

## Newsmakers 2010

# Pat Rodgers, Rodgers Builders Inc.

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**Pat Rodgers** describes her management style as "hands-on." But the construction executive will have her hands full during the coming year.

Rodgers, chief executive of [Rodgers Builders Inc.](#), succeeds Bank of America Corp. executive David Darnell as chair of the Charlotte Chamber at a time when the construction industry is still facing major challenges. Rodgers has been CEO of Rodgers Builders, one of the largest construction companies in the state, since 1988. She plans to lean on her team at the firm as she commits more time to the chamber over the coming months.

"David Darnell and (past chairs) Pat Riley and Tim Belk told me what a big job it is," she says. "I'm not sure I really appreciated that until now."

B.D. Rodgers founded Rodgers Builders in 1963. **Pat Rodgers** began working at the firm in 1972 as a part-time receptionist and worked her way up, taking on increasing responsibility until she was named president and CEO in 1988. She and B.D., who remains the company's chairman, were married in 1991. That year, the company's annual revenue was approximately \$50 million. As recently as 2008, the company's revenue topped \$400 million, but Rodgers says 2010 was not easy. "It was a challenging year for our business and our industry," she says.

If Rodgers needed a reminder of the importance of economic development in Charlotte, she got it in two of the company's assignments in 2010. Rodgers Builders handled the upfit of 71,000 square feet of offices uptown for Fifth Third Bancorp., a move made possible by the headquarters relocation of Electrolux, which is leasing Fifth Third's former University-area offices. Rodgers Builders also is handling the headquarters upfit for health-care organization Premier Inc., which is moving to a 250,000-square-foot building in Ballantyne. "It was significant for our company but equally significant for the Charlotte area to see that kind of growth," Rodgers says.

As chair of the chamber, she hopes her tenure is marked by job growth — and membership growth for the organization. The chamber has shrunk along with the economy, dropping to 3,400 members from 3,700 a few years ago.

She also wants to continue the discussion about economic diversity started by Darnell. As a woman executive in a field dominated by men — and only the fourth woman to chair the chamber — she hopes to move the conversation forward. "If you're not diverse, you really stand the risk of being insignificant.

"I think it's important to be a diverse community, and I think it's important to bring diverse jobs. If you had asked someone five years ago whether Charlotte was going to be seen as an energy leader, I don't think the answer would have been yes. So I think it shows you how quickly things can change. But it also shows that you have to be looking to capitalize on what change can do for a community."

Rodgers has said the chamber plans to roll out a small-business series called Survive and Thrive to a broader, more diverse audience. It also will work with the Carolinas Minority Diversity Council and the Greater Women's Business Council to help minority- and women-owned firms develop and grow.

As for Rodgers Builders, Rodgers says she's seeing more activity among architectural firms, a key indicator for future construction projects. She doesn't anticipate a return for large, ground-up developments anytime soon. But she foresees an increase in build-out work. She also expects demand for green building services to increase as companies look to become more energy-efficient.

"At some point, they're going to have to do something," she says, referring to the users of real estate who have been watching their spending so carefully. "You can't just sit still. You'll die."

The same is true for Charlotte, so Rodgers vows to keep her company — and the chamber — moving forward in 2011.

"I just don't think there's a better city than Charlotte to provide an opportunity for businesses and people," she says. "But we have to be able to create the jobs to give people those opportunities."

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