

Clark Carries on Family Tradition

By Sarah Baker

[David Clark](#) comes from a long line of construction industry professionals.

His grandfather, John C. Clark Jr., started building homes back in 1942, and his cousin, Ben Clark, has been involved in the subdivision business for more than 20 years.

At 12, he began sweeping out houses for his dad, [John Clark III](#), to earn extra cash during the summer. From picking up studs to sheet rocking, he quickly learned the sequence of home building by simply being around the tradesmen.

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Clark

Clark continued working every summer for his dad and uncle’s company, [Clark Homes](#), during his years at Houston High School, eventually earning the title of superintendent. About three years after graduating from the University of Alabama, he started his own company, [David Clark Construction LLC](#).

To this day, the three Clarks share an office, and their guidance is something the third-generation homebuilder doesn’t take for granted.

“They have been very instrumental in my business,” David Clark said. “I’ve ever got a question, we can bounce ideas off each other and work together. I don’t know that any other builder has had anything like that.”

Now president of the Memphis Area Home Builders Association, Clark can echo the close-knit feel of his family in his leadership. While the association’s members are all technically competing again one another, they work together to strengthen the industry – something other industries and trade organizations don’t always enjoy.

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“It takes a very special person to be in this industry, to be a builder – most of us are type-A personalities,” Clark said. “I don’t know what it is about Memphis, but we all work together really well – the pride is gone.”

Almost four years ago, Clark and a colleague started Carpenter’s Way, a monthly prayer breakfast with motivational speakers.

Clark said. “In this economy, people are going to turn to something,” Clark said. “I think we ought to have them turn to scripture – you’ve got to have faith.”

Being able to orchestrate a project is Clark’s biggest thrill in homebuilding. During his one-year stint in office, he aims to increase education and membership.

“We have a strong association, definitely the strongest in the state, and probably one of the strongest across the country,” Clark said. “It’s because of our membership, they are very involved, they have a passion for the industry.”

But the slowdown in sales has taken its toll on membership numbers. In May 2008, the count was 1,028. As of May 2010, the organization had 776 members.

“In this economy, I encourage our members to use this association as it’s theirs,” Clark said. “You can’t just sit at home and wait for the business to come. Find out what everybody else is doing, get out there and make it happen. We’re all in this together.”

One of the things Clark did when he formed MAHBA’s committees this year was appoint past presidents for chair and co-chair positions.

“Don’t let them go away, don’t let them sit down, put them back to work,” Clark said. “Use from their experiences, their knowledge that they gained in the past.”

Clark also plans to aid in several legislative issues that the organization is collectively working on, such as adjustments to current federal law on owner financing and a proposed grant to the state legislature for homebuyers.

But most of all, he hopes to continue running the association in a seamless transition, as those who came before him did.

“We don’t have any real big, lofty goals this year, except to maintain where we are,” Clark said. “I’m just the president of the Home Builders Association, it’s simply a title that I have. It’s not going to change how I worked last year or how I’ll work next year.”

Just as with his members, Clark provides resources to his family.

He and his wife, Laura, an agent at [Prudential Collins-Maury Inc.](#)’s Germantown office, have two kids, Lydia, 4, and George, 7 months.

“I thoroughly enjoy the business in which my family has been so prominent,” Clark said. “If that includes building homes and carrying on the family tradition, I would happily support them in their decision. I have already seen in Lydia a keen attention to detail – she reminds me of myself as I would visit job sites with my dad when I was younger.”