

The Business Diversity Development office will be highlighting the great work of some of our certified companies over the coming weeks. We hope you will enjoy getting to know them as much as we have.

The Williams Sisters of HVAC: Joy Williams and Jane Molina



Joy Williams and Jane Molina, owners
Williams Heating and Cooling, LLC.

Men have long dominated the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) repair service industry, leading to the surprise of many homeowners to learn a female-owned HVAC company operates in St. Louis.

Sisters Joy Williams and Jane Molina are no strangers to the HVAC industry. In fact they grew up in it. Their father owned J. Williams Heating & Cooling Co., a mostly residential company based in St. Louis County for 21 years. In the last four years of the company, larger mechanical contract work was added to the list of services.

The Williams sisters sharpened their skills early in the operation. Jane managed the residential customer base and Joy worked in marketing.

When the sisters noticed a decline in the operations, they started to worry about their futures. Like many in business, the 2008 stock market crash took its toll on the company. More trouble emerged when attempting to grow the company's non-residential commercial base. Joy recalls, "It was just bad timing to try and grow the company in a bad economy."

But it was a good time to have a heart-to-heart talk with their father. Jane and Joy informed their father of trends in the industry that showed a more lucrative business in residential HVAC.

When the company closed and their father retired, the sisters took all their knowledge and what they had learned from the men in the family and started their own company, Williams Heating & Cooling in 2011. "My sister and I always wanted to go into business together, we just didn't know what outfit that would be," said Jane.

"With our father's blessing and the right team we felt very confident that we could go out on our own and start a company from scratch," said Jane.

The sisters have been on their own for four years. As co-owner, Jane serves as the Office Manager overseeing all the in-house functions of invoicing and pricing, answering the phones, work schedules, and customer service requests. The company employs five technicians and operates five service vehicles.

Not only are the sisters growing their business, they are growing their families. They have five



Mike Harris with Williams Heating and Cooling repairs homeowner's furnace.

children between them, ages five and younger. Joy remarks, she recently had to move car seats to make room for sheet metal to take to a job site.

Joy is the more social of the two sisters and networks to build the client base. She serves as the Marketing and Business Development Manager. She attended the March 27th Business Diversity Forum at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. "I saw a lot of people who I did business with in my dad's company who are in union companies that we may not be able to do business with as a non-union outfit, but everybody has a house and need heating and cooling services," she said.



Matt Northway with Williams Heating and Cooling installs two ton air conditioners.

The Forum provided a valuable networking opportunity to meet face-to-face with key Airport decision makers. Williams Heating and Cooling was recently certified as a minority and women-owned business through Lambert's Business Diversity Development Office.

"Our strategy was to establish our business first and gain respect from our employees as business owners before applying for the certification," said Joy.

The sisters offer this advice to anyone seeking certification. "If you are organized and have your financial books together, you will find that the process is

fairly streamlined," they concurred.

Joy and Jane say they are excited about growing their business through the certification process and moving into more into light commercial HVAC. Currently, their business is 70% residential.



Joy and Joan with their dad James Williams.

More information on certification and upcoming events may be found at www.flystl.com/businessdiversity or by calling Business Diversity Development at 314-426-8111.

