



THIS WEEK'S SPEAKER

February 16, 2021

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Pat Rodgers Rodgers President and CEO 2020-2021 Excellence in Leadership Award

By Henry Bostic



The Rotary Club of Charlotte revealed Rodgers President and CEO, Pat Rodgers, is the 2021 Excellence in Leadership Award recipient. The announcement was made during the club's virtual weekly meeting by club member Anthony Marciano, II, President/CEO of the Charlotte Rescue Mission, who received the award in 2020.

Pat Rodgers is the 33rd recipient of the award created in 1988 to highlight management excellence in the Charlotte-area business community. The award is co-sponsored by the club and the Charlotte Business Journal. The club's Trade and Professional Relations Committee conceived the award to emphasize the Second Object of Rotary: "High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society."

Introducing Pat, Tony noted that she is "someone who all of us know, love and respect." She became president of Rodgers Builders in 1988, a company her husband B.D. Rodgers started in 1963 "with nothing but a truck, one superintendent, \$5,000 borrowed from his life insurance policy, and a vision," she noted.

Since then, Tony said, "Rodgers grew from 100 employees to 328 employees. Revenue grew from \$28 million to \$715 million. Today, it is one of the top 100 construction management firms in the country. Success doesn't happen by accident. It happens by intentionality. This is the leadership Pat brought to Rodgers Builders: focus on integrity, problem solving, devilish details, and raising up leaders.

"Pat has a tremendous passion for construction and our community, Rodgers COO Eric Reichard, said. "She is a hands-on leader that believes the only way to build great buildings is to build great teams to manage the process. She also

believes we need to serve the communities we work in. She encourages everyone in the company to take an active role in the community.”

“Pat has an outward focus,” said Tony. “While growing a successful business, she also has been a major influence in Charlotte’s success. Her skills and passion have literally grown Charlotte through dozens of significant buildings throughout the city, and culturally through her servant leadership to the city she loves.”

“Thank you, Tony, for your nomination and your kinds of words,” Pat responded. “Thank you to the Rotary Club of Charlotte and the Charlotte Business Journal for this recognition and the great opportunity to be here with all of you today.

“It is a great honor. . . I know I am in the company of many great leaders and organizations who are shaping the community we all call home,” she said. “I’m very humbled to join the ranks of those who have received this award in the past. I am also humbled and fortunate to have been a member of a great team at Rodgers for a long time.

“This past year has presented unique challenges and has tested the strength, resiliency, and integrity of Charlotte as a community, and of the world as a whole. It’s shown us what is truly important in times of crisis – the community we’re a part of and the relationships we’ve built.”

Pat continued, “B.D. Rodgers’ strong values and unique approach have shaped our company and culture, and his vision continues to motivate the way we do business today. Building is our passion, but that means so much more than simply the buildings we construct. Rodgers team members, at all levels, have a passion for building, but deeper than that, they are all passionate about building communities with care, relationships with integrity, and people who lead.

“Our commitment to building communities has allowed Rodgers to develop relationships and construct true partnerships in the places where we work and live. Rodgers is actively and proudly involved with many non-profit organizations.”

Pat cited Rodgers partnerships with The Roc Solid Foundation which supports pediatric cancer patients in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia, Habitat Charlotte, the Keep Pounding 5K annual race to support cancer programs at Atrium Health’s Levine Cancer Institute and Levine Children’s Hospital.

“Partnerships make up our business,” she explained, “and we’ve learned first-hand just how important shared values are in these relationships with our clients, subcontractors, suppliers, and with our team members.”

Said Pat, “We believe that partnerships work best and are the most healthy and long-lived when we don’t limit our focus solely to the specific business venture but instead, extend it to encompass a long-term relationship that emphasizes four things: 1. community involvement, 2. developing a diverse, trained, educated, and fairly compensated workforce, 3. engaging in and developing minority partnerships, and 4. prioritizing a push for change.... beautiful and astounding things can come from change.”

She highlighted several successful joint ventures including the Levine Center for the Arts. “What a jewel for our city and our region,” she said. “Imagine living in a place where there are no art museums, no opera, no symphony, no history museums, or world-class ballet. That is a world I don’t like to think about, and one we can never allow to exist, not only for us, but for future generations.”

Pat was quick to point out that none of the projects “would be successful if we didn’t start by ensuring the safety and health of our team that brought them to life.” Always a priority, in 2020, the company expanded its safety initiatives through its LiveSAFE campaign, “emphasizing safety on and off all our projects and in all our offices.”

The president and CEO attributed much of Rodgers’ success to its ability to cultivate and support strong partnerships at the leadership level. “We were lucky to have a strong team” particularly now during the pandemic, she said.

Rodgers’ leadership team’s average tenure of 19 years. They are “strong and talented individuals... that helped form our company’s culture and possess unmatched expertise and knowledge. They make working through tough decisions, celebrating wins, and navigating uncertainty look easy, but we recognize we have something special – a family.”

Pat noted that Rodgers is “dedicated to building future leaders through workforce development and mentorship.” The company supports the ACE Mentor Program of America. It was created in 1994 by the Integrated Design and Construction Industry to meet future workforce needs.

Rodgers also supports the ROC Charlotte and Goodwill Construction Skills Training Center. ROC Charlotte recruits, educates, and mentors high school students for career and technical education and employment opportunities in the construction industry.

“I strongly believe that companies are only as good as their teams, the executive said. “Rodgers would not be what it is today without the diverse group of men and women who continuously adapt and bring innovation to our work. Their dexterity, brilliance and hard work allow Rodgers to navigate challenging times with strength and allow us to stay focused on our mission that began all those years ago with B.D. Rodgers’ vision.

“To quote Napoleon Hill,” she continued, “It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed.” We believe to our core that for a team to be successful, “[We] put people first – before projects or profits. Put people first and the rest will follow. At Rodgers, our hope is that the work we do, no matter what type of project it is, will enhance someone’s life.”

*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/513069577>

Ms. Rodgers’ introduction begins at the 5:45 minute mark.