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**Drumm Construction
Corporation**

A Reputation for Old World Craftsmanship

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By Michael T. Brigandi

It was in May of 1993 that *Builder/Architect* introduced a young builder by the name of Mark Drumm to the local building community. Drumm Construction Corporation was founded in 1987, with the premise that to be successful over time, you had to earn a reputation of building quality from the inside out. And, now almost 20 years later, Mark continues to maintain his standards and reputation by building nothing but quality.

To this day, Mark does not allow his customers to cut corners. He feels each home or building has his name on it, regardless of who lives or works there. Mark says, "My customers are the boss, and they have unlimited say as to what goes into each project. However, I will not let them deviate from my standards and put in a poor quality product." This sentiment was backed up by Jon Libby of Jae Bee Electric: "Mark demands only the best, and he expects high-quality

work because that is what his customers expect. Drumm customers are never short-changed," he said.

Mark Drumm grew up on a dairy farm in the Otisco Valley, where he learned at a young age the value of hard work and discipline to detail. He put himself through college, earning a two-year degree from Alfred State in civil engineering technology. And, within one week of graduation, Mark founded Drumm Construction. As most entrepreneurs in the building trades, he started out as a subcontractor before becoming a builder. Working out of the back of his truck, he built a lot of decks before moving up to doing custom trim and stair work. It was at this point that Mark gained a greater perspective of the building industry and knew he had made the right career choice.

In 1989, Mark built his first house, and he has never looked back. Today, he builds three to five high-end custom homes and/or

The front of a home at twilight — this heated portico or carport features a cupola and a beaded fir ceiling. To the left of the portico the home offers the library with a steeple roof.





The great room in this home offers an authentic Rumsford fireplace with a full wall of arched windows on an arched wall. This room also provides the right finishing touches with its barrel vaulted ceiling, cherry trim and Brazilian cherry hardwood floors. And, the simple furnishings of spinning wheels and yarn winders offer the perfect décor to complete an Old World charm.

commercial buildings a year. His average home has a price range of \$800,000 with an average size of 5,500 square feet. Mark was quick to point out though, "That regardless of the size or the value of the project, quality will never take a back seat. We always do our own carpentry, framing, trim work, etc., which gives me control of the finer details," he said.

Drumm Construction also has a solid reputation for its commercial projects. When the town of Tully needed a new Post Office, Drumm Construction built it. When the local Chevrolet dealer needed a new facility, they called Drumm Construction. And, when the New York State Police needed a new barracks in the neighboring town of Lafayette, they not only had Drumm Construction design and build the new facility, they liked it so much that they purchased the plans and made it a standard for all future state police barracks. Mark presently owns five of these facilities, which he leases back to the state, and he is building a sixth with plans of building one a year.

We asked Mark about his philosophies on business. He said, "Treat people fairly and honestly, and it will always come back to you." He continued, "I will always put my customers ahead of profit. My name and my reputation are too important to me. I will not let money jeopardize that, and fortunately, I had two good examples growing up, as my parents had the same philosophy about running the dairy farm. My father continues to say to this day, 'It takes several jobs to build a reputation, but it only takes one job to ruin it.'"

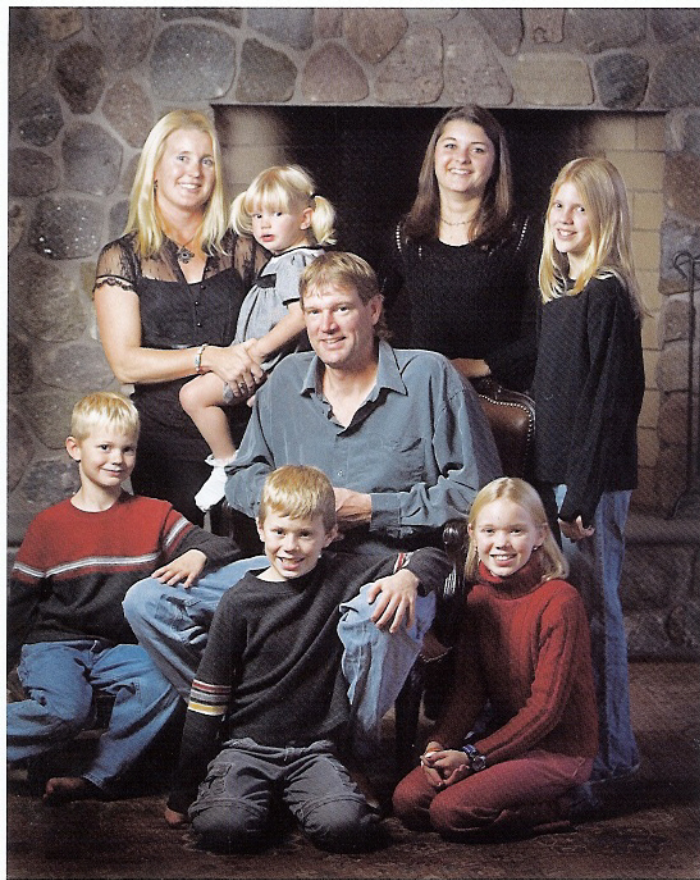
Mark's commitment to quality and service didn't stop here. In 1996

he founded Integra Supply Corporation, a full-service lumber and building supply outlet, and in 2000, he added a heavy equipment sales and rental business under Integra. Mark admits Drumm Construction is Integra's largest customer, but he made it a point that Integra will supply and service anyone who is in the building trades.

As for the future, Mark sees great opportunities ahead for growing the equipment sales and rental side of his business under Integra Supply, www.IntegraSupply.com. He also plans to do more with land development in the southern Onondaga County and northern Cortland County areas. Mark sees the importance of diversifying his business interests, albeit all in the construction trades. He says, "This allows me to keep my costs down, stock the products I want to use and remain competitive. And, it prevents me from having all my eggs in one basket."

Mark has a reputation for having a keen eye for the details, and with a little coaxing, he modestly admits details do not get missed on his projects. A few of the subcontractors we spoke to during the development of this story remember very keenly at one time or another how Mark would pick something up that just didn't seem right, whether it be a dimension, a detail or the grading of the land, which he would have to have fixed before they went home for the day. Mark admits he is a perfectionist, and he will look for things others may miss, just to make sure everything is perfect before he hands over the keys. "Most builders talk about quality; we actually build it," he said.

Mark's statement on quality and perfection goes much further than



Drumm Construction Corporation Board of Directors: From L to R starting at the bottom and going in a circle — Landon, Logan, Adrienne, Alexis, Amber, Aurora, Suzanne and Mark Drumm (center), president and chairman of the board.



This lovely open kitchen features light colored Wood-Mode cabinets with under-cabinet lighting highlighting the granite countertops and tile floors.



This transitional-style home on Otisco Lake is strategically placed to fit into the grade of the land. The home features a sunroom on the main level and a walk-out basement to a stone patio with a hot tub for that picture perfect view of the lake and the surrounding shoreline.



In the process of building a carriage house, a Drumm-owned rough terrain forklift is at work.

even he can anticipate. As we were conducting our due diligence on builders to feature in future editions of *Builder/Architect*, one local supplier who wished to remain anonymous had this to say, “If I were to have a house built, Mark Drumm would be my choice of builders. His reputation and his attention to detail and perfection are the best I have ever seen.”

And, this attention to detail also goes much further than what the traditional customer sees. In most homes, people tend to focus most of their attention to the kitchen, bath or crown molding. Although very important cosmetic details, Drumm Construction takes great pride in the behind-the-scene details, such as poured walls, waterproofing basements, in-floor radiant heat, top of the line insulation products, etc. Mark says these details are just as important, if not more important than the cosmetic details.

In order for Mark to maintain the quality he expects, he remains very loyal to his subcontractors. He says, “I have worked with many of my subcontractors for a number of years; I pay them promptly and, in turn, they become a great source of referrals.” In every instance, without exception, every time he mentioned one of his subs, he prefaced the statement with “the best in the state,” or “the best in the area,” or “I have never seen better.” For instance, he knows when he retains his subs, he knows, without exception, the job will be done right, and done right the first time. Mark also made it a point to mention his foreman Matt Kenyon, who he credits for much of his

success. He says, “Matt, who is probably the finest trim carpenter in the state, has been with me since the beginning. And, I believe we get along so well because we have the same characteristics and values, such as work ethic, keen eye for detail, loyalty and perfection, but, most important, he looks out for me.”

A Drumm constructed car dealership in Tully, NY. The building was designed and built to meet the standards of General Motors and still blend in with the country setting by offering a stone and window front exterior.



Most of Drumm Construction's customers are local; they are mostly middle-aged or older, and appreciate the finer things in life. They call Drumm because of his reputation for quality and the stress-free experience of building a home. Mark is known to be very organized on every project, and his subcontractors follow suit. This makes for a very comforting environment for his customers in what can tend to be a drawn-out, chaotic experience. And, every contractor on-site is expected to clean up after themselves, and leave the site cleaner than when they entered it. Mark feels this not-so-little detail adds to the positive impressions he wants his customers to experience when they stop by the site.

One unique feature to working with Drumm Construction is they have their own in-house design capabilities, which makes for a one-stop source for all their customers. And, it's the unusual design features that attract many people to their door, such as cut-up roof lines. Mark says, "Very seldom do we get called to do the traditional four corner job or straight gable roof. Some of our homes will have 40 – 50 corners, and many will have very complex roofs. When we complete a complex roof, their street appeal is very attractive and we have never built two the same. This gives all our customers some differentiation in their homes."

As the interview was winding down, we asked Mark what he enjoyed the most. He said, "It's the sense of accomplishment at the end of each day and at the end of each project. I'm very passionate about my work." He also interjected, "It gives me great joy knowing I can take care of my family, and at the same time, have the freedom to spend time with my family." Mark and his wife, Suzanne, have six kids, which in and of itself is a full-time job. And, on top of being a stay at home wife and mother, Suzanne



This spacious master bath centers around the hot tub, which is surrounded by a tumbled marble finish, columns and curved windows on a curved wall. To the left is a glass door leading to a steam shower. The added beauty of this room is the view overlooking the lake and the colors of the season.

has her own business, raising alpacas.

Mark was very modest throughout the interview as we touched on the subjects of his success. However, we did get him to boast about one critical detail: his stable home life. He says, "Suzanne has always been very supportive of my work, the hours and the headaches. Without her, I don't know where the business would be; just knowing she is there for me and my family has to be without a doubt the number one reason for my success."

You may contact Mark Drumm at 315-696-5756. ■

A commercial building featuring some of the unique design and construction capabilities of Drumm Construction, such as cut-up roof lines and barrel vaulted entry ways with columns.

