

By Charlee Beasor



Sprague Company Hotel Developers

GOING FOR THE 'WOW' FACTOR

"Each hotel I've ever built, I try to make it the best looking design. When you walk into the hotel, you go, 'Wow, this is a nice Hampton Inn.' I want the 'Wow' factor."

*Janeen Sprague
founder, owner and CEO
www.spraguehotels.com*

At your service:

- 700 employees
- 10 properties around Central Indiana, including Columbus/Edinburgh, Greenwood, Seymour, Indianapolis/Greenwood and Fishers; a Noblesville property to open in 2016
- Founded in 1990 as Choice Inns, Inc.; headquartered in Columbus
- Owner of the No. 1 Hilton property in the state, located in Columbus; owner of the first Holiday Inn Express ever built

Taking in the scenery:

Founder and CEO Janeen Sprague has added design elements into her Columbus properties that pay tribute to the renowned and unique architecture dotting the area's landscape. The Hilton Garden Inn includes an individually-pieced mosaic tile that features the North Christian Church and its recognized spire.

"You walk in and you're like, 'Whoa.' Because Columbus is very well-known for the architecture. I try to live up to that," she says.

Keeping a smile on:

One of Sprague's philosophies is: Take care of your employees, and they take care of you. Several of her team members have been with the company for more than 15 years. And when one is honored with a Lt. Governor's Hoosier Hospitality Award, everyone celebrates.

"I think that's why I have employees as long as I've had. It's not just my hotel. It's their hotel. We celebrate the things we accomplish; and the things we don't do well, we're hard on ourselves, but we go forward. You can't look back. You've just got to keep looking forward," she notes.

Surviving the downturn:

The company opened its first two full-service Hilton Garden Inn properties in 2008 and 2009, during a severe recession. A mix of financial savvy (being "known to be kind of like a squirrel for money)," Sprague acknowledges, "perseverance and tenacity" and a "great team" helped the company survive the hard times.

The Hilton Garden Inn in Columbus is the No. 1 rated Hilton in the state.

