

**Central New York  
Retail Lumber Dealers Association  
2014 Lumber Person of the Year:**

**Jonas Kelly**

JAY-K Independent Lumber Corp.



As the grandson of JAY-K Independent Lumber Corp. founder Joseph Kelly, 2014 Central New York Retail Lumber Dealers Association (CNYRLDA) LPOTY, Jonas Kelly, co-owner of JAY-K, has worked at the family lumber and building material business since 1983 when he was 13. He worked there in the summertime during high school and college.

“Working with my father Chris and Uncle

Kevin was a huge benefit. They had the vision to grow JAY-K to the entity it is today. They also imparted their wisdom and business savvy to both my cousin Dean and me. I am forever indebted to them.”

After receiving his Bachelors of Arts degree from Hobart College in 1989, and working for Somerville Lumber for a year, Kelly returned to the family business.

Jay-K Independent Lumber Corp.—founded by Kelly’s grandfather and run by his father and uncle for years—faced its toughest competition when Home Depot and Lowe’s moved into their neighborhood during the late 1990s. Kelly helped JAY-K maintain its staying power by implementing a plan with his cousin, uncle, and father to fight the invasion.

“People always ask, ‘What changes did you make?’” Kelly says. “The answer is: Instead of homeruns, we made a thousand base hits.”

The family decided to avoid radical changes (such as becoming strictly a lumberyard) and simply enhanced the store’s strengths: customer service, employee satisfaction, and keeping abreast of current industry trends.

Like many lumberyards, JAY-K has many long-term employees. “Those employees, especially when I was a kid, used to tell me stories about my grandfather, and how he would demand that customers be

treated. I’d also regularly have customers tell me stories about my grandfather and how he helped them out with building their house. Those stories stuck with me and certainly provided foundation for working at JAY-K.”

Kelly has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, and has participated in the United Way Young Leaders Program. He has also chaired Young Leaders United volunteer day at the Thea Bowman House, is a board member of Christmas in April, a board member of Oneida County Habitat for Humanity, a former president of Oneida County Habitat for Humanity.

Kelly’s service to our industry has been tireless. He has been a CNYRLDA board member since 1994 and still current, President of the Central New York Lumber Dealers Association from 2003 – 2005, NRLA’s legislative committee since 2007 and still current, NRLA Membership Committee, and presided over the entire association in 2014 as NRLA Chair during its exciting expansion to affiliate with the New Jersey Building Materials Dealers Association.

He is married to Heidi Jones, his lifelong friend and sweetheart, and enjoys the company of three black Labrador Retrievers. In his spare time, he is an avid skier, enjoys competitive sailboat racing, and fly fishing.

The Central New York Retail Lumber Dealers Association  
proudly recognizes  
Jonas Kelly  
as its  
2014 Lumber Person of the Year.