

From the Ground Up

Pat Rodgers is changing our point of view about leadership in the construction industry.

What Pat Rodgers, the president and CEO of Rodgers Builders Inc., finds least interesting about herself as a leading executive in the construction industry is that she's a woman. That might surprise anyone who knows the construction industry to be, in Rodgers' own words, "male-dominated." But she's clearly proved, after leading for three decades the company that regularly ranks among *Engineering News-Record's* top 400 U.S. general contractors, that she wears her hard-hat as easily and naturally as any.

The more interesting challenge, she notes, is "to be in the field at a time when the construction industry as a whole has had an opportunity to work on its image." What she means is that Rodgers doesn't just build buildings in commercial, health care, institutional, and industrial markets throughout the Southeastern U.S. "We're very involved in the communities we work in," she explains. "We leverage that into community involvements" such as the board service and not-for-profit support she encourages.

All of which demonstrate that there are truly many ways to lead — and to build.



SNAPSHOT: {Pat Rodgers}

THE 9-TO-5: "Know yourself and your values and make sure they fit with your life's work."

EDUCATION: A course called "The Gospel According to *The Wall Street Journal*" that she attended through the Institute for Servant Leadership. Its chief lesson was to develop and value "a sensitivity to others."

LOCAL HEROES: "A whole list of folks: Bill Lee of Duke Power, John Belk (both deceased), Hugh McColl Jr., and Sandra and Leon Levine." Charlotte wouldn't have become what it is "without having a lot of leadership."

BREAKTHROUGH: "Realizing that my management style, which incorporates more of the velvet glove theory, was OK."

ACHIEVEMENT: "Receiving honorary degrees from Queens University and Johnson & Wales University. And being able to lead Rodgers Builders through a major growth period."

INSPIRING READ: Loving history and biographies "of people who made a difference," Rodgers names *5 Days in London* by John Lukacs, which chronicles the events of 1940.

CURRENT WORKOUT: Her incentive, she says, is to do everything — going to the Y, swimming — to permit her to continue to snow ski each winter.

MAD ABOUT: "I love life. I live in a great part of the world. And even though I love to travel, it's always nice to come back to Charlotte."