2018 Lumber Person of the Year
Margaret Price
Ridgefield Supply Company

Margaret Price is used to competing with men as equals. As the owner of Ridgefield Supply Company in Ridgefield, Connecticut, she sits in the boss’ chair every day in a male-dominated industry. Outside of work, she’s a competitive equestrian, a sport in which men and women compete directly on the same field of play. She’s found success in both the lumber yard and the stables: in addition to being chosen as LDAC Lumber Person of the Year, she was the subject of a feature story in *Sidelines*, an equestrian magazine, in September of this year.

The Lumber Person of the Year award is something of a family legacy for Margaret. Her father, Louis Price, was awarded the very same honor in 1999. Ridgefield Supply is also a family legacy. She purchased the company from her father in 2011, the third generation of her family to own it, and the sixth generation of ownership in the company’s history, which stretches back to 1883.

“I was always involved in the business with my mom and dad as a child and teenager,” she recalls. “Usually I was ‘child labor’ when we did our physical inventory or did data entry when needed.”

She eventually went on to Wheaton College, where she received a degree in political science and international relations, and considered law school while working as a paralegal in New York City. However, a lesson from her days of data entry at mom and dad’s store came back to her and set her on a different path. “I learned at a young age I wanted nothing to do with administrative work,” she says. “I returned after a very brief stay in New York to work full-time for my dad. I quickly realized the values my dad taught me in life and in business were not quite the same in a major New York law firm. I knew it was not a fit for me.”

As for the family business, “I truly fell in love with the industry and the people I met along the way,” Margaret says. That’s where she’s been ever since, and she quickly emerged as a young leader who doesn’t shy away from a challenge, whether it’s broadening her education or revamping the business for changing times.

Professional growth is something Margaret has pursued throughout her career, often looking beyond the family lumber yard for opportunities. “My dad allowed me to spend time working for Kleer Lumber, both as a road warrior and successfully achieving their SCS Certification for Recycled Content,” she remembers. “It was a wonderful introduction into manufacturing and distribution channels.” She also became an NRLA Certified Building Materials Specialist in 2003.

Despite her long family history in the lumber industry, Margaret remains focused on what lies ahead. During the downturn in the housing market, she saw an opportunity to modernize the lumber yard, so as to be ahead of the game when the market looked up again. She sees more change on the horizon. “We cannot be blind to the future of our industry,” she says. “I strongly believe that we are going to see more change that will be technology-driven rather than relationship-driven.”

A few years after Margaret took the reins at Ridgefield Supply, she also decided to get back in the saddle. She had ridden horses competitively throughout her youth, but stopped after college. In 2015, after more than 15 years out of the sport, she returned to training and competing with two horses, Ciao and RF Smoking Gun.

“My horses motivated me professionally in business to be successful so I could pay for it,” she told *Sidelines* magazine. “It was just something I needed to do in order to balance my life.”

Margaret exemplifies the next generation of leadership for this industry. She was involved with NYLFE for many years and was chosen as NRHA Young Retailer of the Year in 2004 and one of ProSales’ Four Under 40 in 2015. She also works hard to support and help develop her colleagues and peers in the industry. Margaret was involved in the NRLA’s effort to set up LIFT, which offers financial assistance to member employees impacted by natural disasters, and served on the board of the Lumber and Building Material Dealers Foundation.