

suburban life

Rachel
McADAMS
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Coming Home

AS A THIRD-GENERATION MEMBER OF THE FAMILY LEADING HOLLAND FLOOR COVERING, **SARAH ALLES** FEELS AS THOUGH SHE'S EXACTLY WHERE SHE'S MEANT TO BE.

Sarah Alles was born into Holland Floor Covering, a family-owned business whose deep roots in the community stretch back to 1973. She grew up playing with her cousins in the company's Bucks County showroom while their parents worked nearby. As she came of age, despite the fond memories of her childhood and her familiarity with the company's business, she chose a career path of her own making.

"I was wary about joining the family business," she admits. "The pressures I thought that would come from working with them full-time seemed a little scary to me. I also remembered things like the housing crash of 2008-2009 and the struggles that everyone went through. I wasn't sure I wanted to go through something like that with my family."

In August 2018, after gaining years of experience elsewhere, Sarah determined that joining Holland Floor Covering would be the best thing for her. She began to absorb as much knowledge as she could from her mother, CFO Pamela Gifford, and her uncles, Roger Hansbarger Sr. and David Hansbarger Jr., who lead the company's retail and commercial divisions, respectively. A few years later, when Holland Floor Covering expanded from its roots in Bucks County to a second showroom in Wayne, Sarah found herself leading the charge.

"Wayne is a little different than small-town Newtown, where I knew the names and faces of everyone," she says. "We're working with clients with homes of all different sizes, from small

cottages to large estates. Although we're still growing as part of the community, we already have some repeat customers. It's starting to feel like home."

The Wayne showroom has experienced significant growth since opening its doors in May 2021. The new location has some distinctive touches, ranging from specific products favored by Main Line clients to a high-end refreshment station offering coffee, tea, beer, and wine—a welcome addition, especially for clients whose appointments tend to run long.

At both locations, Holland Floor Covering strives to be a comprehensive resource for flooring options of all kinds—hard-surface options such as tile, natural stone, and hardwood, as well as natural high-quality carpet. The company also offers backsplashes and other products critical to a home renovation, and it may expand into other complementary product lines in the near future.

Sarah's grandparents, Dave and Judy Hansbarger, founded the family business as Hansbarger Quality Carpets 50 years ago. Sarah is one of three members of the third generation of the Hansbarger family to work in the business, along with her cousin, Roger Hansbarger Jr., and Mike Miller, David Jr.'s son-in-law.

"People might not realize the pressure you feel as a third-generation family member, but mostly it's pressure I put on myself," Sarah says. "There are some challenges that come from working in a family business, but there are a lot of joys, too. It's the best feeling in the world when your mom or uncle or grandmother calls you and tells you how good of a job you did."

"I learned everything from my mom and uncles," she continues. "My uncle Roger turned me into who I am, and I'm always hearing his voice in the back of my head when I'm at work. This is a detail-oriented business, so every time I'm pricing a job or meeting with a client, I'm remembering what they taught me. I take my mom's and uncles' management styles and blend them into my own."

Sarah is happy with the career path she took, especially because it led her back to her family.

"Initially I was not sure of the career I wanted, but working with my family has been the right fit for me," she says. "I love what I do, and I enjoy the work. I feel like I'm where I'm meant to be." ■



Sarah Alles (left) with her mother and mentor Pamela Gifford



Holland Floor Covering
HollandFloor.com

124 E. LANCASTER AVE.
WAYNE, PA 19087
(610) 947-6500

35 SWAMP ROAD
NEWTOWN, PA 18940
(215) 357-0909