

A passion for design

Starting a construction-related business in the middle of the worst economic downturn in recent memory is not something many people in the Cayman Islands would have even contemplated. But that is exactly what Lyle Rodney Frederick and Lori McRae did in 2011 when they opened the doors to the Island's newest architectural and interior design firm, Frederick + McRae Ltd.

Born and raised in East End, Grand Cayman, Frederick is certified architect with more than 20 years experience. He was educated at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture in New York and worked in New York City and Germany before returning to Cayman.

McRae is a certified interior designer with more than 25 years experience. She was educated at Ryerson University in Toronto, where she is from. After university, she worked for a large design firm in Toronto and then worked in Bermuda before immigrating to the Cayman Islands in 1999.

The professional history between Frederick and McRae began in 2000 when they both worked at OBM International, a company for which McRae also worked in Bermuda. The two later worked together again at DDL Studio. It was while they were there that they started thinking about setting up their own shop.

"We had both dreamed of owning our own business," says Frederick. "Although the economy wasn't ideal for making a move like this, we had confidence in our abilities to carve out a place for our company in the architecture and interior design industry. So we decided to take a leap of faith."

McRae says the long history between them was a key factor. "We had known each other for 12 years and we had good synergy in our working relationship," she says. "We each know the other's strengths and weaknesses and we make a good team."

When the dynamic duo opened the doors of Frederick + McRae on 1 September, 2011 they hit the ground running with a mix of new clients and loyal clients who followed them.

McRae quickly established herself as the go-to interior designer for many companies moving into Cricket Square, Camana Bay and Governors Square, while Frederick worked with a mix of corporate and residential clients.

The firm provides an array of services, including space planning; design development; the provision of construction documents; facilitating the Building Control Unit processes required to obtain a building permit; project management and relocation management.

The assimilation of the clients' requirements into a creative design is what drives Frederick + McRae Ltd's passion for design.

"Frederick + McRae Ltd. offers creative, quality design solutions to reflect our clients' corporate image, retail identity or personal vision, and quite importantly, budget," says Frederick. "We pride ourselves on completing projects on time and on budget."

Although she specializes in corporate interior design, McRae has also had many retail clients over her years in Cayman, which recently include Bon Vivant and Silhouette at Camana Bay.

Frederick is comfortable in the realm of either commercial or residential architectural design, and his recent projects have included the new Appleby tower and several new homes, including his own in East End.

Beyond meshing in their professional philosophies, Frederick and McRae also share some of the same social philosophies. Both are long-time members of The Rotary Club of Grand Cayman, a club of which McRae served as president from 2010 to 2011. The firm has already done pro bono work to assist The Cayman Islands Cancer Society and The National Trust for the Cayman Islands.

"Rodney and I have always believed in giving back to the community," says McRae. "We've been very fortunate in our lives and in our careers, and we feel it's only right to support the Cayman Islands community in which we live and work."

When they started the business, Frederick and McRae handled all the work by themselves. By the summer of 2012, less than a year after opening, they had more than 30 active jobs and they had to consider taking on more staff.

"We decided to get our bearings over the first year before bringing any staff on board," says Frederick. "By the end of our first year we knew it was time to grow."

In the last quarter of 2012, Frederick + McRae took on three new employees, adding Sabrina Jackson and Nicole Walsh to the interior design team and graduate architect Anthony Ebanks to assist on the architectural side of the business.

"We're very proud of the new team we've put into place over the past few months and the fact that we are 100 per cent local with no work permits," says Frederick.

McRae said the firm feels it has a responsibility to nurture and



The Frederick + McRae Ltd. team includes, from left, Lyle Rodney Frederick, Lori McRae, Sabrina Jackson and Nicole Walsh. Missing from the photo is Anthony Ebanks.



The newly opened retail store, Silhouette, at Camana Bay was designed by Frederick + McRae.

develop young Caymanians who have chosen the field of architecture and interior design.

"Both Sabrina and Anthony grew up in Grand Cayman and went to the US to further their education and follow their passion for design," she says.

Working out of an open plan, loft space at Governors Square with a view that inspires creativity, McRae says the firm is excited to have the new hires on board as part of the team.

"We're developing a creative, supportive, learning environment, encouraging our staff to be the best they can be," she says. So far, Frederick + McRae's clients have liked the results.

Nick Bullmore, a partner at the new law firm Carey Olsen at the new Willow House building in Cricket Square, was pleased with the office design and fit-out services provided by Frederick + McRae.

"Their experience and professionalism ensured that the project ran smoothly," he says. "We are delighted with our new offices."

Frederick + McRae also provided services to the telecommunications company Logic at its offices at Governors Square.

"Working with Lori at Frederick + McRae made our fit-out so much easier to deal with," says Logic's Customer Care Manager Pamela Small. "They provided a high level of professionalism and their expertise in the area of design helped us accomplish our goal of providing the public and our staff members with a high-class, state-of-the-art retail centre that we all can be proud of. We are extremely happy with our new retail centre and very thankful for all the hard work and dedication that F&M provided

us. We have already recommended them to others and will continue to do so."

Cynthia Hew of Bon Vivant, Frederick + McRae's first completed project, said McRae's attention to detail and ability to work as part of a team provided the push that was needed to move the store into Camana Bay in time for the 2011 Christmas shopping season.

"It's not often that someone you work with will actually put themselves in 'your' shoes, but Lori did and continues to check in to make sure we are okay and things look and work the way we all intended," she said. "We are grateful that she took us on as her client and wish her and Rodney much continued success!"

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