a lot of questions and learned everything she could.

She said what really helped her improve her skills was joining the Remodelers Council in 1997 and a peer-review



groups, Remodelers Advantage. She now meets with 11 other remodelers from across the country twice a year to sharpen her skills.

Back when she started in 1995, she heard comments that she didn't know what she was doing, but those comments have disappeared over the years, she said.

No doubt Greymark's many awards have had something to do with those comments disappearing. Greymark Construction won the Greater Houston Builders Association Grand Remodeler prize from 2010 and 2015, in addition to the Chrysalis Award for the nation's best Universal Design. Greymark received a Texas Lone Star award for Best Historic Renovation.

Also, the Better Business Bureau gave Greymark its award for excellence from 2009 through 2019 in recognition of its A+ rating. Texas Association of Builders gave Greymark its Star Awards for Best Whole House Remodel over \$500,000 and Best Kitchen over \$100,000. Other national recognitions are being named one of Remodeling Magazine's Big 50 and Best Whole House Remodel from Professional Remodeler Magazine.

With so much crystal on the shelves, nowadays almost all of Greymark's clients ask if theirs will be an award-winning job! "Everybody wants to be award-winning," she adds.

Leslie King is now recognized as a leader in the construction

industry. Past president of the Remodelers Council of the Greater Houston Builders Association, Leslie was also president of the Greater Houston Builders Association in 2014, the second woman and the second remodeler to lead the organization long dominated by male custom builders.

King created Greymark Express in 2011 as a way to weather the economic downturn and to expand the company's market area beyond Houston's Inner Loop and I-10 West Corridor into the suburbs. Unique to the Houston market, Greymark Express promises to complete a bathroom remodel in two weeks if no plumbing fixtures or walls have to be moved. "In the down economy small projects were the only thing homeowners could afford. Greymark Express allowed us to get our foot in door with clients, which is huge." Those bath remodeling projects were \$15,000-\$20,000 and up. People are now spending more money, King said.

But when the economy soured in 2009, most custom builders became remodelers to keep their businesses afloat, she said. However, they didn't realize how different remodeling was from ground-up building. Suddenly their clients were around every corner, watching them as they worked, because they were living in the project, not viewing it from the street.

These custom builders asked King what was the secret to remodeling. "Communication is a huge part. That and listening."

*Continued on page 22*



*Continued from page 21*

While hearing has been something of a challenge for Leslie who has life-long severe hearing loss, listening comes easily to her. King keeps Greymark focused on its clients' satisfaction. Its goal is to keep its customers happy every day. She said they do that by anticipating problems and eliminating surprises as well as finishing projects on time and on budget. She cites 90 percent of business coming from referrals and repeat customers.

She uses BuilderTrend software, updated by her field people, so that clients can track their projects' progress on-line. "Clients love it," she said, because people are becoming more technically focused.

Since 2009 she has used GuildQuality, an independent survey company, to track Greymark's customer satisfaction results. Greymark's website links viewers to the results so that they can read the comments for themselves.

"People hire us because we know what we're doing and they trust us. Those are huge things," she stated. "We're being hired for a service, for our expertise. We're able to establish trust from the beginning."

King refocused her business in 2004 from just building to design-build because she could control the costs that way. "If a client brings us architectural plans, it is usually outside the client's budget. For example, one project's budget was \$200,000, but came in at \$400,000. If we design it, it stays within the client's budget. We make sure we anticipate every expense. It's a win-win for the client."

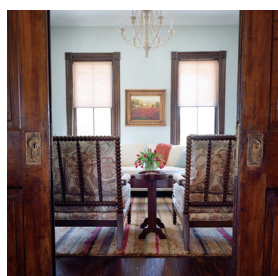
Leslie said she prefers design work but also does and sales. "My job is to give ideas and to anticipate the best operating function" to meet the homeowners' needs. There is an Architect on staff along with an estimator, interior designer, office manager and marketing person. Her oldest daughter who is a CPA has come on board as Vice-President and will be taking over the business in about 5 years. The rest of the



staff is in the field.

One reason King chose Greymark as the company name back in 1994 is because it lent itself to succession, which is something she thinks about these days. She now has a succession plan in place with her daughter and looks forward to watching her take it to the next level of success.

Greymark and its founder, Leslie King, have made their mark on the Houston building scene. And it's an award-winning mark. Just look at all of the crystal on the shelves if you don't think so.



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