

# Developers follow in their father's footsteps

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rewarding to Buzz.

"The fact that it changes — every house is different, every customer is different," she said. "There are new opportunities every time you turn around."

**'What I like is so many challenges, so many things to do. I'm working on three or four different projects.'**

— Paul Levine

Her brother, Mark, also is in the family business.

Gerald Brody, 34, vice president of operations for The Brody Group of Bloomfield Hills, remembers his father, Robert, company president, taking him to job sites when he was 5 or 6 years old.

"Going through houses and seeing lumber, I enjoyed it immensely," Brody said. "Riding on a bulldozer, front-end loader — I wasn't afraid of it."

Brody started working as a laborer/gofer at about age 14. "In business, you've got to learn from the ground up," he said.

Brody said he never really talked with his father about entering the business while growing up.

"WE DISCUSSED law, accounting. He never pushed me to go about going into the business. It's something that came about on my own," he said. A real estate professor in business school further whetted Brody's appetite for development.

"I knew eventually I would end up in real estate one way or another," he said.

Brody, who holds a builder's license and a real estate brokerage license, joined the family business after a one-year stint as a car broker.

The draw?

"A sense of accomplishment, to go by a building, a house, and say, 'I built that,'" he said.

Brody's grandfather started Samuel Brody & Sons more than 70 years ago. A brother-in-law involved in the business, Jim Deuchman, is a fourth-generation builder from Cleveland.

Brody sometimes finds himself taking daughter Hillary, 4, and son, Joshua, 2, to job sites.

"I'M MORE more inclined to see how things develop and let them make their own decision rather than be pushy," he said.

Gil "Buzz" Silverman, co-chairman of the Holtzman & Silverman Co. of Farmington Hills, said his father, Gilbert, almost took a discouraging posture right from the beginning.

"I was advised that since he had partners, there was no certain career in the real estate business for me," Buzz said.

"In the event I was able to prove myself as a successful businessman in another field, I may be invited into the business."

Buzz, 34, studied business at the University of California at Berkeley, dabbled in the restaurant business, then helped his mother, Geraldine Goodman, expand her Wells Fargo china business.

That's when his father took notice and extended the invitation.

"Two things tipped the balance: earning potential of real estate and development, and long-term gratification," Buzz said.

"My father is a very shrewd person," he said. "In my opinion, he was taking the risk of me not going into the business to hyper-motivate me to be tougher and more aggressive to enter the business."

Buzz is a third generation builder, having followed Gilbert and Nathan. His partner, Jonathan Silverman, also is third generation, having followed in the footsteps of his father, Toby Holtzman and grandfather, Joe Holtzman.

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