

NICK HERRON

Nick Herron's long-time service and dedication to Master Builders has earned him official life member status – but his passion for making a positive difference in others' lives goes well beyond these efforts.



Growing up in Brisbane as the third eldest among seven girls and three boys, it was sharing in the family's chores and commitment to his early roles that instilled the strong work ethic Nick exhibits today.

"Dad was a doctor, and Mum had her hands full wrangling 10 kids. As one of the oldest kids I also reckoned I'd changed more than my fair share of nappies before I reached adulthood," he recalled.

Following his first paid job as a pathology lab 'runner' in Spring Hill when he was just 12, Nick followed in the footsteps of his paternal grandfather, a North Queensland publican, and his father who grew up in pubs, securing a job at the Newmarket Hotel with family friends the McGuires.

It wasn't construction, but law that first appealed. Studying at QIT (now QUT) and taking Articles at Barry & Nilsson, a 17-year-old Nick found himself thrown into the deep end, and struggling to balance work and study – while his side hustle working two nights a week at a Greek restaurant earned him more than 45 hours' work at the law firm.

"I remember having a moan to my mum that people only ever needed a lawyer because they're being sued or want to sue someone else. I wanted to work in an environment where we could all work together collaboratively," Nick said.



Nick with 20-year employee, Woo Hollis.



A motherly pep-talk gave Nick the courage to quit – not an easy decision as he had just accepted an associateship to a Supreme Court Judge. Ironically, a young Dean Merlo replaced him, before also quitting law to establish Merlo Coffee. Years later Dean encouraged Nick to participate in the inaugural St Vincent de Paul CEO Sleepout, starting a journey with the organisation he'll be "forever grateful for."

With no idea what to do next, Nick enrolled in a Business Degree, and moved into a Brisbane share house, where architecture student Paul Fairweather was his flatmate.

"I met a range of people pursuing careers in the construction industry and decided I wanted to be a part of it in some way. They were always talking about the designs and

projects they were working on, and I started thinking about where I could fit in," he recalled.

"I began researching the industry and with the help of my father I got to meet some real industry titans of the time. Ian Barclay very generously explained the career pathways available, including the importance of the Master Builders Association."

After working with the Queensland Expo Authority, Nick landed a cadetship with Jennings Construction Services, proving himself by labouring on-site before being entrusted with administrative tasks.

With his Business Degree and postgraduate studies in Applied Science – Construction Management behind him, Nick remained with Jennings until their takeover by Fletcher Construction, becoming a Project Manager in Business Development in the 1990s. While studying a Graduate Diploma in Project Management at QUT, he jumped at the chance to become Construction Manager on an ambitious \$30-million-



Nick at the 2024 Vinnies CEO Sleepout at Adelaide Oval.



Nick with friend and business partner Dave Coorey at a family birthday celebration.

plus capital works program at Armidale. Loving the place and the people, he stayed 18 months longer than planned, before accepting an offer by established Adelaide company Badge Constructions to grow their Brisbane operations in 1995.

"Me leaving had less to do with job dissatisfaction than a realisation that I was never really going to be a master of my own destiny working for someone else," Nick reflected.

Destiny led Nick to approach friend of more than a decade, Dave Coorey, to go into a 50:50 business partnership – and Herron Coorey was born, specifically targeting the education sector for its growth potential. The team has weathered several challenges, including a market flooded with underbidding competitors in the wake of the global financial crisis; the cost hikes following the COVID pandemic; and the 2022 Brisbane Floods, which swallowed up three months' turnover as the team cleaned up after watching one of their site sheds floating down the river on the TV news.

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Today, the company has grown from a staff of four to 30, a third of whom have been with them for more than a decade. Their slogan is 'Built on Integrity' – something Nick lives by.

His reputation for fairness, humility, and focus on charitable endeavours are evident in his work with Master Builders.

He served as President from 2014 – 16 and served on the Contracts Committee from 1998 – 2017, including a decade as Chair; a major achievement coming in the introduction of a Code of Conduct for members allowing the Board to terminate those who bring the association into disrepute. He currently sits on the Construction Committee and holds

positions on several subcommittees and various industry and education boards.

Being named a life member meant "a lot" to Nick.

"It's nice to be acknowledged by your peers," he said.

"Success for me is living a life where I'm happy doing what I do and being able to make a positive difference in the lives of others."

Outside of the office, hitting the open road is his favourite way to wind down.

"I ride my motorcycle. I find it very meditative. There are no phone calls or interruptions and too much going on for you to think about anything other than the road ahead." /