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Builder profile: Joe Freeman

Joe Freeman

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Year started: 2000

How Did You Get Started In Your Profession? Growing up, I had two primary interests: building and politics. My uncle is a custom-home builder in southern Virginia. Growing up, I saw him build many beautiful houses, including my family home, and was drawn to it as a creative job that could result in something lasting and functional. It was my family's involvement in local politics, however, that left me bitten by the political bug at a young age and ultimately led me to pursue my degree in political science and communications. Then, with a swift move to the District, I began a 15-year career in government - seven years on Capitol Hill and eight years representing two successive Virginia governors before the federal government. During this time, I also pursued my other interest by involving myself in the D.C. real estate market. Following a simple apartment rehab, I took on my first significant project with the renovation and restoration of my first house in Logan Circle in 1993. The transition to real estate was complete when, at the end of the governor's term, I decided to shift from government altogether and take advantage of the growing opportunities in the D.C. condo market with my first multifamily building.

How long have you been with the current company? Eight years

Honors and awards: Commonwealth of Virginia, Patrick Henry Distinguished Citizen Award, 2001; Commonwealth of Virginia, appointment, Radford University Board of Visitors, 1997; Commonwealth of Virginia, second appointment, Radford University Board of Visitors, 2001

Greatest accomplishment in the past 12 months: While the past 12 months have involved tremendous efforts on many fronts (including stabilizing our condominium projects in the face of the housing crisis and diversifying our business into other areas, such as construction management services), my greatest accomplishment was adding an instrument rating to my private pilot's license. Often recognized as the most challenging and rewarding training that pilots ever encounter, instrument training has made me a far better and safer pilot.

Best-selling communities: Our best-selling communities to date were our first three boutique condominium projects located in and around Dupont Circle: the Burton Condominiums on U Street Northwest, the Stacey Condominium on Swann Street Northwest; and Corcoran Place Condominiums at 17th Street and Corcoran Northwest.

Community most proud of developing: Each project has been unique and special to us, so it's not easy to choose. We believe our most recent condo development, 1402 Swann Street Condominiums, is very special. We restored the facade of a turn-of-the-century Victorian town house - a classic District row house - and built a matching structure on the adjacent vacant lot to create eight luxury two-bedroom units. These units, located on one of the most beautiful streets in town, have 10-foot ceilings, hand-scraped wide-plank floors, beautiful woodwork, custom cabinets, imported granite countertops and spalike limestone bathrooms.

New and upcoming projects: We're currently working to restore another neighborhood gem: 1740 13th St. is a 4,200-square-foot, semidetached Victorian town house in the Logan Circle Historic District. Originally built in 1890, the house sits prominently atop a large corner lot and has a large yard on three sides. This grand house is being completely renovated into a modern home while preserving its historic details and charm. Planned is a five-bedroom, 3 1/2 bath single-family residence with an in-law suite in the basement. Built with entertaining in mind, the house will feature a large gourmet kitchen off a formal dining room, a grand central staircase, large living room and library.

We also are working on several client-based projects. We're currently providing construction management and design services for two custom home renovations/additions in suburban Maryland and have two District-based commercial projects in the planning stages, including an exciting downtown

restaurant build-out that's currently in the design phase.

Age: 43

Family: My sister, Yvette Freeman Sigal, and I run the daily operations of the business together.

Pets: Copper, a Rhodesian ridgeback

Education: Radford University, Radford, Va., bachelor's degree in political science and speech communications, 1987

Community affiliations: I'm a former two-term member of the Radford University Board of Visitors and a member of Foundry United Methodist Church. I still dabble in politics, but I'd much rather be flying.

Last book read: "John Adams" by David McCullough

Last movie seen: "Iron Man"

What kind of car do you drive? Range Rover HSE. The rear seats fold forward. It's a work car, really.

Describe your personal dream house: My dream house would be on the water off the Chesapeake Bay with acreage enough to land an airplane.