

GOODMAN LUMBER CO. DEALERS IN LUMBER & MILLWORK 1907

Four Generations and Counting Goodman Millwork Keeps the Tradition Alive

For 100 years, Goodman Millwork has thrived, thanks to a successful combination of tradition, technology and talent.

"We've got some newer technology here intermingled with the old," says Franco Goodman, president of the business. "Our company started in 1907—we're not sure of the exact date—and the business has evolved from there."

Franco's grandfather, E.A. Goodman, and L.G. Goodman opened the doors to Goodman Lumber in Salisbury a century ago. Along the way, E.A. had four sons: Myron, Lloyd, Harold and Ree.

Regardless of the decade or the generation, Goodman Millwork has been affected by the economy. "We experienced a lot of change with the World Wars; we were sending things out to help the military," Franco says. "It was just part of the growing-up process of the company."

Remnants of the company's history can be found everywhere, from the old steam engine that once powered the plant to a few

pieces of equipment dating back to the '30s that are still in use. In one section of the facility, an old railroad spur made way for loading docks; in another area, part of the old manufacturing facility was converted into storage for lumber.

"We used to be a full-line building materials supplier until the 1970s, when we decided that our strength was in millwork and decided to concentrate on that," Franco says.

This was just one of many changes instituted by Franco, who graduated from East

Carolina University in 1971 with a degree in business.

"My dad, Myron, wanted me to work somewhere else besides the family business," he says. "I worked for Sentry Bank, and for the Kendall Company in South Carolina as an industrial engineer. Then one day my dad called to ask if I wanted to come home and work for the business. None of my three brothers or my sister was really interested."

Franco received that phone call in the mid-70s, about the time when the second generation of employees was ready to retire and sell their shares in the company.

"There was a renewal of enthusiasm," he remembers. "I began to gather the sales part of the business and purchased new equipment. As a young man, I wanted to make sure I was doing the right things financially. I wanted to cultivate our employees and make sure we found the right people."



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In the early 1990s, Franco changed the business' name to Goodman Millwork to better reflect its purpose. The company now produces custom exterior and interior work, including doors, cabinetry, stairs and moulding. At that same time, F.E. Goodman Construction was started to handle the construction side of the business.

"We frequently receive calls from a homeowner who has ideas. It's really a combined effort and a matter of listening well and interpreting what they want," Franco says. "We have an in-house design team headed by Mike Keene. Once the design is approved, we start the fabrication, and then handle the finishing and installation. We have an outside installation crew that handles most of our work full time.

"Once all the details have been approved, it takes us 30 days a room to build, finish and install," he adds.



Benjamin Goodman

While the business got its start as a sawmill and lumber yard, Franco has had to learn what types of wood are in demand and stock them accordingly. On any given day, the storage warehouse is filled with all sorts of lumber—mahogany, redwood, cedar, pine, fir, walnut, cherry, poplar, oak and more.

"Some of what we do has to do with the furniture industry and with what's popular," he says. "This is one of the reasons why we've been so successful for so long—being able to change direction as the economy and the demand have required it."

Franco also credits people—both customers and employees—for the company's century of success.



Nicholas Goodman

"We have been blessed with people. The quality of our product has never wavered over time; it has to be at the top level," he says. "Our people believe in this and live it. A lot of their fathers and uncles worked here at some point. We've been successful because of the people who've come before us."



To view examples of Goodman Millwork's craftsmanship, visit www.goodmanmillwork.com.

Among the 32 employees are Franco's two sons, Benjamin, who manages the millwork operation, and Nicholas, who has been involved in the construction side of the business. The family anticipates a busy fall, as Nicholas is getting married in September, and the company is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a gala in October. In addition, Benjamin and his wife, Kelly, are expecting their first child—a son—in October.

"We hope that he'll carry on the tradition," Franco says.

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