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Rosemary Connors, the owner of Rosette Specialty Trades, with Meridian Bank Vice President of Commercial Lending Ben Peek

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A Whole New World

When **Rosemary Connors** transitioned from broadcast journalism into commercial scaffolding, her relationship with **Meridian Bank** supported her growing business.

by **Matt Cosentino**

For 15 years, Delaware Valley residents knew Rosemary Connors as an Emmy-winning reporter and anchor at NBC10 Philadelphia who exuded intelligence and professionalism during her broadcasts. What they didn't realize was all the hard work behind the scenes that went into the polished finished product that came across on their television screens.

In her role, Connors was expected to see a story through from start to finish, a

process that involved making a pitch to her supervisors, determining who she had to interview, scheduling and completing the interviews on camera, writing the piece, getting editorial approval, and having the story fine-tuned in time for the nightly news.

Although she has left that part of her life in the rearview mirror, she has found that the fast pace of her new career mirrors her former one.

"The deadlines are very real in news, and you are constantly troubleshooting,

maneuvering, and strategizing. All of those skills have transferred into the work I am doing now," says Connors, the owner of Rosette Specialty Trades, a union-based company specializing in commercial scaffolding services. "I don't know if I really knew exactly what 'business development' was because I didn't work in that space as a reporter, but it's something I have come to realize I am very good at doing.

"When my team and I go into pitch meetings with various general contractors, even though my team has decades of experience in this industry, I'm the one making the pitch," she continues. "I know this business very well, and this is a skill that I bring to the table from having worked so many years in news."

Connors decided to retire from NBC10 in 2024 for a number of reasons, primarily to spend more time with her family. She soon launched Rosette Specialty Trades after being introduced to a group of seasoned scaffolding professionals whose previous business had been sold to a corporation.

She had prior experience in construction as a consultant to her husband, Ben, the

Connors/Peek portrait by Jeff Anderson; jobsite photo by Brett Tiagwad/Elevated Angles LLC



Financial backing from Meridian Bank helped fuel the quick ascension of Rosette Specialty Trades, which specializes in commercial scaffolding services.

second-generation owner of a family business that offers chimney maintenance and restoration along with masonry services. She further felt comfortable embarking on a new endeavor having been influenced by strong women in both her family and her husband's, including her mother and grandmother, who also were reporters in the region.

"I feel very fortunate to have so many women around me who have been trailblazers in their own right, and have in turn inspired me and given me confidence," Connors says.

She feels similarly about the team at Meridian Bank, which previously financed a 30-acre commercial property for her in-laws and also supported the business needs of her husband. When she required financial backing to sustain her company's quick ascension in the industry, Meridian was a natural fit.

Ben Peek, vice president of commercial lending at Meridian, knew Connors' husband well and was eager to learn about her vision for Rosette.

"That's one of my favorite parts—to get to know the individual and learn about the goals of the company, their personal goals, and their expectations," he says. "They're not going to be able to do this forever, so I ask about where they see it going, their exit plan, and how we can help them build the business value-wise into something that someone would want to buy or lend into in the future. We want them to hit their personal and professional goals.

"We started to work with her about three months into her company's founding and provided a line of credit," Peek continues. "They had already lined up some major projects and they were coming in pretty hot and heavy. Knowing some of the end users they were working for also gave us a bit of comfort."

Rosette works in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Its clientele includes the University of Pennsylvania (Connors' alma mater), Temple University, Lincoln Financial Field, Citizens Bank Park, SEPTA, and the University of Maryland.

Securing a working line of credit from Meridian, which has increased as Rosette's demand has grown, has allowed Connors to pay her staff while awaiting payment on existing jobs.

"Even though I'm putting out pretty large payrolls every week, I'm waiting to

“Even though I’m putting out pretty large payrolls every week, I’m waiting to get paid. That’s typical in construction, so you really do need a strong banking partner.”

—Rosemary Connors, Rosette Specialty Trades

get paid,” she says. “That’s typical in construction, so you really do need a strong banking partner, certainly if you’re starting up, to be your support. That was paramount.

“I’ve seen how seamless my husband’s relationship has been with Meridian, so it was a no-brainer,” she continues. “Ben [Peek] has been phenomenal. He’s an incredible liaison in terms of the work he

does between the bank and the client.”

Peek has regular contact with Connors and her controller to stay up to date on Rosette's projects, quarterly projections, and ways in which the bank can help. He has even been on jobsites with Connors, which he finds both enlightening and rewarding.

It's all part of ensuring that lender and client are on the same page, strengthening a relationship built on transparency.

"The better-operated businesses in our region still utilize their bankers as trusted advisors, along with their attorneys and CPAs," Peek says. "That's the holy trinity of trusted advisors for people who are looking to succeed financially and for ways to protect themselves as well as the company. They have employees who they care about and think of as family, and it's our job to make sure they can keep supporting those folks, because those are our community members."

At Meridian, that example is set from the top down.

"We were founded by Chris Annas (Meridian's president, chairman, and CEO), who has always had entrepreneurial spirit, and we have that entrepreneurial mindset here," Peek says. "We like to get our hands dirty, learn the business, provide support, and have that personal touch." ■



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