

Building™ **EDGE** MAGAZINE

The Local Voice in Building

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Co-Owners Dan and
John Curington

Curington Contracting Inc.

Guided by Family and Faith

Celebrating 35 years

FAMILY AND FAITH

By David Greenberg

Photography by David Johnston,
Johnston Photography

THE GUIDING FORCES AT CURINGTON CONTRACTING



The Curington family and co-workers on the site of the new Legendary Trails Development

For the past 35 years family and faith have been the formulas for success at Curington Contracting, Inc., and the mix is clearly working for the second generation Ocala builder.

Owned by brothers, Dan and John Curington, the company was started by their father, Thomas Neatwood Curington III in 1972, after he moved his family from South Florida to Ocala. You might say they came home to Ocala, considering their great grandfather Thomas Neatwood Curington the First was once the mayor of Wildwood.

Dan and John Curington, along with a third brother, David, learned the business the old fashioned way.

“Dad taught us from the ground up,” said Dan Curington. “We’ve done everything from digging the footers to painting the finished product, and everything in between.”

John Curington says their training started at a young age.

“When we were kids, our dad would get us jobs with other trades people,” he said. “Dad always said it was important for us to

know a little bit about everything and those lessons have come in handy.”

Start With a Good Plan

“Another thing Dad taught us,” says Dan, “is that to do a good job you must start with a good plan.” The Curingtons have been drawing their own plans for 35 years. “That’s one thing we insist on doing in-house.”

“In the early years I drew all the house plans by hand,” said Dan. “If we provide clear, accurate and understandable plans, it



makes everyone's job easier, and there are fewer mistakes in the field."

Today the Curingtons have eight full-time drafters equipped with the latest in computer-aided drafting equipment. Curington Contracting has been commended by the Marion County Building Department for the quality of their plans.

It was indeed a long journey that got Curington Contracting from its beginnings in 1972 to where it is today.

Prior to the move to Ocala, Thomas Curington lived in Miami with his wife, Lillian. Tom and Lil were both born and raised in Miami. In fact, all three of the brothers are fourth-generation Floridians. Tom was a firefighter in Miami, working part-time in the construction industry with his father and grandfather. For a time, he was a painting contractor, while continuing to work as a firefighter. Tom eventually left the fire department in 1964, when the family moved from Miami to

Melbourne, where Tom continued in the painting business for a number of years.

In 1969, he got involved with a company doing construction in the Virgin Islands. He worked on projects on both St. Croix and St. Martin.

"After being away from us for about six months, Dad decided to move the whole family to the Islands," said Dan. "That was a big deal for all of us. We lived on St. Martin for about a year and half and then moved back to Melbourne in 1971."

The move to Ocala occurred a short time later.

"It was certainly slow in construction in the mid 1970s," said Dan. "We were doing odd jobs such as room additions, screen enclosures, whatever work Dad could find, and we were glad to do it. It was a rough time, and we struggled to pay the bills at times."

They built their first home in Silver Springs Forest in 1972, and then continued



to build homes and commercial projects through most of the 1970s.

Expanding the Company

In the late 1970s Tom Curington was invited to work with a friend in West Palm Beach. He partnered with Tom Fahey, and the two began building in West Palm under the name of Curington and Fahey, Inc. Tom, Lillian, Dan and a good friend, David Messer, who was working for the Curingtons at the time, packed up and moved to South Florida. David Curington moved to West Palm a few years later but John stayed in Ocala running the office there.

Another opportunity presented itself in the early 1980s which lead Tom, Lillian and David Curington to the opposite end of the state near Pensacola. Curington and Fahey was dissolved, and two new branches of Curington Contracting, Inc. were established. For a while there were three offices in the state. John ran the Ocala office, Dan ran the West Palm Beach office, and David ran the office in the Panhandle. Tom and Lil traveled between all three locations to keep an eye on the boys.

The focus in Ocala at that time was on commercial construction. "We were doing a lot of industrial plants and office buildings," said John. "We were blessed with the



Tim Boutwell, head of the Residential Division and David Curington, head of the Commercial Division



Model Home in Exclusive Curington Development
Buffington Estates

Curington Contracting was awarded the Prestigious Grand Aurora Award at the 2004 Southeastern Builders Conference in Orlando for Best Energy Efficient Home

opportunity to work with the Dinkins family, and became their exclusive builder for Kwik Kings all over Central Florida.”

“In West Palm, we were building a lot of interesting projects such as marinas, car dealerships and restaurants. We even built a Trap and Skeet Club in Wellington,” Dan said. “When we first went to West Palm, we were there to build houses, but that changed as time went on, and we stopped building homes and became a commercial contractor.”

The office in the Panhandle was involved in both commercial and residential construction, but with the slowdown in construction in the mid to late 1980s, it was decided that the northern branch of Curington Contracting should be dissolved. Tom, Lil, and David made their way back to Ocala.

Dan closed the West Palm Beach office in the late 1980s also, and rejoined his father and two brothers back in Ocala in 1989. The three sons and Tom worked together until May 1992, when Thomas Curington suffered a stroke. “We were blessed with three wonderful years working together as a family,” said John. “Dad went home to be with the Lord in 1993.”

The brothers continued the Curington operation. After many years of focusing only on commercial work, and upon Dan’s returning from West Palm, they decided to re-establish a residential division. “Every other builder in town had a model in Marion Oaks, so we decided that would be a good place to start,” said Dan.



A Relationship with Deltona

Having a model in Marion Oaks opened the door for Curington Contracting to begin building a relationship with one of the largest developers in the state. They were invited to work with Deltona Corporation in Marion Oaks as their exclusive builder for Marion County. Deltona, with offices in Ocala and Miami, first opened in 1962, and has created a number of large-scale Florida communities, including Marion Oaks.

Curington worked with Deltona for a decade and described the sales activity as minimal during that period. But things took off about three or four years ago, and there has been no looking back.

“Deltona has kept the Deltona Division of our company very busy these last few years,” said John.

Curington Quality Homes Division has also been busy. The Curingtons acquired Green Ridge Acres, which became their first

exclusive subdivision. Later they picked up a majority of the lots in Dalton Woods Phase I and built it out in no time. The company’s first official development was Buffington Estates, which completely sold out in record time. Most recently, they have been involved in a brand-new residential project known as Legendary Trails. This beautiful 80-acre residential development has been in the planning and permitting stages for over two years and is currently under construction.



Aerial Photo of the First United Methodist Church of Dunnellon
photography: Smith Aerial Photography



The Exchange, built by Curington and Burns, Inc.

This development will consist of 76 lots ranging in size from $\frac{3}{4}$ acre to $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres. It is located on SE 80th Street about one-half-mile west of 441. It's rolling hills, granddaddy oaks and easily accessible location will make this a sure winner.

Between the Deltona division and the Curington Quality Homes division, the company has been keeping quite busy with the task of delivering over 1000 homes in a four-year stretch.

The Curingtons are also developing a commercial retail/business park called CrossPointe Commons. The 30-acre site located near the post office on Maricamp Road will be a mix of retail and office buildings, including bank sites, drug store sites, office sites and room for a big-box tenant as well. CrossPointe is the company's biggest commercial development project to date.

Buffington Estates, Legendary Trails and CrossPointe Commons are all joint venture projects and include long-time partner Robert Burns. Robert has been working with the Curingtons for 13 years. He started out as a commercial salesman, but as

time went on, the group began to do some speculation building together. They created a separate company called Curington and Burns, Inc. and have built, and continue to build, many projects together. Another joint venture partner who is involved in a few of the Curington projects is Mike Radcliffe, owner of Michael W. Radcliffe Engineering, Inc. Both Burns and Radcliffe are long-time friends to the Curington Family, and are considered part of the team.

David Curington had moved to Stuart, Florida in the mid 1990s, and ran his own remodeling business, but has recently returned to Ocala and rejoined the Curington team. He is heading up and revitalizing the company's commercial division. "David has been back with the company for about a year now, and what a blessing it has been to have him back," say both Dan and John. "David brings a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge with him and has already proven, in the short time he has been back, to be a huge asset to the company."

Curington employs other family members as well. Mother, Lillian Curington recently

returned to work on a part-time basis, after 15 years of retirement, to assist in filing and to spend time with her three boys. Adam Curington, John's son, is working in the office doing administrative work. Aron Mavros, John's daughter, also works in the administrative branch of the company. Ryan Mavros, Aron's husband, works in the purchasing department. Trevor Curington, Dan's son, is one of the eight auto-cad operators in the drafting department. Heather Sasina, David's daughter, is working as an assistant to the field superintendents. Nikki Astling, a cousin to the Curington brothers, is heading up the permitting department. Robert Merriman, Dan's brother-in-law, oversees the warranty department and Patzi Emholtz, John's mother-in-law, is working part-time in the archiving department.

Making the Process Simple

The process when building with Curington Contracting is relatively straightforward and simple for the homebuyer.

"We have lots available, or we can build on the homeowner's property," said John. "We do that quite a bit."

The first step for a Curington customer is to work with the sales team. The homebuyer picks from one of the Curington plans, and works with the in-house drafting department and design team to develop a specific plan. "In some cases the customer has already had plans drawn, and that's OK. We will use those plans for pricing the home, but if we are awarded the job, we will redraw the plans to ensure they meet our strict requirements," said Dan.

There are a number of ways a Curington home exceeds the minimum code requirements, and the plans must reflect those strict requirements. Here are a few examples: Curington provides 50 percent more steel reinforcement in the foundation than code requires, they also provide an oversized footer, they place 3/8" rebar at four-foot increments each direction in the entire slab of every home, which far exceeds any code requirement. Code only requires one course of reinforced, concrete-filled block as a tie-beam; Curington includes

two courses on every home, which is double the minimum requirement. They insist on using a high-strength concrete in all structural components. These are just a few examples of what makes the Curington name synonymous with quality. They believe quality starts from the ground up.

Once the contract is signed the homebuyer begins to work with their in-house color coordinator and customer-service representative to begin the two-phase process of selecting all the interior and exterior finishes and colors. The homeowner is given an opportunity to review the final plans before they go to the permitting department. This is called customer plan review, or CPR for short. In addition, every plan goes through an in-house plan review process to ensure that the plans are as accurate as they can possibly be before they are released to the multitudes of sub-contractors and material suppliers for the purpose of constructing the home.

Before construction begins on a Curington home there is an on-site visit with the homeowner and the general superintendent, Tim Boutwell, who is in charge of all residential construction, and reports only to John or Dan Curington. He meets with every homeowner at the beginning of construction to layout the home on the property, and to answer any questions they may have at that time. He also oversees every job-site superintendent and every aspect of the residential construction process to ensure that quality is maintained and the jobs run smoothly.

On the Deltona team you will find Russ Jasaitis working directly under Boutwell but overseeing all of the Deltona homes and performing similar duties to Tim's.

Once the home is completed, and the homeowner has moved in you might think that Curington's work is done. There is still one more step in the building process that is generally overlooked: the all-important work of the warranty department. "Servicing the





homeowner after the home is completed is extremely important,” said Dan. Robert Merriman, manager of the warranty department is responsible for making sure all warranty claims are addressed in a timely manner. In addition, Merriman will perform a year-end review with the homeowner, at the homeowner’s request, to inspect the home, and make repairs as warranted.

Every Curington home comes with a 2-10 Home Buyers Warranty, which includes the normal one-year warranty, a two-year warranty on mechanical systems, and an additional 5 years for a total of 15-year structural warranty.

On the commercial side, Curington is usually approached by customers who already have property to build on. However, “we can and will help them find suitable land through our realty division, aptly named Curington Realty, Inc.,” said Dan. Curington Realty is managed by Broker Hal Nichols, another long-time friend of the family.

Repeat Business on the Commercial Side

Once a property is located, Curington can again help with the design of the project from the ground up. “Commercial construction is different in a number of ways,” says Dan. “The biggest difference is the requirement of a fully engineered site and drainage plan which must be approved by numerous government agencies before construction can begin. We can help with this daunting task.”

Curington also takes pride in helping commercial customers to design a building that is cost effective. “With the price of construction continuing to go up, it’s important to design a building that meets the needs, dreams and desires of our customers without exceeding their budget. And that’s exactly what we try to do,” says Dan.

“We get quite a few repeat customers on both the residential side and the commercial side,” said John. “We built an auto repair shop

here in Ocala in the 1980s for Jerry and Terry Brewer, owners of Auto Tech II on State Road 200.”

The Curington Design Team under the direction of David Curington is now designing a brand new building for the Brewers. This state-of-the-art two-story facility will expand the existing facility to five times its current size. The service area will be air-conditioned and fully equipped with the latest technology in auto repair equipment. The facility will include a giant classroom for specialty training. “Jerry hasn’t built anything since we constructed the first shop almost 20 years ago. When he decided it was time to build again, he came straight to us,” says David.

The Curington brothers say that one of the keys to their success is their experience, but they also believe that they have become extremely effective communicators and often refer to themselves as being in the communications business.



“It used to be that we were just in the construction business,” said Dan. “It has become evident that we are also in the communications business. Our job is to get the information from our customer, then clearly and correctly communicate that information through various departments of our company to the people working in the field who actually put it all together and create a building, a home, or project, which was once nothing but a dream. Without good detailed communication the process can fail at multiple levels.”

John Curington says that detail is crucial in the construction business.

But both brothers say there’s more to it for them – something that keeps them working at it every day.

A Strong Spiritual Conviction

“People tell us all the time they can’t understand how brothers can work together like we do and get along,” said Dan. “First of all, in a business sense, we complement each other, where I am weak John is strong and vice versa. But there’s more to it than that: our goal has always been to conduct our business in a manner pleasing to our Lord. And to that end, we rely on various Christian-based resources and one of the resources is a group called C12, an organization for Christian businessmen, which helps us keep our business running on biblically sound principles. The C12 group allows us to share ideas and concepts, as well as frustrations and difficulties with other Christian businessmen and to learn from each other what works and what doesn’t.”

One very positive result of the C12 group is the addition of what has become a key member of the Curington team, Chaplain Joe. That’s right; Curington Contracting has a chaplain. His name is Joe Regnier, and he is employed by Corporate Chaplains of America.

“For the last three years Chaplain Joe has been doing what chaplains do best: minister to employees and their families,” said John. “Chaplain Joe has proven to be an invaluable asset to our company.”

His work includes visits to hospitals, employees’ homes, weddings and funerals, as well as visits to our office to meet with over 70 employees on a weekly basis. Chaplain Joe is available to Curington employees 24-7, and is only a phone call away.

According to John Curington, that Christian belief holds the business and the family together.





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