

## **Brasfield & Gorrie Super Takes 18-year-old Prospect Under his Wing**

James Gilreath and Brian Seymour have a lot in common, with one exception: James has been a builder for 32 years. Brian is just getting started.

The two met in June through the CEFGA Summer Internship Program. Brian, an 18-year-old graduate of Milton High School, went to work with James, a veteran superintendent with Brasfield & Gorrie at their King's Ridge Christian School project in Alpharetta.

"We usually have college interns, so I was a little surprised when they told me I would be getting a high school student," James said. "I didn't know what to expect, but by the end of the summer I told him he could come back and work with us anytime. He's smart, dependable and he works hard."

The match was made through the CEFGA Summer Internship – a program designed to place high school students with construction companies. Students work fulltime for eight weeks during the summer. They are paid directly by the contractor. The purpose is to expose students to construction at an early age to help them make career decisions.

It worked for Brian. With unusual clarity for an eighteen-year-old, Brian knows exactly what he wants to do. He is currently enrolled at Middle Georgia College in Cochran, and plans to transfer to Georgia Southern University in the fall of 2007 to study construction management.

"I'm thinking after college I will manage a crew with a residential company and then run my own residential construction company one day," Brian says.

That sounds familiar to James, who started his career in the residential industry, but today works with one of the largest commercial general contracting companies in the Southeastern United States.

For James, construction runs in the family. In fact, he has three family members on the \$10 million King's Ridge Christian School project. Dorothy, his wife, is a job clerk. Johnny, his brother, is a foreman. And his youngest son, Tommy is an equipment operator.

"My father-in-law was a carpenter, so it was just something I knew how to do. I started out building houses in my late teens," James says. "I personally think residential is a great way to get started. You learn how to frame with wood; you learn how to read a tape and drive a nail. You just learn a lot that you might not learn in commercial construction."



(left to right) Tommy, Johnny, Dorothy and James Gilreath of Brasfield & Gorrie.



Brian Seymour (right) with his dad on a residential construction project

There was a family connection, and the construction bug bit Brian at a young age, too. He watched his dad build a house “when he was young” and decided that he wanted to “build something one day.” He worked with his brother-in-law for two summers, building houses and decided he wanted to pursue a career in construction.

And what does Brian think about commercial construction?

“I’d never worked with steel buildings and concrete. It’s a lot bigger. It takes a lot more time and effort, and there are lot more people working on the project,” Brian says. “I never understood how steel is put together and how buildings are anchored. Now I do. I enjoyed it a lot, actually.”

In fact, he’s already planning to go back to the Brasfield & Gorrie project for a few weeks during his winter college break.

“I think what CEFGA is doing is good,” said James. “If we want to get good workers, we’re going to have to go into the high schools and identify those boys and girls who are not going to college and tell them that the construction industry is a great place to be. CEFGA is doing a real good job.”

*CEFGA is a nonprofit foundation. Established by the construction industry in 1993, CEFGA connects the construction industry with the education system in Georgia. Specifically, CEFGA is building a feeder system of trained and informed students for Georgia’s construction industry. [www.cefga.org](http://www.cefga.org)*