



The Sowards also credit their success to surrounding themselves with trusted professionals. “The best advice we’ve been given is to make sure you know and trust three individuals—your banker, your insurance agent, and a good accountant. We’ve tried to do that,” Keith says.

Linda emphasizes another cornerstone of their business: honesty. “We believe in being honest and fair with all our customers. If there’s ever a problem with a job, we’ll go out and fix it. That’s just who we are.”

Today, daughters Jess and Melissa are gradually taking over the reins. “We’ve been very lucky,” says Jess. “My sister and I share the same values and financial philosophy as our parents, so the transition hasn’t been difficult. They trust us, and we trust them to do what’s best for each other and the business.”

Melissa plays a critical role behind the scenes. She is responsible for accounts receivable, accounting, and taxes—ensuring the financial health and compliance of the business. Her attention to detail and steady hand has helped Sowards Glass maintain its strong financial foundation through every phase of growth.

Jess, who leads hiring and personnel relations, is focused on building a strong team for the future. “We look for people who genuinely enjoy the construction industry,” she says. “From there depending on their experience level, we put them on a 2- to 4-year training track. It’s about investing in people who want to grow with us.”

Succession planning, they’ve learned, requires flexibility. “One of the most important elements is having a willingness to change and adapt,” Jess notes.

For Keith, one of the hardest parts of growth was learning to let go. “Learning to delegate was tough,” he admits. “But it was inevitable. The business is bigger—and more automated—than we could have ever imagined.”

Still, one thing that’s hard to replace is Keith’s passion for the industry. “I’ve loved going to work every day,” he says. And that passion won’t be lost. Jess, who thrives on putting the right people in the right places, has no doubt she’ll find a part-time role for her dad—one that allows him to keep sharing his love for the craft and the company he built.

At Silver Lake Bank, we’re honored to be part of the Sowards Glass journey and proud to support businesses that reflect the best of our community: faith, family, and a commitment to doing things the right way.