

From 'chemie' to homebuilder

Sometimes, the best career is the one you fall into

By **BETHANY CONWAY**
The Las Cruces Bulletin

Though she is working in a field that is overwhelmingly dominated by men, builder Sharon Wasser has never thought the numbers put her at a disadvantage. In fact, she has never really thought about the numbers at all.

"I guess I have just looked at it as a job," she said. "It is something I want to do, and I just go and I do it."

Considering that she received her bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from New Mexico State University, Wasser has never been intimidated by male-dominated fields.

"I think, if you have an interest in a certain field, regardless of whether it is dominated by men or women, because it can go the other way too, then you should rise to that occasion," she said.

A global traveler, Wasser relocated a great deal as a child with her father who was in the Air Force. She grew up mainly in Europe in the countries of England, Spain and Germany. Before moving to New Mexico, her father was actually stationed in Hawaii, and Wasser moved to Alamogordo her freshman year of high school.

"I thought it was the end of the world. I thought, 'What am I doing here?'" she said. "Obviously, I fell in love with New Mexico. I've been a lot of places around the world, and the sunsets here and the colors – nowhere else can compare."

After receiving her degree from NMSU, Wasser found there wasn't a great call for "chemies" in Las Cruces, and was soon on the way to becoming a builder. Her husband, Danny, had the opportunity to purchase a portion of a local landscaping business owned by Las Cruces native Randy Farmer, and created Wasser and Wasser Landscape Management.

"Then I had an opportunity to go to work for Randy Farmer, and he is a contractor as well. He was my mentor," she said. "After I got my experience, I decided I would bite the bullet and take the test. I didn't always know what I wanted to do. I just kind of fell into it."

After receiving her general contractor's license in 2005, Wasser quickly excelled as a builder and finds that

Featured Builder:
Sharon K. Wasser



Building homes since 2005, Sharon Wasser has made her way from chemical engineer to personal homebuilder.

the greatest satisfaction comes from the end product.

"I have always enjoyed seeing things being built – you start something, and you can visualize it, and you work on it, and you see it to completion. So that concept I have always enjoyed, whether it be something I was working on in my kitchen or woodworking or anything like that," she said. "I like being able to see the end product, to be able to say, 'Wow, I had a part in this.'"

While she was working for Farmer, Wasser was also able to get to know a few quality subcontractors, and subsequently, when she started her own projects, she worked with many of them.

"I have a core group of subcontractors that I enjoy working with who are very professional," she said.

Today, she has built six homes including one of her own. Working with Tammy Anderson on the design and floor plan of the homes, she often asks friends who have a knack for interior designing to give her pointers.

"I am definitely on the jobsite. When it gets toward the end of the project, I do some of the trim work myself," she

Details

Featured Builder

Sharon K. Wasser

Company

Organ Vista Builders

Address

4915 Desert Walk Court

Phone

640-3416

Education

- Bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from New Mexico State University

Organizations

- Las Cruces Home Builders Association
- Calvary Baptist Church

Family

- Husband Danny, owns Wasser and Wasser Landscape Management
- Daughter MacKenzie, 15, sophomore at Las Cruces High School
- Son Tate, 9, student at Mesilla Valley Christian Schools
- Dog Woodrow, miniature schnauzer

said. "I love working with people. I like to be able to bounce ideas off of people and hear what they have to say and attempt, to the best of my ability, to put into a building what it is the owner would like."

As a mother of two, Wasser finds working as a builder gives her the opportunity to spend more time with family.

"Being able to do something like this affords me the flexibility to do things with my kids and still be able to participate with them in school activities and sports," she said.

While all of her homes have been spec homes, she classifies herself as a custom builder because of the level of detail and features she includes.

"I go from the ground up as far as design," she said. "I walk the lot and decide what aspects I want to take advantage of."

On top of residential building, Wasser has also constructed commercial buildings, including the new office for the Pinnacle Management Group.

"There are some beautiful commercial buildings out there," she said. "You want your workspace to be something that is welcoming and invites people in."

Her next big project will be the construction of her own home in the Talavera area, which she will use as a showcase home for prospective clients.

"My intention is to build a personal home that I can use as a model, where I can invite potential buyers to see what I can do and showcase the quality work that I provide," she said. While the building market has lost some momentum recently, for Wasser, there are many reasons to look forward to the future.

"This is a very exciting time for building because, as far as technology goes, there are many advances in different types of building materials and the technology you can put in a house," she said.

When she finds time, Wasser also does some woodworking and has built furniture along with her father.

"It would be nice, once I have this house built, to have a large enough area to have a shop," she said.



Sharon Wasser of Organ Vista Builders recently constructed this office building for the Pinnacle Management Group in Las Cruces.



Sharon Wasser built this custom home at 3085 Moonlight Arc to take advantage of the views of the city.