

# Welhouse Construction Services, LLC

**THERE'S NO REASON FOR HOMEOWNERS TO MOVE OR EVEN TEMPORARILY** relocate when they partner with Welhouse Construction Services, LLC. More than 100 years old, the fourth-generation firm—based in Kaukauna, Wisconsin, in the heart of the Fox Valley, and owned by Paul and Diane Welhouse—is a full-service general-contracting and design-build company that specializes in remodeling homes without displacing residents.

Welhouse helps homeowners expand as their families grow or assists them in renovating aged yet cherished pieces of property, and the company has won numerous awards from its local National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) chapter. But the firm had to undergo a significant evolution to get where it is today, an evolution that began with the building of barns on Midwestern farmland. —Karen Gentry

## Early 1900s BIRTHED FROM BARN

Brothers Joseph and Anthony Welhouse begin building barns with hand tools and horses. They use wood cut down at each homeowner's farm, and their timber-frame structures consistently withstand storms and the heavy loads of animal feeds. The barns make the Welhouse family name synonymous with superior quality, craftsmanship, and service.

## 1932 ON TO HOMEBUILDING

Joseph's son Jerome joins the business, leaving high school to help support the family. As the Welhouses become known for their quality woodwork, their company evolves from barns to homebuilding and renovation jobs. And as demand increases, Jerome's brothers, Harold, James, and Eugene, join the company.

## 1960 MEETING GROWING NEEDS

Jerome and his son David start creating custom woodwork, including cabinets, built-ins, doors, and finished trim work. Then, Jerome purchases the business from his brothers and names it Jerome Welhouse Construction, Inc.

"We were one of the first builders in the area to build spec homes in the 1960s," Paul says. The spec homes are mostly smaller ranch homes—typically 1,000 square feet with garages. The paper industry and the growth of the Fox Valley region create a need for housing, according to Paul.



From left to right, Eugene and Jerome Welhouse, a client, and Joseph and Harold Welhouse pose for the camera during the firm's transition into homebuilding.



From left to right, James, Eugene, Joseph, Jerome, David, and Harold Welhouse stand as three generations of builders.

## 1969–1979 A REFRESHING TRANSITION

Over the years, the company shifts its focus to renovation and remodeling. "They were really good at working in unconventional building conditions," Diane says. "They had a feel for it from their experience in barn construction and were able to excel in an area that was new in the trades."

Jerome and his team find that they enjoy the challenges that remodeling brings. Homeowners typically remain in their homes while Welhouse does its work, and the firm is forced to meet city building codes and interconnect its additions seamlessly with existing structures. The firm continues tackling such projects into 2012. "We're also dealing with unknowns behind walls and in ceilings [when] building [in] structures that have been built by others," Diane says. "We've been doing it so long we can sense potential challenges before the project begins."



### 2009–2012 THE EMERGENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The firm completes a premier project: an elegant great room addition for a client whose home overlooks Lake Winnebago. The space includes a blue-stone porch, double patio doors, a full-coffered ceiling, and a full fireplace surround with built-in bookcases. This addition earns Welhouse Construction Services, LLC a 2012 NARI Regional Contractor of the Year (CoTY) award for an addition under \$100,000.

Additionally, trends in the industry have evolved by this time to include increased use of maintenance-free materials and more sustainable, energy-saving practices. Paul, already a certified remodeler, becomes a green-certified professional when he sees the demand for green renovations. "We're focused on maintaining healthy and cost-efficient environments through all of our projects," he says. **ABQ**

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**PAUL WELHOUSE, OWNER & PRESIDENT**



### 2008 A NEW GENERATION

Diane and Paul take over full ownership of the business. The company prides itself on honesty and trustworthiness and uses the slogan "Always on the Level." "We are open and honest all the way through the customer's project, including not exceeding the price, barring changes from customer requests," Paul says.

Welhouse offers renovations for life. "As the customer base ages, we've become more adept and astute at making things ADA compliant and converting homes so customers can live there as long as possible," Paul says. "Home is a cherished place for many people. We have the skills and know-how to keep our customers in their homes while we make their remodeling dreams come true."



### 1981–2007 GAINING EXPERIENCE

David's sons, Mark and Paul, begin working for the family business in high school. Paul goes on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering and engineering management respectively, and he then works in corporate America for the Outboard Marine Corporation and Harley-Davidson Motor Company.

Diane earns bachelor's degrees in mass communications, psychology, and sociology, and later, in 2011, she works to finish an interior design degree. "Our past experience in corporate America has given us different ideas on how a construction business can be run," Diane says. "We mix elements of our small-business foundation with big-business concepts to come up with the best solutions for our business and customers."



### 1980 JOINING NARI

David buys into the business, which is now named Jerome Welhouse & Son Construction Company, LLC. David joins the Fox Valley chapter of NARI and becomes a certified remodeler, and his company goes on to win numerous NARI Chapter awards.



From left to right, David and Paul now work with Paul's son Kevin.

2010



2004

From left to right, Jerome and David stand with Welhouse Construction's soon-to-be president, Paul Welhouse.