We often speak of the “next generation” of leaders in the lumber industry in the abstract, but Nolan Levine is that next generation.

In the case of Fallsburg Lumber Company, Nolan is the fifth generation, to be exact. When he graduated high school in 1998, the company founded by his great-great-grandfather was already 90 years old and well into its fourth generation of the Levine family.

Despite the generational span, Nolan entered the industry much like those before him.

“I got my start stocking shelves as a kid, and then working in the yard loading and unloading trucks in my teens, and driving the small trucks in high school and college,” he recalls.

A scholar-athlete at Fallsburg High School, Nolan went on to study finance and marketing at the Binghamton University School of Management, graduating in 2002. During college he spent two summers interning for Bear Stearns, but returned to the family business.

It’s the sense of tradition, honesty, integrity, and serving something greater than one’s own ambitions that keeps him committed to Fallsburg Lumber. Of course, he’s had some great examples from which to draw inspiration.

The Fallsburg Fire Company (of which Nolan is now a member) purchased its very first truck in 1927 with a $750 donation from Fallsburg Lumber. During World War II, when pretty much all goods and resources were directed at the war effort, Nolan’s great-grandfather closed the business and went to work for the post office. “This was because he was extremely honest and would not operate on the black market,” Nolan explains. “This was passed on to both my grandfather and my father, who both taught me the importance of being honest and working hard to get ahead.”

The business has grown by leaps and bounds during Nolan’s still-young career. “Over the last 18 years we’ve grown about eight times in volume,” he says. That includes purchasing multiple lots surrounding the lumber yard, more than doubling the truck fleet and growing the staff from ten to nearly three dozen.

Nolan’s own accomplishments have kept pace with the business. The Sullivan County Democrat news publication chose him as one of its “up and comers in our business community” for its 2014 Young Professionals list. (His mother and father, as well as his aunt and uncle, took out ads in the issue congratulating him.) He joined the MHLDA board in 2006 and rose through the ranks to serve as president from 2016-2018. He also served as a Northeast Young Lumber Executives trustee representing Mid-Hudson from 2006-2012.

Despite all his success in business, it should perhaps come as no surprise that family is what’s most important to Nolan. And here too, he has thrived. He’s been married to his wife, Natasha, for 11 years, gushing that “like a fine wine, she gets better with age.” Four years ago, they moved from Fallsburg to Callicoon, New York. Together they have two children, son Braydan, 7, and daughter Arya, 4. “Everything I do moving forward is for the three of them,” he says, adding, “I am proud of the fact that both of my children are better looking and smarter than their father.”

Although significantly younger than many recipients of this award, Nolan’s take on the industry is very much in line with his elders – specifically the premium he places on relationships.

“There are a lot of things that keep me engaged in this industry. First and foremost, would be that it is a people’s business,” he explains. “It’s these critical relationships that I cherish on all levels; they’re what keep me grounded and give me the will to succeed.”

As the lumber industry looks to its younger generations to carry on not only the everyday work, but also the decades-spanning legacies of family-owned lumber yards like Fallsburg, it can be confident in emerging leaders like Nolan Levine. The lessons passed down between the generations of his family continue to inform his life and career in his role as vice president of the company.

He strives to uphold the long family tradition of honesty and integrity in both his professional and personal lives. “I would say that in life I have learned that the best I can be is me. What I mean is that we should all try to be the best version of ourselves,” he says. “I always said I would rather be considered a better person than I am a business man.”

Fortunately, he has proven himself adept at both.