

Life Above Water

David Wilson Says It's about the People, Not the Pools

By Thad Mumau

When asked to explain the success of his company, David Wilson points toward the door of his office and says simply, "It is those people, the people who work here."

Wilson is the president and co-owner of Chapman-Wilson Pools, Spas and Home Improvements, Inc., which has locations on Hope Mills Road and Ramsey Street.

For years, he has said in radio commercials: "We're going to give you a quality job at a reasonable price." To do that, he has hired quality people and kept them.



Above | David Wilson talks to his construction manager, T.J. Soto. Wilson is president of Chapman-Wilson Pools, Spas and Home Improvements.

Right | David Wilson



"The core of our company," Wilson says, "is hiring the best people we can, paying them well and treating them well. We have great people working with us, and there is no way we could function without all of them."

"We separate ourselves from the crowd; we set high standards. I know the people who are at the job sites."

Last year, during its busy season that ran from March through October, Chapman-Wilson juggled about 130 construction jobs simultaneously. But no shortcuts were taken, no corners were cut.

"We give the customers more than they pay for with our service," Wilson

says, "and we let them know we are going to take care of them during and after the project. We pull permits on every job we do. We try and over-deliver."

"We never run the other fellow down; we just concentrate on doing the best we can, and we do good work. I'm proud of what we do."

Chapman-Wilson installs swimming pools, Jacuzzi spas, decks, fences and gazebos. It does vinyl siding, replacement windows, roofs and gutters as well as additions and remodeling. There is even a Chapman-Wilson brand of pool chemicals.



Above | It's not just about pools. Wilson's company added a porch to this home, expanding this family's outdoor living space.

The company has served more than 10,000 people – many of them repeat customers – in and around Fayetteville, Raeford, Clinton, Southern Pines, Sanford and Lumberton. There are 20-25 employees, depending on the time of year, and from 40-50 subcontractors.

It all began in 1988, when Wilson and his wife, Sandi, opened Chapman-Wilson in Fayetteville.

"I had been running two businesses in Greensboro," Wilson recalls. "We came to Fayetteville because it probably has the best economy in the Southeast, and the locale and climate are so great."

Things have gone well, and Wilson is happy with the success of his business. He is also grateful to so many people who have played such a large part, and especially, to God.

"I am truly blessed," he says. "I have two wonderful children (Ashley and Matthew), who are healthy. And I have another family here ... that's what we have at Chapman-Wilson, a big family."

Wilson's happiness and blessings go deeper than his business. He has a Purple Heart and some troubling memories from two tours he served in Vietnam. And he

remembers when life was so bad that he thought it could not get any worse.

"When I was a young man, I had it all; at least, I thought I did. I had lots of money and lots of things, but I got into alcohol, and I lost everything. I was in a deep, dark hole. I thank God for helping me."

Now, Wilson helps others when he gets the chance, especially those in the military. And what better gift for soldiers sweltering in the desert than a pool? Wilson donated a 24-foot above-ground pool for troops in Iraq three summers ago. A year later he sent pool equipment to soldiers in Afghanistan.

And his compassion carries over into his business. Office Manager Angie Holt will vouch for that.

"It is nice to work for somebody who is honest and fair," Holt says. "It is enjoyable to come to work. We get very busy, and it gets pretty stressful, but David keeps his sense of humor. He buys us lunch every Friday, and he takes care of us. You don't have a fear of losing your job. If you make a mistake, you just get it right and go on."

Wilson feels he has found a niche.

"People are staying home more these days," he says. "They can install a pool and they can vacation in their own backyard, and it is a safe and comfortable environment. Plus, with the gas prices so high, they save money."

"For us, it is fun helping people have fun. This is a stressful job about nine months a year, but it is rewarding. I like coming to work every day."

"We have had a good run. We try to take care of people, and that is why they keep coming back." ☺

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