



PROJECT 24

Executive Interview Series

Fall 2015

Spotlighting: Home Renovation Business Owner

Jennifer Hill

Employer: Creative Cabinets and Faux Finishes

Position: Company Founder and Owner

Creative Cabinets and Faux Finishes (CCFF), LLC is an Atlanta-based custom home renovation company specializing in kitchen and bathroom design and remodeling and, most notably, custom cabinet refinishing and design.

Owner Jennifer Hill founded CCFF in 2005. Acknowledging her young children were in their most formative years and striving to honor her calling as a mother, Hill sought a business venture that would allow her to 'do business' while also being present as a mom. She picked up a paint brush, and her journey began. In CCFF's first two years Hill handled most of the cabinet finishing business single-handedly, rolling and brushing countless finishes on hundreds of cabinets. Over time and driven by her passion for quality, she realized she needed to provide a more professional, seamless cabinet finish for her clients so she bought a spray gun and began spraying cabinets in her basement and on her back deck. Hill admits the spray gun caused some stares from neighbors.

Ten years later, Creative Cabinets and Faux Finishes has grown from a 'one-woman show' to a flourishing business with multiple paint crews, granite contractors, appliance vendors, tile sources, carpenters, and salespeople. CCFF considers its 'home' a 3,000 square-foot facility located in Marietta, Georgia. The space includes an open showroom allowing clients to experience the complex cabinet refinishing process firsthand, as well as obtain design consultation and advice. In 2014, CCFF launched its sister company, Creative Home Accessories, LLC, offering one-of-a-kind furniture, lighting, and home accent pieces. With hundreds of satisfied customers, CCFF received the 2013, 2014, and 2015 *Best of Houzz* award in both design and service.

Hill received her Bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism from Syracuse University. Prior to founding Creative Cabinets and Faux Finishes, Hill enjoyed a successful career in broadcasting.



16 Years Married

3 Children

**Favorite Family
Vacation Spot?**

**Watercolor-30A
Florida**



One of Creative Cabinets and Faux Finishes kitchen transformations

Humble Beginnings

Two housewives, a van, and plenty of cabinets!

As CCFF's business grew over the years, Hill realized she needed help. She asked long-time friend Susan Fossum to grab her paint brush and join her. They single-handedly removed kitchen cabinet doors, then washed, sanded, prepped, and painted them (armed with spray guns and lots of paint). The two housewives transported hundreds of freshly-finished cabinet doors and drawers in their mini-vans across Atlanta and reinstalled them in their clients' homes. The two continue working side-by-side today (but have passed their spray guns on to their paint crews).

New Crews, New Views

In 2007, CCFF contracted United Brother's Painting to take over the cabinet spraying and prepping, allowing Hill and Fossum to focus on managing the business. Business growth brought on the need for more space as Hill's basement and backyard were no longer suitable. In 2008, CCFF leased a small 500 square foot warehouse in Woodstock, Georgia. Over the next two years, CCFF expanded again, taking on two more spaces in the same facility to keep up with demand for its services.

Q: How would you define your mission as a parent?

A: Hill has made a point of focusing on the unique strengths of each of her three boys (Evan-16, Jack-12, and Sam-11). "As a parent, I strive to help each child find something he is passionate about — whether it's music, soccer, football, or art. The specific activity or interest doesn't matter, as long as each child has a 'place.' I also make it a priority to have our entire family together at dinner time. It may only be an hour, but it is our family time to talk about the day and events." Hill adds, "With three growing boys, discipline is always a challenge, but this is one area where cellphones have helped. I find if you take away a child's cellphone, there is a very, very good chance his behavior will change!"

Q: What are the biggest challenges you face in balancing demands at the office and home?

A: Hill admits the difficulty of juggling a business, clients, and family. As a result, she finds the concept of 'balance' a difficult ideal to achieve. "With the advent of texting, clients do not understand the concept of 'time off.' I receive texts at all hours of the night and on weekends. Unfortunately, it is hard to turn my phone off, as I have children who need to be able to reach me any time and that means clients can also reach me any time. Additionally, with three active children, it is impossible to be in three places at one time. As a result, I often feel pulled in three different directions—in addition to the pull from my clients. Getting a real 'break' or time off is a thing of the past."

Q: With so many different demands for your time in both your personal and professional life, how do you prioritize everything? Are there tips, techniques or habits you've developed to manage how you spend your time?

A: Recently, Hill has adopted the discipline of putting her phone in a drawer when her kids are home. It's her signal to 'unplug' and tune in to her children. Hill also admits to being an expert multi-tasker. "I often pull out my laptop at the boys' sporting practices!"



“The single
biggest
challenge
in parenting
today’s youth?
Social
media.”

- Jennifer Hill



Hill with husband Matt and sons Evan, Jack, and Sam

Q: What secrets can you share that have helped you both protect and grow your marriage while balancing career demands?

A: Hill acknowledges connecting one-on-one is critically important to her marriage. She and Matt have made it a priority to have dinner out—just the two of them—once a week. They established this ritual when their first son was a baby; their weekly dinner out is precious time and has continued 16 years later. Aside from these weekly dinners, however, Hill is honest in admitting she and Matt are in ‘survival’ mode right now. “We both understand this is a busy time in our lives and we are working towards the mutual goal of retirement as well as sending our children to college. While it is crazy at times, we do know there is an end in sight.”

Q: What is the greatest challenge in parenting today’s youth?

A: “Social media, by far, is the greatest challenge our children face. When I grew up, we went to school and came home to our families. Kids today never get away from each other. They compare each other via Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook — the list goes on. If someone is getting bullied, it doesn’t stop at school—it continues through social media. The demands of the electronic age are overwhelming. I fear for our children’s future and their ability to maintain balance.”

Q: If there’s one “life lesson” you can choose to pass on to your children, what would it be and why?

A: Hill’s father told her growing up: Love what you do and you’ll never work a day in your life. “I truly believe this,” states Hill. I am blessed to love what I do.”

“We are in
‘survival’ mode
right now.”
