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Construction News

Dallas/Fort Worth

# CONSTRUCTION™

## NEWS Reprint

The Industry's Newspaper

www.constructionnews.net ★ (210) 308-5800 ★ Volume 11 ★ Number 12 ★ DECEMBER 2013



**Bill Imhoff**, President/CEO

**Intertech Flooring**

Business is in **Bill Imhoff's** blood. As the son of a business owner, the **Intertech Flooring** president and CEO got a taste of entrepreneurship early on, and went on to establish a company that, in only 25 years time, has grown to serve nearly every corner of Texas.

His drive isn't just reserved for his work. As a loving husband, a doting father, or just a guy enjoying his boat on the lake, Imhoff gives his all, all of the time.

**Are you a Texas boy, Bill?**

Absolutely! Born and raised. I was born in Port Arthur, and then we moved when I was in second grade to Houston, where my dad started a business, a folding door distribution company.

**Did you help your dad out in the business?**

I did as a kid. I started in the warehouse, just like my sons did, and then went and worked out in the field installing folding partitions. That was back in the "open concept" days, when elementary schools and hotels wanted to have open concepts [instead of walls]. It was very educational, and it was tough because as a son of the owner, you always have to prove yourself, but it was absolutely worthwhile and a great experience. I enjoyed working and it got me interested in working in construction.

**Did you know you were going to be in business then? What did you study in college?**

I went to school my first year in Lubbock, transferred to Texas my sophomore year and graduated from UT; I majored in marketing and minored in law.

**Marketing and law! That's an interesting combination. What drove your interest in those fields?**

Business has always been interesting to me. Growing up in a family business, you really get to know the ins and outs of a business, so that really spurred me to want to be in business. As for the law side of it, I actually thought I was going to be an attorney, but I got out into the world and just never went back. So I had quite a bit of law, and that actually helped us in my business.

**What did you do post-college?**

I started with L.D. Brinkman, a flooring distributor, and moved to San Antonio and then to Dallas. I kind of rose in the ranks with L.D. Brinkman here and

ended up running their commercial division. I married Sylvia in 1984 and left Brinkman to start Carpet Resources in 1985, which was a commercial carpet contractor. In 1988, the company that we were working with went out of business, and that was during the "depression" of Texas. I decided to start my own business. No one would give us a loan, so we started up and put everything we had in it. We went six months without a loan, which was challenging.

Sylvia was also starting her law degree at St. Mary's that same month that we had this opportunity. She got an apartment at St. Mary's and commuted; her first two years were in San Antonio while I was starting the business in Austin and then she ended up coming back to UT the third year. This was, of course, before we had kids.

**Well, it sounds like your lives were busy enough! You did a great job of remembering the dates of what happened when!**

Well, I remember our wedding because Sylvia and I adopted two kids in Russia, and we knew the judge there was going to ask when our wedding was, so I had to make sure I didn't forget that!

**How wonderful! Tell me about your journey to become a dad.**

We have three adopted kids. Our first son, Grant, was adopted in 1991, when Sylvia was taking her bar exam; it was one of the first open adoptions in the state of Texas. In 1990, Sylvia and I decided that we wanted to adopt some more kids. We actually had waited a while trying to go through the adoption process here. We know [Lieutenant Governor of Texas] Ben and Melanie Barnes; they actually had adopted two girls – one from Romania and one from Russia – and they hooked us up with an agency. We were in Russia probably four months after that and adopted a 1-year-old girl, Sydney, and a 3-year-old boy, Blake. Grant has just graduated from Texas Tech with a business degree in Marketing Management. Blake is a sophomore and Sydney is a freshman at Westlake High. We're very fortunate to have them.

**Can you believe that all of your children are almost independent adults?**

No, it's hard to believe, it's gone by pretty quick.

**What are you and Sylvia going to do when they are officially out of the house?**

Sylvia and I can't wait! We told them that we were going to get on a boat and go some place and not tell them! Everyone tells us it's lonely not having kids at home but we're looking forward to it!

**Listening to your story, I have to wonder if you and Sylvia like to have a lot going on all at once! Starting a business, pursuing a law degree, adopting children – each is a full plate!**

We always have something going on, absolutely. She's got her own law practice now, and I have Intertech with



Controlling his own destiny has always appealed to Bill Imhoff, both in business and in life.

four, soon to be five, nice offices in the state of Texas!

**What do you and Sylvia do for fun?**

We like to boat. I have a place and a fishing boat down in Port Aransas, and I have an old 1960 Holmes mahogany boat that my grandfather bought new; I grew up with it and reconditioned it. That's probably our best times, when we're on the water. We love to go [to Port Aransas] but lately we have not had the opportunity to get down there as much.

We like to travel; we don't do enough of that either, but hopefully we'll have more of an opportunity once the kids are grown. This year, we've been on three trips together. We went to Jamaica, Costa Rica and just recently New Orleans. It's the first time we've both been able to go on trips because our schedules allowed it. We enjoy and are trying to spend more time doing trips like that together. Sylvia's traveled to Europe, but I've never been, except to England once. I'd love to go to Australia; I'd love to go fishing on the Great Barrier Reef. Sylvia's not a "fisherperson" but she loves to travel, so maybe we could do that together.

**When it's just you, what do you like to do?**

My wife says I collect boats! When I'm stepping on a boat, whether it's to fish or just cruising, it seems to be totally relaxing. I think that's probably where my love is. In fact, I got my captain's license and master's license about five years ago; I had enough boating experience in the past to do that. I don't ever plan to be a guide; I just thought that would be something to do.

**Sounds like that would be a nice break from your busy work schedule. By the way, I recently attended Intertech Flooring's 25th anniversary party in Dallas and marveled at how many people attended.**

It was wonderful! It was great to see our vendors and our customers. We did another anniversary party in Kyle, Texas where we probably had another 400 people show up, people I hadn't seen in 20 years. What a great opportunity to share our 25 years of success!

**What have you enjoyed about owning your business?**

At our 25th event, I saw two daughters of my employees – that used to be knee-high to a grasshopper – come up to me; both were married and out of college. We got a great picture of them [at the event]. Seeing families over the years grow up and really mean something, that probably is the best part about having a business. Also, having control of your destiny, and the decisions you make being final decisions, and effectively making a difference.

**What advice would you give to people who are starting their own businesses?**

Keep ethics at the top of the list; I think that's critical. I would also suggest for any business owner to have audited statements every year to make sure they understand exactly where their financials are. It makes sure that you understand what you really have to work with, especially when you are starting out. Good financial controls are like a compass, providing direction and checks and balances. I've talked to people who say that's it's not really required, but that doesn't matter, it's really for your insight.

**What does the future hold for you and your business?**

I think the next five years are going to be really exciting for our company, with the new SUPERCAP mobile blending unit; I think that's going to change the way concrete is finished. We've gotten such positive results all over the state, and have installed over 600,000 feet [of Laticrete Supercap] since we got the truck in May. We will be expanding the business into Houston, probably more so in the SUPERCAP business.

We are a Texas company – Texas-bred, Texas-run – but you never know how things are going to go down the road. If I see an opportunity that makes sense, I'll go that direction, but I think our plans at this point are to be the dominant force in Texas.

*Intertech Flooring is a provider of commercial flooring products, installation, maintenance and design consultation services to businesses throughout the Southwest. –mjm*