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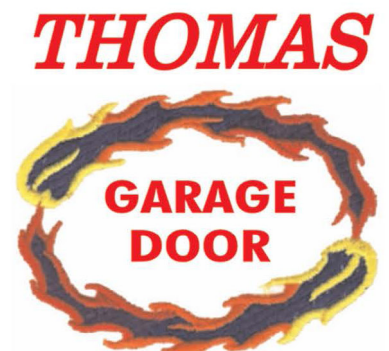
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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

# NAHB Inducts Dan Bawden into Hall of Fame, the Remodeling Industry's Highest National Honor



**Giselle Bernard**  
Publisher/Owner



**Dan Bawden**

*This month I recognize one of our own, Dan Bawden, CEO of Legal Eagle Contractors, by sharing the following information from the NAHB. Dan and Legal Eagle Contractors were featured in the October 2019 issue of The Metropolitan Builder. Congratulations, Dan!*

The Greater Houston Builders Association's (GHBA) Past President Dan Bawden, CEO of Legal Eagle Contractors, Co., was inducted into the National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) Hall of Fame, the remodeling industry's highest national honor.

Only a few general contractors in the nation have received this top honor. The Hall of Fame recognizes those in the industry who make visionary contributions with lasting national impacts on the residential construction and remodeling industry. The event was held during the 2020 International Builders Show in Las Vegas.

Dan was recognized for more than 37 years of national and local service to the community and the industry. He is CEO of Legal Eagle Contractors, Co., an award-winning remodeling and new construction company based in Bellaire. He served as the 2017 NAHB Remodelers National Council Chairman. He was the first remodeling specialist ever to be president of the Greater Houston Builders Association.

Dan has served on the board of directors of the Greater Houston Better Business Bureau for almost 20 consecutive years.

He recently returned from a speaking tour in Japan, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, to lecture about

aging-in-place construction methods.

He is a champion for seniors and those with physical challenges and promotes independent living. For many years, he has lectured builders, architects and designers about better ways to build and renovate homes across the world, eliminating barriers and making home safer and friendlier for people of all ages and abilities. With the help of fellow remodelers and the AARP, he created the NAHB "Certified Aging in Place Specialist" or "CAPS Certification" in 2001.



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# Butler Brothers Bond over Building

By Kathy Bowen Stolz



Some siblings squabble. Many brothers bicker. But Bo and Scott Butler of Butler Brothers find their mutual respect and compatible skill sets make them ideal business partners in their Houston custom

design-build firm with its strong client focus.

“We’re pretty much on the same page most of the time,” Bo, the older brother by two years, said. Scott agreed. “We both look at things slightly differently. I think we bounce off each other well.”

Bo added, “When we do disagree, we eventually see a better path. We always come together.” “We’re better together than separate,” Scott confirmed.

Both Butlers, who are Houston natives, have similar educations, earning undergraduate degrees in environmental design from Texas A&M and graduate

degrees in architecture from the University of Houston. They also have similar work experiences, both joining large, local architectural firms after college.

But working in a large firm where the work is very specialized didn’t satisfy Bo’s desire to be a holistic architect. After renovating his own home, he realized anew that he loved doing things he could get his hands on. “I needed a little more fulfillment, a little more hands-on.”

Scott discovered that he really enjoyed working directly with clients when he worked for a residential architectural firm while in graduate school.

So, in 2003, when Bo said, “Hey, let’s do something together,” Scott was immediately interested. “We both wanted to be entrepreneurs and to own our own business,” Scott said.

In reality, they are partners in three integrated but separate companies: Butler Brothers Development, Ltd.; Butler Brothers Architecture, LLC; and Butler Brothers Construction Corp. They have done more than \$100 million in projects, primarily inside or just outside the loop and on





the west/northwest sides of Houston.

“Early on, we decided we wanted to develop projects in the Houston area,” Scott stated. Their original model was to develop, design and build projects. “When we started this business, we didn’t think we’d be building houses,” Bo noted.

At first, their focus was on custom remodeling and custom design, but market and client demands changed their focus. “We hired two other construction companies, but we decided we needed to do it ourselves to get it right,” Scott said.

Now construction generates the majority of Butler Brothers’ revenue. To help them accomplish their projects, they employ two site managers, an interior designer, a part-time bookkeeper and occasionally the youngest of their four sisters.

Having an architecture practice and while being builders is unusual in the Houston market. “Not many firms have owners that have an architectural background,” Bo noted. “Because of our background we understand all aspects of building a home from the first line drawn to the last nail hammered. As an architect you’re good at listening to clients and figuring out what their needs are and providing solutions.”

He added, “We’re especially good at spatial relationships” and interpreting things to their clients. Scott agreed. “We

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find that a lot of people can't see things in 3-D."

They've trained their site managers and subcontractors to recognize their expectations, Bo said. Scott added, "It's as simple as knowing where to locate a switch on a wall so it's not where you might want to put a piece of art."

While Scott handles 99 percent of the design work, Bo focuses primarily on construction, doing estimating, figuring budgets and working with subcontractors. Their work intermingles when they do development site plans and create spreadsheets. "We both can handle all components of the business. We're interchangeable," according to Bo.

They said they are happy to build homes designed by other architects. As architects, they said they understand what other architects are trying to get across and can explain those ideas to clients.

They both find satisfaction from being builders. "I really love starting from scratch on a project and seeing it through to the end. It's really gratifying to create something that makes your client happy at the end of the day," Scott said. Bo said he finds building really rewarding. "Even if it's someone else's idea, it's our creation."



They agreed that trying to determine the future of the housing market is the most challenging part of their work. "There are so many winds blowing. It's hard to manage speculative projects, to get in front of where the market's going to go," Bo confessed. "The market moves faster than a construction project." Scott likened it to a roller coaster.

"You have to have patience. You get excited when starting something new, but the market has demands. You have to be ready to downsize or expand. You can't turn on and turn off demand," Bo stated.



They currently have two patio home projects underway. Audubon Hollow is a 22-unit, \$50 million, high-end home development near the River Oaks neighborhood. The other is Maravilla Court, a 28-unit home development with prices starting at \$670,000 near Spring Branch.

Buyers have eight floor plans to choose from with options to modify slightly the floor plans. Buyers can also help select finishes to make their homes unique.

They also have four single-family speculative houses either under construction or on the market. On average they complete about 10 projects a year.

Despite their preference for classic, timeless architecture style, the Butler brothers will build in any style, depending on the client's preference, the context, the location and the perception of how the client wants to live. "We help give people what they want and need," Bo stated.







The Butlers agree that they want to continue in the custom home building and renovation market while increasing their client base. Custom building is the heart of their business and always will be, they said.

There's no doubt these brothers will stay in step on their path to building Houston's premier housing!

*For more information, visit [www.butler-brothers.com](http://www.butler-brothers.com) or call 713-621-7221. You may contact Bo Butler at [bbutler@butler-brothers.com](mailto:bbutler@butler-brothers.com) and Scott Butler at [sbutler@butler-brothers.com](mailto:sbutler@butler-brothers.com). Their office is located at 4605 Post Oak Place Dr., Suite 107, Houston, TX 77027.*



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# Dickinson Realizes Childhood Dream as Interior Designer

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Not everyone realizes a childhood dream, but Suzanne Dickinson of Dickinson Interiors in Cypress certainly did!

From the time she was seven years old, Dickinson told everyone she was going to be an interior designer when she grew up. No one questioned her choice because she was one of those kids who regularly rearranged the furniture and even chose the exterior color of the family's house!

Now this native Houstonian specializes in transforming entire spaces, usually serving as the general contractor on kitchen and bathroom renovations all over the greater Houston area. She said homeowners often will choose these two spaces first when renovating because they reap the best reward for homeowners in both investment and resale.

Projects range from 2,000 sq. ft. to 12,000 sq. ft., with

costs and length of time to complete depending on the scope of work, she said, but they will typically take at least four weeks.

The first and most important step in any of Suzanne's projects is to interview the homeowners to determine what they really need or want. "I ask question to find out how I can make their dreams come true," she stated.

"The 'want to know' is a big part of what I do is educate clients about what we can do. Then they start to think outside the box, to get creative."

She encourages clients to provide inspiration pictures, even of the front yard and elevation of a home because anything can provide clues to their style preferences. "My goal is to find out the design style of my clients. I want them to say 'Oh, my gosh! I love it! It's exactly what I wanted!' instead of 'I hired a designer, and this is what she did' when the project is done."

Suzanne admits to being very flexible about change orders. "I'm too flexible, according to my staff! But I feel strongly about customer service. As an only child, I'm a people pleaser, and making people happy and transforming spaces is the most gratifying part of my work."

She begins demolition in a house only when the materials are on site. "I want to diminish the inconvenience to a family. I don't want to make them live with construction for an extra week waiting for materials to arrive," Dickinson said. "I always have the homeowners' best interest at heart."

She positioned herself to start her own firm by graduating with a bachelor's degree in interior design from the University of Texas and later with a master's in business administration from the same university.

But first Suzanne worked as a buyer and regional manager for a small chain of clothing stores for 11 years after college. "It was really fun, but I decided to pursue my passion" and returned to interior design in 1990.

Her clients come from all walks of life, she noted. There's no typical customer. But the one thing they have in

*Continued on page 11*









# KBIS 2020 Features Fresh Take on Kitchen Design

*Bold colors and functionality are key themes, from bright hues and appliance customizations to multifunctional eco sinks, manufacturers introduced new products at the annual Kitchen and Bath Industry Show 2020 in Las Vegas.*

## **Hello Yellow!**

Ruvati embraced color with the debut of its striking, new, Italian-made, Midas Yellow epiGranite kitchen sinks. The bold hue is a great way to add contrast in a traditional white or neutral kitchen and provides a welcome alternative to stainless steel with the look of luxurious stone.

The sinks are offered in seven additional colors from elegant neutrals, such as Caribbean Sand or Onyx Black, to more vibrant hues, such as Carnelian Red or Catalina Blue.

Made from 80 percent crushed natural granite, these sinks are enhanced with a proprietary resin that makes them non-porous and resistant to stains, bacteria and extreme temperatures. The epiGranite sinks are available in sizes from 16" x 20" to 33" x 22" and in single or double bowl configurations.

## **Customized Appliance Design**

In the appliance category, BlueStar introduced a cutting-edge printing process that allows any image, text, print or pattern to be applied to a range, refrigerator or kitchen hood in a smooth, durable, easy-to-clean finish.

Imagine the possibilities: The ability to match not only any color but also to apply any photograph or replicate an original work of art for a design that is not only personal to the homeowner but can be a signature piece for the interior designer or home builder.

BlueStar showcased the new capability with a stunning, original patterned design created by Kendall Wilkinson Design – a 36-inch Nova Series gas range with complimentary Azure Blue colored knobs and brass trim.

## **Compact and Eco-Friendly**

FOTILE Technologies showed that smart use of space in kitchen design doesn't mean compromising function with its 3-in-1 sink/dishwasher. Featured as a Best of KBIS finalist for 2020, this amazing design is perfect for compact kitchens, in-law suites or even stand-alone bar areas.

Engineered for maximum functionality, this unit includes a sink, a dishwasher that uses just 1.85 gallons of water to wash and dry dishes for a family of four, and a very cool produce washer that uses high-frequency ultrasound and turbulence technology to remove dirt and pesticide residues from fresh fruits and veggies.

This innovative design is an ideal way to make the best use of limited kitchen space and promote a wellness-centered lifestyle.



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common is that they choose her because of her reputation. She said she recently created the website [www.dickinson-interiors.com](http://www.dickinson-interiors.com) because “so many people want to see what I do.”

Capitalizing on her years of retail experience, Suzanne opened the Dickinson Interiors retail store in Cypress 20 years ago that features furniture, home furnishings, accessories, floral design, clothing and jewelry. A very capable staff of seven manages the store and operations, allowing Dickinson to spend most of her time on job sites and working with clients.

Her office and studio share space with the retail store.

As for the future, Suzanne Dickinson will continue to pursue her passion for interior design, assuring that her clients’ homes tell the story of who they are and to be a collection for what they love.

*You may contact Dickinson Interiors by calling 281-370-2099, by visiting [www.dickinsoninteriorsonline.com](http://www.dickinsoninteriorsonline.com) or by emailing [suzanne@dickinson-interiors.com](mailto:suzanne@dickinson-interiors.com). The studio and store is located at 13044 Louetta Road, Cypress, TX 77429.*



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# Terie Beth Dillard Is Artist's Artist

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID



**Terie Beth Dillard**

To say that Terie Beth Dillard is a “jack of all trades” and a master of many would not be an exaggeration, for there is nothing Terie Beth cannot paint. There’s no style she can’t reproduce. Simply put, she is an artist’s artist.

Terie Beth began her love affair with art at age eight as she sat beside her grandmother, or

“Gram” as she was known, and learned the nuances of color, scale, graphics, perspective and all the mathematical calculations that go into creating a specific piece of art.

She creates custom art, murals, faux finishes on furniture, large scale canvas art for churches and specialty art for interior designers. She creates images from close observation of her surroundings or to fulfill the designer’s request with her vast knowledge of art, insight and imagination. She is a quick study and is so knowledgeable about the history and style of famous artists that one need only discuss the project with her once to achieve the desired outcome.

Utilizing her master’s degree in graphic design and illustration, Terie Beth illustrates children’s books and paints custom Christmas decorations for fun in her spare time.

Houston-based Dillard draws much of her innate sense of how the right art can change a bleak space into one that is welcoming from Georgia O’Keefe, one of the most famous artists of the 20th century. O’Keefe is known and loved worldwide for her boldly innovative art, picturing distinctive

flowers, cityscapes, glowing landscapes and sunsets of the West Texas and New Mexico skies.

Terie Beth feels a distinct connection to the artist because in 1916 Ms. O’Keefe taught Terie Beth’s grandmother to paint at West Texas Normal College, the same school where Terie Beth received her bachelor of arts from what is now known West Texas A&M.

Terie Beth feels that both she and O’Keefe share a quest for a style of art that departs significantly from traditions of the past in search of “the great American thing.” Like her hero, Terie Beth is a pioneer in decorative arts. In addition to her breathtaking murals, she was creating wood grain made to look old on new wood, long before it was a popular aspect of the interior design industry.

She has a broad knowledge of historical furnishings and styles that she incorporates into pieces in a new and creative way. She sees the world of art in an abstract but historically and traditionally correct way.

“My desire as an artist is to fill a space in an imaginative and beautiful way,” Dillard said. She excels in expectation and delivery and never disappoints. She definitely is an artist’s artist.

For more information visit [www.teriebethdillardart.com](http://www.teriebethdillardart.com).

## About the Author

*Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID, is an interior designer with 25 years of expertise. She may be contacted at 713-203-4047 or at [www.MaryLynnInteriorDesign.com](http://www.MaryLynnInteriorDesign.com).*







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# Venetian Stairs Provides Styles for Every Decor

**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**

Whether it's a stairway to heaven or just a way to reach the second floor, every beautiful home deserves a beautiful staircase. No matter if it's new construction or a remodeling project, Venetian Stairs can provide that staircase to match every home's aesthetic.

Venetian Stairs offers stainless steel railing systems, iron balusters, steel stringers and wood staircases and parts to enhance the profile of modern, farmhouse, traditional or other décor styles, according to Margie Melgar, general manager of this Houston-based company.

It sells complete turnkey staircases as well as individual wooden stair elements, such as handrails in 12 patterns, newels in 10 patterns and custom treads in different species of wood. Additionally, it offers as one of its products Italian powder-coated wrought iron balusters manufactured by its parent company and next-door neighbor on Mesa Drive, Indital USA. All components are sold only as part of installations.

The company shifts its product lines to match homeowners' changing preferences. "When we opened in 2013, we sold

tons of iron scrolls. Now everyone wants the modern look. Stainless steel is really becoming our niche for custom builders," she said. Melgar added that stainless has grown to about 50 percent of the company's business.

Styles the company offers in its stainless steel systems are cube or round posts and handrails with cable, glass or round bar infill. Other handrail options are Woodinox and LED handrails.

However, iron balusters remain popular, especially with remodelers who want to refresh a home's look. Venetian Stairs offers 41 wrought iron baluster patterns with exotic names such as Bassamo, Vincenza and Soave, which can be seen on its website, [www.venetianstairs.com](http://www.venetianstairs.com).

Colors available are wrought iron black, classic black, midnight bronze, Old World copper, dark champagne, shadow grey and warm nickel.

For those not sure what look will work best in their space, Venetian Stairs provides within its design services samples and catalogs to allow customers to customize their stairs. After they sign a contract, customers may request a 3-D





rendering to ensure the stairs have the look they want. Melgar said Venetian Stairs' parent company Indital has an in-house drafting crew that does the rendering.

And to ensure the stairs fit correctly, Venetian Stairs employs expert installers who are carpenters that also have been trained to work in stainless steel.

Melgar, who does the estimating, measuring and ordering of materials, said she likes to have everything mapped out on the front end to ensure a smooth installation.

"For example, there are 10 steps to think ahead of before installing a steel stringer. The homeowner gets a better finish when we're involved from start to finish, but we'll do whatever whenever in the process."

She noted that she will work with designers, builders or homeowners to create a customized staircase. "Homeowners do a lot of internet searching. Thanks to the internet, there's a lot of inspiration pictures that can help us [deliver the look people want]."

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However, she said homeowners can suffer “sticker shock.” A staircase with simple iron balusters may be \$2,000, but one with a curved glass handrail may be \$60,000.

“No job is too small or too big for us. We do both commercial and residential projects,” she said.

Margie noted that installations may take two days to one week. However, major projects with a steel structure may take three-four months from the planning stage to finish.

She added, “We do a final walk-through with the builder to ensure satisfaction. We wouldn’t put anything in your home that we wouldn’t put in our own. We thrive on the customer’s satisfaction at the end of each project.”

*For more information about Venetian Stairs, visit [www.venetianstairs.com](http://www.venetianstairs.com) or contact Margie Melgar at [mmelgar@venetianstairs.com](mailto:mmelgar@venetianstairs.com) or 713-481-1188 (office) or 832-657-7103 (cell). The company is located at 7947 Mesa Dr., Houston, TX 77028.*



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