

BUILDING FROM A FOUNDATION OF TEAMWORK

Written by Erin J. Wriston



Chuck Waldal, Erin J. Wriston, and Chris Galyon

Kingston Homes was formed in 2011 as my husband Jeff and I faced the challenges of the devastating housing bust and recession. Logic may have told us that it was not a good time to start a home building company, but with blind faith and intuition, we decided to give it a shot.

At the time, we owned several building lots created by our residential development entities, but unfortunately, no home builders were buying them. The real estate market had come to a complete standstill. We figured the best way to move these lots was to become home builders ourselves.

With our experience in the development community, we knew of other good building lots in the county that were selling for bargain-basement prices. One of Kingston's first land purchases was 12 lots in Messner Estates in Felida for only \$40,000 each! Even at that amazing price, we were so nervous and anxious about the risk. It was here, with our fingers crossed, that we built our first model home and began to feel we were moving in the right direction.

House by house, Kingston kept building and selling and growing and learning. As we grew, it became necessary for Jeff and me to divide up the business duties. Jeff continued to develop top-notch residential building lots for Kingston and other home builders. I enthusiastically took on responsibility for the daily operations of our budding home building company and became CEO.

At the helm, it was my desire to build a collaborative team with diverse strengths. My vision was to empower the individuals in our team to make decisions and share their insights and knowledge. My background was in finance and numbers; I needed to depend on my crew for design and construction expertise.

Here's where I leaned on Chuck Waldal, Kingston's General Manager, for much guidance. His steady style and deep industry knowledge gave Kingston its foundation for success. He built a construction team of detail-oriented individuals dedicated to high-caliber standards. With Chuck's experience, Kingston formed excellent relationships with some of the best sub-contractors in the county, many of whom still partner with us in building homes today.

Chuck was building quality homes. I was managing business operations. What we were missing was someone with a design vision. Luckily, this is where Chris Galyon, our sales manager, walked into the picture. Chuck and I listened to and trusted Chris as he guided us toward his creative ideas on style and architecture. He had the pulse of innovative home design and knew what new home buyers were yearning to call their own. Chris's style and eye for design solidified our brand as a leader in custom home building.

Together, we've been an extremely effective team and have grown a remarkable company, building about 50 incredible custom homes per year. Reaching this 10-year milestone is hard to believe. I am so proud of what we have accomplished. I remember wondering if we'd even make it through the first year. It's been a group effort, and it's been fun. I've learned that the home building business is certainly not for the faint of heart and comes with lots of risk and uncertainty. Still, looking back, I can happily say our crazy decision to start a home building company has been incredible.



The Kingston Homes Team