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Executive of the Month: Rowland, president of EW Howell Construction Group: Joined firm as project manager in 1983

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Plainview, NY *The New York Real Estate Journal* recently sat down with Howard Rowland, president of EW Howell Construction Group, one of New York's oldest construction firms, for a question and answer session.

Q: EW Howell got its start in the industry as a builder for large mansions across Long Island. How did the company make the change from homes to commercial properties?

A: Yes, that is true! We were founded in Babylon, N.Y. in 1891 as a family-owned builder of large estate homes throughout the region, for families like the Guggenheims, Whitneys, and Pratts. Eventually, we began to build properties for their business interests, and over the years, we grew to specialize in commercial vs. residential building. Our client-centered approach of doing business has evolved into our present-day position as a construction leader in the New York metropolitan area.

Q: Tell us a little bit about your background. How did you get started in construction? What path brought you to EW Howell?

A: My first job in the construction industry was for TF Jackson Electric, a contractor with offices on Long Island and in New York City. We actually used to do some work for EW Howell and I became familiar with the staff and the firm's projects. Ralph Howell and Rogers Howell, before they retired, were the biggest influences in my career. I began at EW Howell in 1983 as a project manager, and worked my way up to president of the firm in 1997.

Q: How has the construction industry changed on Long Island, and in New York, over the years?

A: Overall, it's a little less rough and tumble and its image has become more professional. And now, buildings are much more efficient. But, the most dramatic change has been information technology. I still remember when you had to let faxes dry out, or when you wrote a letter and put it in the mail. Express mail was considered earth shattering.



Howard Rowland, EW Construction Group

Q: Can you tell us about some of the projects EW Howell is working on at the moment?

A: EW Howell focuses on five main practice areas: Healthcare, retail, education, arts & culture and specialty. Right now, we're involved in one of the largest projects on Long Island at the moment, the Stony Brook Medical Research and Translation (MART) project on the university's Academic Medical Center campus. The project consists of the MART building and a Hospital Pavilion, in which two floors will be dedicated to a new Stony Brook Children's Hospital.

The firm also just completed a new residence hall at Iona College in New Rochelle. It was a 95,000 s/f project for 300 undergraduate students, with 6,700 s/f of retail on the ground floor. As colleges expand and the educational experience shifts, one of the first needs a college has is additional housing and academic buildings for its students. EW Howell is also working on a few public and private schools in Manhattan.



Q: What are the project-types that are driving Long Island's construction industry today? Why?

A: Healthcare is a big area of growth for New York. As healthcare providers transform the way care is delivered, we are seeing demand for more micro hospitals, outpatient facilities, and urgent care centers. We are also seeing an uptick in development of senior/assisted living facilities as the first wave of Baby Boomers start to make living arrangements for their parents, or even themselves. In fact, EW Howell is working on one now out in Smithtown for Benchmark Senior Living called Whisper Landing. It will include 130 beds, and will be Benchmark's first project in New York.

Q: What are some trends we're seeing, or going to be witnessing in 2017?

A: Sustainability is improving by leaps and bounds. It's been a long time coming, and is definitely one of the largest changes in physical buildings.

Q: How do you continue to build upon your practice?

A: Over the past few months, EW Howell has seen a wave of personnel growth as the firm expands its reach across all divisions. Robert Timperio has been named vice president of the Healthcare division, with Daniel Abbruzzese and Chris Caponegro rising to project executives. Jack Hagen has been named vice president of the education division, with Daniel Navarro being promoted to project executive. In our arts & culture division, Dominic Paparo Jr. and Bob Zirkel have been named vice presidents, while Jehan Joonoos was promoted to senior project manager.

Q: You recently presented EW Howell's first "Build Simply" Award. Can you tell us more about the that?

A: Our inaugural "Build Simply" award was given to Bob Zirkel, vice president of our arts & culture division who has been with us for more than 30 years. We established the award to recognize an EW Howell employee whose behavior best reflects the firm's values and brings to life "Build Simply." This approach streamlines the construction experience for the firm's clients across five practice areas, making even the most complex projects well-executed endeavors delivered on time, on budget, and with as little complication as possible.

Q: EW Howell prides itself on its commitment to the communities it serves. What are some ways that the company has given back?

A: Through EW Howell's nonprofit, The John Bergin Benefit for a Friend, we have managed to raise more than \$1.3

million for construction families in need. Founded in 2003, the organization was recently renamed to honor our late senior vice president, John Bergin. Benefit for a Friend hosts an annual fall golf outing, and, in November, it presented a \$10,000 donation to the Good Samaritan's Neurosurgical Program in his memory.

EW Howell sponsored the Mercy Center Ministries 5K run/walk for Homeless Teens in October, and, with the support of several area subcontractors, we raised more than \$4,000 for the Long Island State Veterans Home at Stony Brook University, just in time for Veteran's Day.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time? Any professional memberships or hobbies?

A: I have a place on Fire Island which I go to as much as possible, and spend lots of time on the beach. I'm the treasurer of the New York State Chapter of Associated General Contractors as well as for the New York Chapter of the Building Contractors Association. Philanthropically, I sit on the board of the Mercy Center Ministries and of an educational foundation near my hometown.



EW Howell at Mercy Center Ministries' 5K run/walk.