



Thomas Gallin of John Gallin & Son continues to grow the business with his cousin and brothers

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Most family businesses are built on entrepreneurial spirit, and their longevity is dependent on whether that spirit passes on to the next generation. John Gallin & Son, one of the oldest family-owned construction companies in New York, is currently in its fourth generation of management, with four direct descendants of the original John Gallin as partners of the firm.

John Gallin, an Irish immigrant, founded the small masonry and concrete company in 1886 shortly after his arrival in America. The business now specializes in corporate interiors, and is managed by Mark Varian (a Gallin on his mother's side) as president, and brothers Michael Gallin, vice president in charge of production; Christopher Gallin, vice president overseeing marketing and client relations; and Thomas Gallin, chief financial officer.

Like all members of the family, Tom, the great grandson of John Gallin, worked hard to earn his place at the company. He gradually climbed the ladder, starting as a part-time mason tender during college and joining the firm full time as a plan clerk post graduation. After six years in various roles, Tom was named partner and chief financial officer in 2000.

Tom, who has a master of Business Administration degree from Pace University and a bachelor of science from C.W. Post on Long Island, says there was absolutely no pressure to join the family business when he was growing up. In fact, he had plans to start and run his own retail company until he realized that he could devote his passion and skills to building the family legacy.

As chief financial officer, Tom plans and implements John Gallin's overall financial strategy. He analyzes and monitors office and field activities, enabling the firm to maintain its profitability while providing clients with dedicated service. Since he has both field and office experience, Tom combines a deep understanding of finance with hands-on knowledge in construction management. A hallmark of his tenure as CFO has been the complete overhaul of the firm's accounting software, allowing John Gallin the flexibility to accommodate the unique needs of its many clients.

His careful oversight of the firm's finances continues a policy of financial strength and stability that spans over a hundred years of his family's history.

In John Gallin & Son's 123 years of operation, the firm has survived the Great Depression and several other downturns. Tom is maintaining a cautious outlook for 2009. He compares the construction industry to a ship, noting that "the engine may have slowed down, but the ship is still moving forward. And if that engine does stop, there will be continued momentum to push us forward for a while. I hope that the drift will carry us into better times."

According to Tom, the firm remains busy, but the nature of some of the new projects has shifted. Instead of elaborate build-outs and expansions, John Gallin was recently hired for several consolidation projects, helping companies that underwent layoffs to construct smaller office space.

The firm has also been more involved with nonprofits. A notable recent project is the unique "Action

Center to End World Hunger," a first of its kind interactive multimedia center developed by Mercy Corps, the global relief and development agency. The 4,000 s/f Action Center, at 6 River Terrace in lower Manhattan, was designed to qualify for the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED platinum certification, the highest recognition available. The exhibits include the Global Status Wall, powered by Google Earth, to enable visitors to maneuver around the planet, and the Training Towers, which feature motivating case studies of how assistance agencies like Mercy Corps are helping communities overcome hunger. In the visitors briefing area, Emmy Award-winning actress and writer Tina Fey provides an overview via video of the issues underlying hunger and poverty throughout the world.

The green nature of this project was of particular interest to Tom, as he is a LEED-accredited (leadership in environmental and energy design) professional and an active member of the New York chapter of the USGBC. He is also on the school committee for the Mechanics Institute, the educational arm of the 220-year old General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, which provides free trade related education for those in the construction industry. The General Society opened one of the city's first free schools to provide evening classes in trades-related education, as well as the Apprentices' Library, the second oldest in New York.

The first member of the fifth generation of Gallins, the daughter of president Mark Varian, recently began working at the firm full time. While it may be a bit early for Tom to discuss career paths with his six-year old son, Jake, he intends to let him choose whichever profession he prefers.

Tom resides in New Rochelle with his wife and son. In his spare time, he plays golf and practices martial arts.