

Long Time Industry Advocate Bob Ferrante Retiring at the End of this Year . . . we're sure going to miss him

Roofing Florida magazine and its publisher, FRSA, would like to honor Bob Ferrante of Polyfoam, Inc. on his retirement at the end of this year. Bob's history and accomplishments, among other things, include spearheading and helping to develop the FRSA Concrete and Clay Roof Tile Installation Manual – a document that is now a part of the Florida Building Code. A look at Bob's 38 years of experiences in the roof tile industry is like reading a history lesson on the industry's growth and is a tribute to the family that have supported him along the way.

RF: What was your first job?

BF: I was 10 years old and for four to five years, I mowed 14 – 20 lawns in a trailer park with a rotary push mower every weekend from 7:00 – 10:00 am. I charged \$1.50 each BUT hand clipping was extra and scored me an extra \$.50 for a total of \$2.00!

RF: How did your involvement in the construction industry lead to your career in roof tile?

BF: I worked in the construction industry during my summers. After I graduated with a B.A. in Education from the University of South Florida, I was a supervisor for National Advertising, a 3M Company, building outdoor billboards all over the State. I got my start in the roof tile industry when Monier came to Florida and hired me to be their technical representative. From there, I worked for Gory Roof Tile, Entegra Roof Tile and Polyfoam Products, Inc. where I am a Vice President and minority owner. Now, 38 years later, I'm back at 3M because they purchased Polyfoam Products in August of 2008.

RF: Highlights of your career?

BF: Being able to take a new concept of using polyurethane adhesive under roof tile as an

attachment system, then getting the building officials, architects, engineers and roof tile manufacturers to accept the concept, obtain all of the appropriate product approvals and then market the product to the roofing industry. What a ride!

I'm also very proud of my involvement in the development of the FRSA/TRI Concrete and Clay Roof Tile Installation Manual. We started out



Something to retire for . . . (front row, from left) Grandsons Aaron, Dylan, Caden and Blake Ferrante, (top row) son-in-law Andrew and daughter Kim Rosengarten, wife Betty, son Mike and daughter-in-law Stacy and Bob

designing the book for roof tile manufacturers so they could focus on product development and service instead of the specification requirements. After a few years, the FRSA took an interest in the project and it is now a part of the code. I also enjoyed participating in the FRSA's Roof Tile and Code Committee meetings, exhausting at times but rewarding knowing it is for the betterment of the industry.

I also enjoy teaching people how to install roof tile systems and have trained many people over the years; many are now successful roofing contractors and FRSA members.

RF: Where were you born and where did you grow up?

BF: I was born in Hartford, Connecticut but when my mother remembered how cold it was up there, we moved back to Florida permanently.

RF: Tell us about your family

BF: My parents, Paula and Bob live

in Pembroke Pines, FL and I have three sisters. My wife's name is Betty and I have a daughter Kim, her husband Andrew and their son Aaron. My son Mike and his wife Stacy have three sons Dylan, Blake and Caden.

RF: How did you meet your wife?

BF: I met her in North Miami. Her brother was one of my best friends from high school and I would do odd jobs for his family from time to time. While I was doing a project at their home, her first husband Mike Pollock died of cancer. With her husband gone the home repair list grew and I continued to help her. After quite a few years, we fell in love and married in 1981. This year, we'll be married for 29 years.

RF: What are the greatest highlights of your personal life?

BF: Marrying my wife Betty, she helped me settle down. When we married, I inherited an instant family. This brings me to my next important highlight, the time when my kids accepted me as their father. Don't get me wrong, I don't ever want them to forget their biological father but the honor of being chosen to be their father makes me proud.

RF: Any advice for those just starting out in business?

BF: Yes, be honest, do what you say you're going to do, treat people with respect, don't spend more than you have and customer service, customer service and customer service.

RF: Your thoughts on your involvement with FRSA

BF: I have always believed in the FRSA and I devoted a lot of time and energy to the association. . . I believe you should always give back to the industry you work in.

Most of the people in the association are just as committed and in some cases more so. I am proud and
Continued on next page

FERRANTE continued from previous page

thankful to God for having a life so blessed that I can devote the time, money and energy to such a great organization as the FRSA.

Editor's Note: On a personal level, I'd like to thank Bob for all the help he's given me and our magazine. When I first came to work for FRSA 19 years ago, I didn't know the difference between clay and concrete tile, but Bob taught me this and more. I'd like to thank him for sharing his knowledge and for the technically solid and informative articles, he wrote for the magazine.

Enjoy your retirement, Bob. We'll miss your enthusiasm, resolve and wisdom and truly appreciate everything you've done for FRSA and our state's roofing industry. You've made a difference.