



Tom Wilmot

Chairman of the Board Wilmorite Corporation

*"You will never achieve big results in your life without
consistent and persistent action."*

Les Hewitt

Tom Wilmot's journey to the top began at a very young age when he first grasped the values of independent thinking. Today he's known for being a mall developer, and with buildings all over the east coast, this is certain to be his long-standing legacy. However, this didn't spring up overnight. It never would have happened had Tom not prepared the fertile soil of independent thought and risk-taking that would allow his ideas to one day bear fruit. The story of his success goes hand in hand with his philosophical development.

From a very young age, Tom was no stranger to hard work. His father had many business interests, but was primarily in the real estate and construction business. Further, the family grew up on a farm and his father was a strict disciplinarian. When he gave an order, it was to be interpreted as law. While Tom certainly respected his father and the power of the businesses that he had built up, he credits this authoritarian approach to parenting with instilling the need for independent thinking in him. Ironically, it is that same deep-seated thinking that would one day expand the family business beyond its boundaries and into the multi-million dollar enterprise that it is today.

In addition to his psychological development as a far-reaching thinker in response to his father's strictness, Tom was also introduced to the value of a strong work ethic. Living on a farm, he always had plenty of chores to do after school, and they would often keep him busy until the sun went down. In order to give himself a temporary reprieve from this labor, Tom sought out an escape in the form of... more work. He took a part time job in construction, which would prove to be the second cornerstone in shaping his unique career.

While working in construction, Tom marveled at how each job required a huge number of skilled specialists. From the laborers to the masons, Tom worked alongside each of them and learned their trade. By the time he had been on the construction job several months, he found himself enamored with the tangible, finished buildings that construction work offered as a testament to a job well done. Though he had always planned to go to work for the family business, Tom knew then and there that he wanted to be intimately involved in construction.

He entered Syracuse University in 1966, where he got his degree in Civil Engineering. His first plan was to be an architect and to do the actual design work on buildings. He quickly realized that he lacked the technical drawing ability to keep up with the others in the class - and this was well before the days of computer assisted design programs. Not willing to totally forsake his dream to be involved in construction, Tom decided to go into the more theoretical side of things and that's how he came to get his degree in Civil Engineering.

The very day after he graduated from Syracuse in 1970, Tom went back to the family business in order to go to work. Though it wasn't quite what he imagined, he felt the desire to help out where he was needed and began working in the field. It was only a short matter of time before he was promoted to the position of an assistant estimator and began to take on more and more responsibility.

In 1978, Tom's uncle, who was intimately involved with work in the family business, had a heart attack. Tom was suddenly left with a lot more responsibility than he had ever handled before. He was only 27 years old at the time, but was now expected to perform the duties that had previously been handled by his uncle – responsibilities on the level of a senior vice president.

Just two short years later, Tom's own father would die of cancer and Tom's responsibility to the family business would find itself redoubled once more. It being the late 1970's, the economy was falling on bad times as well making matters especially difficult for Tom.

However, being no stranger to independent thinking thanks to his upbringing, and being equally familiar with risk-taking and hard work, Tom decided to totally redefine the family business that he was now head of. He imagined the business as a small development firm, a place where he could flex his civil engineering muscle on construction projects such as mall development. The bad economy put a damper on things with interest rates in the neighborhood of 18-20%, but Tom nevertheless persevered.

Tom bought the Danbury Connecticut Fairgrounds for a sum of 25 million dollars. Considering the terrible state of the economy at that time and the high interest on his loans, this meant an incredibly high degree of risk for Tom. If he hadn't managed to make a success out of this investment, he stood to lose literally everything he had.

As Tom puts it, he hardly even thought of it as radical, risk-taking behavior at the time; it was just what he wanted to do.

“When you're young, you don't necessarily see the risks, you just take them. It's a roll of the dice... a gamble...”

Tom developed his first mall on that land and met with a great deal of success. Since then, he has gradually built his business up, buying larger and larger plots of land, and

designing and planning more and more intricate shopping mall projects. Today, he is known as a successful mall developer.

Nowadays, Tom has four grown children. Three of them have joined him in the family business, with one still in school. Although they work for the company, it should come as no surprise that their father has instilled them all with a sense of the importance of autonomous thinking. **Even within the context of the family business, they always strive to make their own individual mark and to leave behind their own unique impression on whatever deals they are a part of.** Having imparted the values that led to his own unparalleled success to his children, it seems certain to say that Tom's success will continue to live on for many generations to come, as a testament to the power of individualistic thought and solid work ethic.