

Business Profile

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Looking over the plan for a home under construction are (from left) Sue Lowery, John Lowery, Cathy Hamilton and Michelle Lowery. Michelle is an interior decorator with Lowery & Son.

Real estate is all in the family for close-knit Lowery, Hamilton clans

By Lori Pruitt
Special assignments writer

Nearly all of Sue Lowery's family is in the real estate business, either building or selling homes. She and her daughter are real estate agents, her sons are home-builders, and her son-in-law also owns his own building company. They have worked with each other for years, and can give at least two reasons why it has lasted: They love each other, and they want each other to succeed. "We're a really close-knit family," said Lowery's

daughter, Cathy Hamilton. "We are all best friends. We're like everyone else; some days we get along, and some days we don't, but at the end of the day we still love each other."

Each family member came upon the business in his or her own way, but it really all started with a dream. Lowery's late husband, John, a brick mason, had a dream of building homes full time. He formed Lowery & Hamilton Building Co., going into business with Hamilton's husband, Doug. He also talked Hamilton, who was a registered nurse

at the time, into leaving her job to work with him. She did, and she and mom Sue Lowery began working to earn their real estate licenses together.

A short time later, John Lowery became ill, but kept working as long as he could before his death five years ago. Lowery and Hamilton started selling homes together. "We just struggled and worked," Hamilton said. "Mom and I didn't make much money the first year, but things got better. We realize now that getting our licenses prepared us to work after my father's death and be able to provide for

ourselves."

Lowery's son, John, also got his real estate license and restarted the building company as Lowery & Son Building and Development. His mother and sister market his homes, which include residences in Pelham's Oak Forest and Fallston Ridge. An older brother, Thomas Lowery, works with the company as a custom home framer. He specializes in luxury, custom features such as domed ceilings and suspended staircases.

"My brother is building homes, and we're his agents," Hamilton said.

"He's fulfilling our dad's dream. Working with my little brother has been a good experience. We call each other and talk about different aspects of the business. We help each other."

Hamilton's husband, Doug, owns his own company, Hamilton Building, and she also works with him in that business. The two building companies pair up on projects as well as having their own.

Hamilton and Lowery, who work at RE/MAX First Choice in Pelham, handle both new construction and residential resales.

There's more history, too. The family comes from a line of builders. Sue Lowery's father, a stonemason, had his own construction business — the company that built Hillman Hospital. "I guess we've all grown up in it (the business)," Hamilton said. "When I got into nursing, I was the odd man out."

The family spends leisure time together, too. They jointly own a river home and bring their families together for fun.

And there's also another sister, Wendy Daley, who is literally the family manager. She helped care for her ailing father, helps baby-sit her nieces and nephews and handles her mother's household bills and other duties. According to Hamilton, she organizes the family's activities. "I don't know what we would do without her," Hamilton said.

Lowery and Hamilton can be contacted at the Pelham RE/MAX First Choice office, 663-4402.