ON SOLID GROUND

At Cornerstone Construction, home building is a family legacy shaped by faith, craftsmanship, and long-term trust.

Words by Anna Duncan Owens | Images by Al Blanton and courtesy Cornerstone Construction

When Corey Noe talks about Cornerstone Construction, the company his father, Kevin, founded in 1996, he does not begin with square footage, lake lots, or custom finishes. He begins with the foundation: faith, family, and the values that have carried the business from the Alabama Gulf Coast to Smith Lake.

"It's named Cornerstone because Christ is the cornerstone of our company," Corey says. "That's the foundation of our family and also the company."

Kevin started the business in the McCalla area, following a construction thread that had already run through the family for generations. His own grandfather worked in construction, giving the family an early connection to the trade that would later become Cornerstone.

Not long after, the family moved to Orange Beach, where the company began building on a larger scale. For Corey, that is where the work became personal. Home-schooled as a child, he started framing houses at 13, often driving to job sites in the neighborhood on a four-wheeler with his toolbox loaded on the back.

The Gulf Coast became its own kind of classroom. Building in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores meant working under strict codes, learning from hurricanes, and seeing how wind and weather test every part of a house. After Hurricane Ivan in 2004, Corey watched the coastal building industry move toward higher standards, including the push for fortified homes.

In 2010, Corey's parents moved to Smith Lake, a place already familiar to the family through grandparents who had owned property there for decades. Corey stayed on the coast, working for the Gulf Shores Fire Department while continuing to run Cornerstone projects on his days off. Then, in 2020, he and his wife, Rebecca, felt called to move their family to the lake.

Kevin had already built Cornerstone's reputation around Smith Lake, and Corey brought new structure, technology, and processes without changing the principles behind the work.

Since 2020, the company has grown nearly 500 percent. That growth is humbling, but it has also made the company's standards even more important.

Around Smith Lake, residential construction does not have the same level of code enforcement as in many municipalities, so Cornerstone created its own inspection process, treating projects as if a building department were overseeing them. Kevin now spends much of his time inspecting job sites, making sure the work not only meets current building code but often goes beyond it.

"In building a house, people are looking for a sense of security and safety for their family," Corey says. "Trust is part of that."

Trust certainly is part of that. Corey knows many people come into construction with concerns about fairness, pricing, communication, and whether they can truly trust the person building one of the largest investments they will ever make.

"Somebody's trusting you to build a million-dollar home," Corey says. "They've got to trust you, and it's got to be behavior that


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creates that trust."

Repeat business has become one measure of that trust. Some clients have built, remodeled, and returned over the years, forming relationships that last well beyond a single project. Corey says some customers have become friends–people they still see, go hunting with, or keep in touch with long after the work is done.

"There's more to this than just money," he says.

That belief also shapes the team inside Cornerstone. Corey sees something in the company that reminds him of his time in fire service: a brotherhood, a shared mission, and people willing to do what needs to be done. From the person sweeping the floor to the project managers, the accounting department, designers, and crews in the field, he believes every role matters.

The family piece extends through the business as well. Corey's mother helped shape the showroom and design side of the company. His youngest sister received her architecture degree and become a licensed architect. At different points, the work has drawn in nearly the whole family.

Over time, Cornerstone has expanded beyond new construction. When Corey moved to Smith Lake, he realized there was only so much land left around the water. Thus, remodeling became less of a side offering and more of a major part of Cornerstone's future.

Today, Cornerstone does more remodeling projects than new builds, transforming older lake houses into homes that fit the people living in them now. Some clients are updating homes they built years ago. Others buy for the lot, then trust Cornerstone to reshape the house into something entirely new.

To support that work, the company has added drafting, design, virtual renderings, construction, remodeling, and maintenance services, especially for out-of-town clients who need someone nearby to care for their lake home. Corey has also brought in digital tools that allow homeowners to follow daily updates, photos, schedules, and weekly summaries from wherever they are.

The tools may be modern, but the purpose behind them is simple: communicate clearly, work honestly, and take care of people well.

Years from now, Corey hopes Cornerstone is known for raising the standard of residential construction in north Alabama. He wants families to feel safe in the homes they build, clients to feel respected through the process, and employees to leave better than they came.

At Cornerstone Construction, the work has never been about building houses alone. It is about faith strong enough to build on, family willing to carry it forward, and craftsmanship meant to stand long after the keys are handed over. **78**













