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## Herrick & White Architectural Woodworkers: Crafting Custom Millwork for More than Four Decades

Herrick & White is a manufacturer of architectural woodwork, based in Cumberland, RI.

By Michelle Keller

Cumberland, RI—Herrick & White Architectural Woodworkers is a complete concept-to-install firm that for over 40 years has crafted custom architectural millwork for exclusive residences, restaurants and country clubs and on occasion, custom furniture.

Herrick & White (H&W) employs 95 craftsmen and professionals who combine state-of-the-art technology with old-world craftsmanship for superior results in their 55,000 square-foot manufacturing facility. The company purchases over 100,000 board feet annually in mixed Hardwoods. Among a wide variety of species, and the standard Poplar in FAS grade (4/4 to 16/4), recent client favorites include Rift White Oak and American Black Walnut (quarter-sawn and plain-sawn) 4/4 to 12/4.

Herrick & White began when Steve Herrick and Ken White opened their two-man woodworking shop in a small garage in 1977. Gary, one of the first employees hired back in 1978 (and now one of the three partners who share company ownership) recalled that the founders “each brought a deep passion for woodworking and a commitment to craftsmanship and quality. They both still have a hand in the trade today.”

In 2007, Herrick & White’s ownership was transferred to the current owners. Gary Rousseau (Executive Vice President), Ken Bertram (President) and Steve Brannigan (Chief Financial Officer) who have 90 years of combined experience at H&W there and each moved up from entry level to executive positions. They continue to build on the founders’

values of craftsmanship and quality while adding their own management styles.

The three partners have each worked in several positions in the shop and office and managed different departments. “We have traveled different journeys to reach management at Herrick & White. What we have in common is that we



The company purchases over 100,000 board feet of high-grade Hardwoods per year, including Poplar, Rift White Oak and American Black Walnut.

were once young apprentices who made the most of every offered opportunity. With guidance, and by trying out several positions throughout the company, we each found our own niche," said Gary.

Although five years apart, Steve explained that both he and Gary were hired as co-op students from the same high school cabinetry program. "We are passionate about continuing this company's tradition of giving vocational students the same opportunities that we received. Ten percent of our workforce is less than three years out of school. Members of our Management Team are on Advisory Boards with three regional vocational programs. Our interns and employees have access to in-house training, workshops, seminars, and college tuition reimbursement. We began a job shadowing program for people interested in trying other positions."

Similarly, Ken collaborates with Skills for R.I.'s Future, a non-profit that matches underemployed and unemployed people with local companies, and acts as an intermediary between public schools and the business community.

Steve explained, "Our success can be credited to our prestigious clients, great team members, and our skilled employees. We look for the best craftsmen and do our best to treat everyone like we want to be treated when we were in their shoes -- a fair pay for a good day's work."

When asked what sets H&W apart from others, Gary said, "Our clients are the architects, builders and designers who entrust us with architectural millwork and cabinetry for their customers' projects. We proudly build long-term relationships with our clients through honesty, integrity, and superior products. We vowed from the beginning to aim high, to continue our award-winning craftsmanship, and to meet customers' expectations... which we truthfully hope to exceed."

H&W's Project Managers carefully schedule each project throughout the entire process. Engineers efficiently turn clients' conceptual drawings into detailed shop drawings which get client approval prior to production. Woodworkers mill rough lumber into mouldings and semi-finished com-



Company representatives state that Herrick & White is known for going above and beyond for their clients.



This fireplace mantel and assorted fixtures were produced by Herrick & White.

*Please turn to page 60*

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Steve Brannigan, Corporate Controller and Owning Partner  
Herrick & White Architectural Woodworkers

## **HERRICK & WHITE** *Continued from page 33*

ponents. Fabrication work groups of cabinetmakers transform those parts into finely crafted architectural woodwork according to specifications. Their gifted Finish team then mixes and applies custom paints and stains within their five spray booths in a positive-pressurized environment attaining a variety of finishes from the simple to lacquers and high gloss hand buffed urethanes with 95 percent reflectivity.

When asked what makes Herrick & White appealing to their clients, Ken replied, "Our projects range from small and simple to grand and complex. We have the experience and resources to solve any design or construction challenge. In the recent past, a client asked if we could accomplish a \$3,000,000 millwork project in three months with only conceptual sketches and design drawings. We accepted the challenge and executed the project as required. I like to think that we are known for going above and beyond to get the job done on time with exceptional quality."

Faced with the recession of 2008, the partners thoroughly re-evaluated the organization. As President, Ken tapped into many resources, sought expert advice from business and industry peer-to-peer groups, and applied for grants ranging from employee training to building improvements and reorganized the plant to increase ef-

iciency. The partners embraced Continuous Improvement, strengthened the entire company through self-audits and adopted Lean Manufacturing.

Herrick & White's spirit of improvement has enhanced employee morale. "We still seek out employee feedback and implement suggestions," said Gary. "We began a profit-sharing program, air conditioned the plant, and established a no-layoff policy - which has been effective for 7 years running. Also, plans are underway to install a solar array by the end of 2018."



**Custom millwork is the company's specialty.**

Looking forward, the three partners anticipate a day when they will hang up their tool belts and pass along the torch of stewardship at Herrick & White. For now, they are preparing the next group of employees to take the helm and ensure that the legacy begun by the founders endures for future generations of woodworkers.

Ken wrapped up with, "At the end of the day, we go home knowing that Herrick & White is a company that appreciates and respects our employees, while delivering excellent craftsmanship and professionalism in every project." ■

For more information visit  
[www.herrick-white.com](http://www.herrick-white.com)  
and Instagram: [herrick\\_white](https://www.instagram.com/herrick_white).



From baseboards to ceilings, Herrick & White can manufacture millwork from assorted Hardwoods, both domestic and imported.



This curved vanity was the result of the application of Herrick & White's state-of-the-art millwork manufacturing skill and technology.



Herrick & White employs over 95 craftsmen and professionals.