

CHESAPEAKE HOME

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THE MID-ATLANTIC'S HOUSE AND GARDEN MAGAZINE

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customizing
a classic

a farmhouse facelift

9 Tips for Selling
Your Home

Award-Winning
Renovations & Design

Creating an
Energy-Efficient
Home



PHOTO BY NICOLE MARTYN

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REMODELER/BUILDER

DELBERT ADAMS

BY JENNIFER K. DANSICKER

After almost 22 years as co-founder and president of Ilex Construction & Woodworking, one of the region's most highly regarded custom homebuilding and remodeling companies, Delbert Adams has decided to walk away and start anew. He has very recently started his own company Delbert Adams Construction Group, LLC, and is ready for a fresh start at a business that creates opportunity for everyone around him.

Adams is energized and ready to focus on his vision of custom building and renovation. His goal is to create quality work in a timeframe and manner that exceeds his clients' expectations. At 52, Delbert wants to get back to what he loved about the industry when he co-founded Ilex two decades ago: his dedication to personalized, hands-on, quality service.

What got you started in your homebuilding and remodeling?

I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and my parents owned a real estate company, so I spent my summers, Saturdays, and weekends working with industry professionals. We were always working on a project, it was a family enterprise. I learned from all those plumbers, carpenters, and electricians how to transform a home into something more than it was. It was a really satisfying feeling to see the before and after of a project.

What do you love most about your job?

I love to exceed the clients' expectation by helping them realize a dream within their home. It is gratifying to assemble a group of professionals for each project with the right talents to accomplish a task. I like to keep the lines of communication open with each person involved in the job, particularly the client.

What accomplishment of yours makes you the most proud?

I am proud of developing a company from nothing and pulling together hard-working individuals and making a team out of them. I love creating opportunity for people around me. I am also proud of the way I maintained a balance and perspective through the ebbs and flows of my business. It's important to find that balance between

work and family too.

I hope that five or ten years from now, I will have developed a company that runs by itself with my thumb print on it. I believe in empowering the people who work for me.

After whom do you model your career?

I would have to say I modeled most of my professional life after my dad. He showed me by example how to work with integrity and humility. At 86, my dad just retired from the insurance industry and has accomplished so many great things in his life. He showed me the power of hard work and doing the right thing.

Who in your life was most instrumental in helping you get started with your career?

My wife Gina has always been my greatest supporter. We have been married going on 25 years and she has been the one giving me encouragement when I needed it and a kick in the rear when I needed it. Gina keeps me grounded and has always been my hidden weapon all these years.

She works on the vision and marketing of the company as well as the master planning. She is my sounding board for any critical aspects of my business.

When you were five, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I am not sure I know what I wanted

to be when I was five other than six. I guess I wanted to be some kind of professional ice hockey player.

If you could do anything other than what you are doing, what would it be?

I thoroughly enjoy coaching. It doesn't matter what sport. Right now I coach the Bryn Mawr School varsity hockey team. I love pushing young people beyond their self-perceived talent so they can get to another level. I want to maximize their potential and make them realize that it's about the whole person and not just the athlete.

What advice can you offer someone wanting to get started in your field?

Be 100 percent committed to the service of your client. Be committed to being a student of the industry and stay on the cutting edge of the building technologies. Work with total integrity. I am a big believer in trade associations and conferences, too. You can share information with other professionals who are trying to perfect their craft.

I also recommend you learn empathy for your client, your employees, and your sub-contractors. Always do what is right and you can sleep a lot better at night.

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