

Agnes Scott

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JUDY JACKSON MOZEN '67

Building on the Liberal Arts

From political science major to award-winning builder



Building on the Liberal Arts

Judy Jackson Mozen '67 credits Agnes Scott with giving her the basic tools to become an award-winning builder **BY ANDREA LYNN '00**

When Judy Jackson Mozen '67 graduated from Agnes Scott, her father told her she had three career options: secretary, nurse or teacher. She had originally majored in math and particularly loved geometry, but switched to political science and became a teacher at an inner-city school in Atlanta.

However, the confidence and discipline she developed at Agnes Scott gave her the courage to branch out and break into—and then excel in—the male-dominated profession of custom homebuilding and remodeling.

In 2011, her Atlanta journey came full circle when her renovation of Callan Castle in Inman Park earned her the National Contractor of the Year Award.

"The biggest thing [my Agnes Scott education] has given me throughout the years is self-confidence," says Mozen, the president of Handcrafted Homes Inc., based in Roswell, Ga.

Mozen also credits "the small all-women environment" for making her "more assertive and comfortable in my skin." Growing up in a military family, Mozen attended a different school every year until the 10th grade. ASC was the first place where she

felt a true sense of community and stability, allowing her to establish strong friendships she has to this day. She attended college during a time of radical change, "when women were stepping out to say, 'We can do this, too.'"

Unlike friends at coed colleges who extensively primped before classes, being at a college without men meant that female students were focused on their studies and free to fully express their opinions. At Agnes Scott, there was a sense that "We're smart. It was a feeling that no one was putting us down. We didn't need to shut up; we could share our opinions."

And then there was that required modern art class Mozen had to take to graduate. "I hated that I had to take the class, and then I fell in love with it," remembers Mozen. This ignited a creative spirit and artistic eye she didn't realize she had, which became another asset in her career.

A Woman's Touch

Mozen got involved in home design only because her first husband, an overworked architect, needed extra help designing homes. She asked if she could lend a hand, designing a house from a cardboard box in 1974 that wowed her husband and his partner. Mozen's house sold faster than any other house in their subdivision and then landed on the front page of the *Atlanta Constitution's* real estate section.

"I started getting phone calls to design houses," she says. Though she never studied architecture, engineering or design, she inherited some of her civil-engineer dad's talents and incorporated her own design-build business just hours before her daughter was born. She has run her Roswell-based business for more than 36 years.

While it was a long struggle to break into a field dominated by men (she was one of the first three women homebuilders in Atlanta), Mozen has found that her perspective as a woman gives her a tremendous advantage in the field. She often sees obvious areas for improvement that her male colleagues don't instinctively notice, like a recent female client's concern about mirror placement in the bathroom. Also, Mozen still uses the lessons learned in her modern art class to design with



"that little touch of doing things differently."

Full-Circle Moment

As a student, Mozen was very aware of the impact the Candler family had on Agnes Scott and at Emory, where she took some classes, and she recalls seeing the mansion in Inman Park during those years. When her children—Rand Knight, 40, and Chelsea Mozen, 36—went to The Westminster Schools, she became even more aware of the Candlers' contributions to education in Atlanta.

When the family that had been living in Callan Castle, built by Asa Candler in 1903, approached her about renovating the two-story Beaux Arts mansion, she was competing with three other local builders and was thrilled to be given the job. "The owner said, 'I want to see your organization,

how you manage billings and what the management of the project will look like,'" she recalled. Her color-coded notebooks and attention to detail sealed the deal.

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The yearlong restoration was an incredibly complex project. When dealing with a seemingly

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overwhelming task, she says to "always remember to tackle it in individual parts." There was also the added pressure of restoring a piece of history, "knowing everyone is watching you." She and her husband, Randy Urquhart—also a former teacher who worked for her for five years before joining her as the vice president of the company—went to painstaking measures to make sure it honored the original glory. The two searched for five months before finding three brothers in Chicago who had the ability to replicate the metal tiles of the roof, and for three months before identifying



DAVID CHRISTENSEN

Judy Jackson Mozen '67 earned the 2011 National Contractor of the Year Award for her renovation of Callan Castle in Inman Park, the former home of Coca-Cola co-founder and Atlanta mayor Asa Griggs Candler.

an Arkansas company that could reproduce the exact snowflake porcelain tile of the porch.

The family—two adults, four children, two cats, three dogs and two goats living out back—remained in the house while the work was being done and is still at work on the interiors.

The dedication Mozen and her team put into the job paid off. Last April, her Callan Castle restoration was recognized as she received the 2011 National Contractor of the Year Award for Residential Historical Renovation/Restoration from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry.

The award was a tremendous honor, of course, but the opportunity to restore "the piece of art" that is Callan Castle was meaningful on a deeper level due to "the connection the house has had to my life and to Agnes Scott," she says.

Andrea Lynn '00 is an NYC-based lifestyle writer, recipe developer and cookbook author. Visit her Web site at www.andrealynnfoodwriter.com.

Recent Awards Highlights

2011 National Contractor of the Year—Residential Historical Renovation/Restoration, National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI)

2011 President's Award, NARI, Atlanta Chapter

2011 Jerry McDaniel Education Award, NARI, Atlanta Chapter

2011 Contractor of the Year—Entire House over \$1,000,000, NARI, Atlanta Chapter

2011 OBIE Professionalism GOLD Award—Residential Remodeling Exterior over \$100,000, Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association (GAHBA)

2009 Agnes Scott College Outstanding Alumna Award for Distinguished Career