

18 YEARS OF COMMITMENT



My career has spanned 18 years at Shapiro and Duncan with 30 years total in the mechanical industry. Early in my career, I had the attitude that you could not make good money in the construction industry. I learned however, that through hard work and dedication you will climb the industry career ladder. As I moved up I found myself in a comfortable financial position. Entering the construction industry was more rewarding than I had thought. Building mechanical systems from scratch, and bringing a building to life is a gratifying accomplishment.

My path to success and in life is my attention to detail; the dotting of i's and crossing of t's along with careful planning and coordination. My parents instilled these life skills in me through discipline, love and care. Besides my parents being a huge influence in my life, Joe Canter, Director of Operations, has also helped me through my early years and my growing pains. He has taught me a very valuable team lesson; to never take credit for someone's success, but to share in the blame when they make a mistake. Another deep friendship I had developed while working here was with Pat Shanko. He is truly missed. With all of the relationships I have developed over the years with my co-workers, I think our commitment, teamwork, and communication skills were put to the test this year working at Gaithersburg High School.

On January 15th Ted Wynes, Wayne Elam and I were escorted by Hess Construction through Gaithersburg High School. The high school was about in the middle of its construction schedule at the time. We took part in a Performance Bond take over by the bonding company from the original mechanical contractor (a first for me).

Though I never served in the military (did not like the haircuts), I felt as if we were dropped into hostile territory, and had to quickly set up shop. There were those who were happy we were there and those who were not. Shapiro & Duncan quickly extended an opportunity of employment for all of original mechanical contractor's employees that had lost their jobs. We hired on 14 men.

We officially took over on January 28th with a challenge of being 75 calendar days behind schedule. The former company had topped out at 35 men on site and in 6 weeks, we had 75 men strong working 6 days a week, thanks to Joe Canter, and Ted Wynes' secret manpower factory. We were able to meet our goals (not without headaches and heartaches) and the school will open as scheduled on August 26, 2013.

This task was accomplished by teamwork. Our team consisted of many players; including Wayne Elam, Stuart Clayton, Emelia Adoma, Dwight Heidel, Raul Ramirez, Donnie Matthews, Brian Palmer, Jeff Kantner, Henry Hayes, Septimus Cummings, Rick Jones, Eric Stahle, Kim Williams and the hard work from our entire field crew; along with full support from office personnel, Purchasing, Cad-Fab and others. We had two material handlers running two Lulls every day.

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On a side note, one other great thing about the job was that the Roy Rogers was five minutes away. I love a Double R Burger and a Roy's Roast Beef! (I gained 5 pounds on the job). Overall, we pulled through as a team and the bonding company was appreciative and very impressed with our success, hard work and will definitely consider S&D for future work.

The company culture here allows me to feel comfortable with my team and the way I approach my work tasks. I know my co-workers know me well enough to know what they can expect from me. This positive way of working is what helped us pull through during the Gaithersburg High School project. My advice to the younger generation coming on board is to acquire the soft skills of patience and perseverance. My wife over the years has taught me to choose my battles (I lost a lot!). While this advice was given to me for raising our children, it does have a role in the business world as well. I had to come to grips early on with the fact that I cannot save the world, and win every battle. Sometimes in life, you have to lose and accept it.

Throughout my career at Shapiro & Duncan, the highest compliment I have received was from a former HR Director who thanked me for doing an outstanding job and told me I was an excellent supervisor, communicator, mentor, and teacher. This industry has tested me at many levels, and I am at a good place today for choosing this career path.

