

Building on a Family Business

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Back in the 1920's, an ambitious young man named Nicolo Scozzari arrived in this country from Italy.

A skilled stone mason, he had no difficulty finding employment, but he was not satisfied working for somebody else. So in the 1940s he established his own construction company, which grew through the years and which today is Scozzari Builders Inc., the busy construction firm based in Ewing Township.

Scozzari's son, Philip began working with the firm as a boy in the late 1950s. In the 1980. Philip's sons, Leonard and Nicholas joined the company. Today, Philip is chairman of the board, Leonard is president and Nicholas is vice president of the firm.

Nicholas jokes that his grandfather started the company "with two wheelbarrels and a pickup truck."

Now, he adds "we have a lot of barrels and a lot of trucks." As this was written, father and sons were looking forward to moving from their headquarters for many years at 243 Lawrenceville Road to a new facility at 1891 North Olden Avenue in Ewing Township which, in Nicholas' words, "will enable us to make a commitment to the growth and the needs of our clients, and where we will put specific people in place to service particular clients, and optimize efficiency in doing so."

The numbers and prestigious nature of Scozzari Builders' clients have grown dramatically in recent years. Listed herewith are a few of the projects on which the firm is working at the present time or has completed in the recent past.

At the Hun School on Edgerstoune Road in Princeton, Scozzari is building extensive additions to the library and the academic center, as well as preparing extensions to the dining hall. "During the coming summer we will completely renovate the existing dining hall and kitchen facility and have them ready for September," said Nicholas Scozzari.

The firm just started work on a new 12,000-square-foot visitors' center at the Howell Living history



Nick Scozzari, left, vice president, Scozzari Builders, with Philip Scozzari, board chairman, and Leonard Scozzari, president, on site at The Hun School, Princeton, where the firm is building a new library and academic center.

Farm facility of the Assunpink Wild Life Center of the New Jersey Department of Fish and Game in Imlaystown.

The company is currently converting an old barn on the property of the Immaculate Conception Church in Clinton Township into a classroom building,

For the Melcor Corporation on Spruce Street in Ewing Township. Scozzari just finished 10,000 square feet of new office space.

The firm is also working on an 8,000-square-foot 3-D Arts Center for the Buck County Community College. The company is building a chilled water

structure for the Trigen Energy Corporation, a 3,000-square-foot project, in downtown Trenton.

Recent project completions by the company include a new addition including seven new bays for the Plainsboro Fire Company. This was a 21,000 square-foot job.

Two projects were completed in West Amwell Township — a new 10,000-square-foot municipal building and renovations to the West Amwell Elementary School.

"Last summer we completely gutted the school building," Nick Scozzari said, "and put it back together in time for the opening of school in September. This is very important because it's a three-month process. If we missed the dates the kids would have had nowhere to go to school."

For the Bridgewater Township Board of Education, the firm completed a 22,000- square-foot addition to its Middle School and an 11,000-square-foot new section for its Crim Elementary School.

At Leisure Village West in Manchester, N.J., Scozzari built a 19,000- square-foot clubhouse which included a kitchen, bar, library, darkroom and such facilities as a gem cutting room, exercise room and "Wall Street room." Outside amenities included tennis, bocce and shuffleboard courts and an Olympic pool and clubhouse.

Scozzari said historic restoration is a specialty of the firm.

"We're very meticulous about that, and it's one of the things that have made us successful," he added.

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In its new headquarters, Scozzari said the firm's staff will include 30 tradesmen as well as 15 inside workers. "We're very careful in hiring new people in each trade – carpentry, masonry, concrete," he said. "In each, we require minimum experience of seven to ten years. Our project managers must have worked in the trade for at least 10 years."

Scozzari said that all three – his father, brother and he – have "cut our teeth in different facets of the construction industry."

"One area where we clearly separate ourselves from the others is the quality of our in-house craftsmen," he said. "We do all of the work with our own forces instead of subletting it out, as opposed to calling in a subcontractor. Quality-wise that puts us far above our competitors – our general construction service, our construction management service, our design/building service where we will actually coordinate the architect, the owner, the engineers, the approval process and lump that all in one package."

Leonard Scozzari noted that just as he and his brother started in the business when they were 8 or 9 years old, both have children who hopefully will start out "when they're old enough to push a broom on the job."