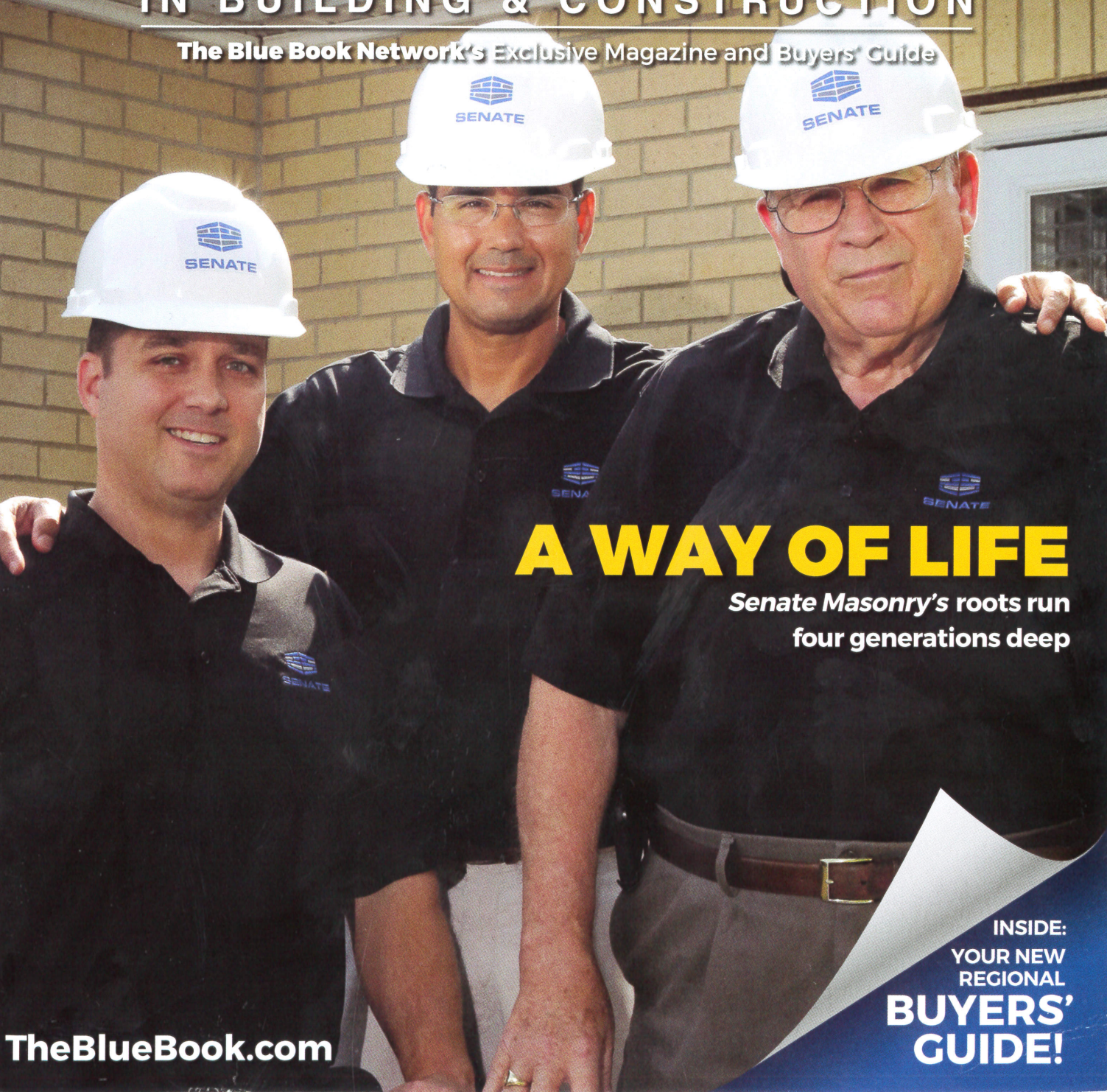


THE Who's Who

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IN BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

The Blue Book Network's Exclusive Magazine and Buyers' Guide



A WAY OF LIFE

*Senate Masonry's roots run
four generations deep*

A BUSINESS BUILT ON ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

*GMC Contractors Inc. demonstrates
the intrinsic value of strong relationships*

by Raja Moussaoui

Ron Getek and Eddie McGowan were childhood friends who met in the eighth grade when Ron moved from Virginia to Maryland in 1982. The pair grew up together, played sports together, were best men at one another's weddings. They were great friends, so working together came naturally.

Ron and Eddie launched *GMC Contractors Inc.* in the summer of 1995. Eddie had recently graduated from

Georgia Southern University and Ron was working with his brother doing sealcoating and paving on driveways. When Ron's brother decided to move his business south to Florida, Ron convinced Eddie to go into business together.

Before purchasing any equipment or trucks, Ron and Eddie went from door to door around Annapolis, Maryland, to see if they could first drum up enough business to get started. Once they did, they scraped



The GMC Contractors Inc.'s management team at company headquarters in Millersville, Maryland.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GMC CONTRACTORS INC.

together a few thousand dollars to buy a truck and some equipment and, before long, they were performing sealcoatings for driveways and power washing and painting houses throughout the summer.

"We had a lot of fun in those early days together. We knew we had to get residents out on their driveways to make a sale," Ron says. "If we knocked on a door and a kid answered, we would say, 'tell your mom and dad that the driveway guy is here and tell them that I am looking under the car.' That would always get them outside."

A MATURING BUSINESS

The next summer, Ron hired his younger brother, his brother's friend Keith Pruitt, and a few others to start working with him and Eddie. This young group of friends worked well together, they kept it fun, and they quickly expanded their reach throughout the Howard, Anne Arundel and Montgomery county areas in Maryland.

Over the years, the business began focusing primarily on commercial work, including parking lot maintenance and renovation projects for



Left to right: Matt Atkinson, Keith Pruitt, Eddie McGowan and Ron Getek on a fishing vacation together in the Florida Keys in January 2015.

property management companies. Eventually, some of the younger crew members moved on, but Ron, Eddie and Keith stuck together as a team.

"After college, I thought this would be temporary summer work while I looked for a 'real' job. Little did I know I'd still be here 23 years later, but I wouldn't change a thing," Keith says.

Years later, GMC Contractors has grown into a mature business with a 40 person-strong team, 18 trucks

and a full range of asphalt, concrete, construction, landscaping and snowplowing services primarily for property management businesses and public agencies across Maryland, Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. Most of GMC Contractors' clients today are repeat customers and/or have been acquired through referrals; as a result, the business has grown at a rate of 10% to 20% every year since the inception of the business.

"We focus on listening to our clients' needs, providing prompt service and competitive prices, which has allowed us to build strong relationships with our clients over time," Ron says.

LONG-STANDING BONDS

The growth and success of the business' project portfolio and services has been forged through the hard work and strong relationships between key leaders of the team over many years.

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Keith Pruitt, Director of Operations,
GMC Contractors Inc.



Before and after photos of an elementary school recreational court in Montgomery County, Maryland, which was upgraded by GMC Contractors Inc.

Keith is now Director of Operations and acts as the company's general manager, taking the lead on developing key client relationships and sales as he focuses on building the business even further. "Keith has been instrumental," Ron affirms. "He's always been our right-hand man."

Equally essential to the company is Matt Atkinson, who serves as Director of Sales and head of the

company's construction division. Matt joined GMC Contractors in 2005 and brought his expertise in commercial construction. According to Ron, Matt's industry knowledge and networking ability allowed the company to grow in a complementary area at just the right time.

The company's construction division has a diverse portfolio, catering to commercial property managers

and retail owners, state and federal agencies, schools and universities, hospitals, apartment complexes, homeowners associations, shopping malls and hotels. GMC Contractors has built its team of qualified experts over the years to adapt to a wide variety of circumstances in order to deliver first-rate services. The team's clients get to experience the benefit of contracting with one company for construction needs from start to finish, whether it is for the interior or exterior of a building. GMC Contractors' services include commercial interiors, tenant fit-outs, demolition, carpentry, drywall trades, acoustical trades, interior and exterior painting, doors, flooring, specialty coatings, exterior caulking and roofing.

While the business no longer markets its services toward residential clients, the team members still perform residential projects for people they're close with, or whom they've gotten to know well over the decades.

"All of us grew up in this area. We always have our friends, or our friends of friends, who want us to do residential projects. We are always glad to provide our services," Ron says.

THE SPRING OF 2014

During the first decade of their company's growth, Ron and Eddie also made real estate investments by purchasing commercial and residential properties, which the pair would either renovate and flip or rent out. As a team, they tackled a huge range of property investments and projects together, and through the daily stresses and worries of work, they always remained the closest of friends.



On the left is Keith Pruitt, Director of Operations, with Ron Getek, President, in the equipment lot at the GMC Contractors Inc. headquarters.

However, in the spring of 2014, Eddie suddenly became ill. After extensive medical examinations and testing, he learned he had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, a progressive neurodegenerative disease also commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. Eddie struggled with the illness for four years before he tragically passed away in February 2018.

At the time of Eddie's diagnosis, his wife, Tracy McGowan, had been pursuing a successful career as a lawyer for the National Security Agency (NSA), which she left to take care of Eddie and their three young children. Eddie's top priority was always his family, and together he and Tracy decided that after he passed away, she would take up working with Ron and assume Eddie's role in the company as Vice President. She continues in that position today.

THE EDDIE MCGOWAN FOUNDATION

Eddie was known for giving back to his community through local events and projects, in fun and creative

ways. Throughout his life, he organized major social events to support important charitable causes. A prime example is the Annapolis Santa Speedo Run, a yearly run each December through downtown Annapolis combined with a toy drive, which has collected thousands of Christmas gift donations for underprivileged children in the area.

In order to continue his legacy of combining social events with charitable causes, Ron and Tracy started the Eddie McGowan Foundation, a nonprofit focused on supporting people with developmental or neurological disabilities. The foundation sponsors an annual golf tournament, happy hour events and other activities. All of the funds raised by the foundation are donated to organizations that supported Eddie through his illness, and that continue to provide vital services to other people who suffer from ALS and related diseases.

FORWARD FOCUS

The leaders of GMC Contractors—Ron, Tracy, Keith and Matt—are well aware that the company's success was

"We focus on listening to our clients' needs, providing prompt service and competitive prices, which has allowed us to build strong relationships with our clients over time."

Ron Getek, President, GMC Contractors Inc.

built on friendships. Hard work, technical knowledge and possibly a little luck have played their roles, but friendship is a key foundation of the GMC Contractors story. It is why Ron and Eddie began working together, why Keith and Matt have remained loyal and invaluable managers for many years, and why the company has been successful with its repeat customer base.

Aside from providing consistent quality service, GMC Contractors' employees have established important long-term relationships with their customers that have developed into many true friendships along the way. Now, the company is excited to make new partnerships within the local community through its work with the Eddie McGowan Foundation.

"We have Eddie's inspiration to continue moving forward as a company. He knew strong business relationships are built on honesty, trust, communication and respect. Our goal is to continue to make and develop these business 'friendships' over time," Tracy says. 🐼

Trained as an architect and journalist, Raja Moussaoui is internationally known for her insightful writing on architecture and urban issues.



Vice President Tracy McGowan pictured in her office. Before working at GMC Contractors Inc., Tracy was a lawyer with the National Security Agency.



Matt Atkinson, Director of Sales, discussing project specifications with a client.



GMC Contractors Inc. resurfaced and striped a parking lot with ADA-compliant markings and installed bollards at the Sears Auto Center in Media, Pennsylvania.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEE KRIEL (TOP AND MIDDLE); GMC CONTRACTORS INC. (BOTTOM)