

## GBCC CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce has implemented three goals in our new strategic plan. Two of our goals are to attract and serve a diverse group of members from all industries representing businesses in Greater Bethesda and to grow awareness of the Chamber among both members and the public.

Living up to these principles, we invite you to celebrate Black History Month with us through our third annual member spotlight series. This special feature helps our communities learn more about some of its leaders and their impacts they make every day.

Today, we would like you to get to know James Lewis, Client Advisor of Paradigm Homes

[Paradigm Homes](#) is a Full-Service, Custom Design-Build Firm that has served many families and has played a key role in reinventing older and newer communities for today's home buyer. Using the Design-Build Method, we assist families that want to Build Custom. Paradigm Homes offers a variety of services which include: Custom Homes, Custom Additions, Custom Renovations, and a host of other Consulting Services. Many of our Addition and Renovation projects arise in established, planned communities, whereas our Custom, ground-up construction, Homes can be found all over the areas we serve.

Our clients are partners in the entire process, from concept to completion. From the very beginning and to the very end, our Paradigm Brand Promise shines through: "On Time, On Budget; You'll love 100% of your home, or we'll make it right". Our Paradigm Process helps us execute on this promise and revolves entirely around the client. We understand that there are literally thousands of considerations when it comes to the Custom Home Building Process, and we're here to help make custom easy.

Our company's success has come from putting the right people in the right seats and from remaining client-focused throughout every project, we Design & Build. Internally, we call this our "Secret Sauce". Putting the right people in the right seats, includes onboarding team members that have a heart of service to others. One of our Core Values is [Creating Lasting Impact](#) which starts with an attitude of – We Care – which we believe allows us to build lasting client and industry-partner relationships while we build lasting projects. Even before Paradigm Homes Team members become Paradigm Homes Team members, they are aware of how their contribution to the team will support our client-families locally through Paradigm Homes and our client-families abroad through Paradigm Foundation.

[Paradigm Foundation](#) was launched in February 2014 and it is our initiative to do more with our passion for building – by addressing the physical needs of the ultra-poor; those who lack the basic necessity of a shelter. Our efforts are centered on increasing dignified living by serving families in need. We currently have teams building in Brazil, Central African Republic, Dominican Republic and Kenya. By Summer 2023 we will have completed our 50<sup>th</sup> home! [Here's the foundation's mission](#) in case you'd like to learn more about Paradigm Foundation and about how every client that completes their Custom Home Project with Paradigm Homes is supporting the ultra-poor as well.

In addition to his work with Paradigm Homes and Paradigm Foundation, James Lewis owns other businesses, in transportation and logistics, brokered technology and he redevelops row homes in the DMV with a primary focus area in his hometown, Baltimore City, with a double bottom line in mind. This double bottom line simply includes not losing money, while renovating and rehabbing rundown properties in the East and West Baltimore neighborhoods he grew up in. James joined Paradigm Homes

after many years in Sales and Service, both corporately and in the community. What led him to Paradigm Homes was his desire to serve a higher purpose, while working professionally so that he could be an example to his 5 children without sacrificing values centered on the care of others.

**We asked James three questions on leadership and life goals. Read his responses below.**

1. As you look back over your life, at what point did you begin to think of yourself as a leader?

At age 12, my mother almost succumbed to her surgery; This forced me to grow up really fast. I remember walking 5 blocks each way to make full market (complete our weekly grocery shopping) for me and my younger brother. I also had to wake myself up on time and travel using public transport from Baltimore City to Baltimore County and then back from Baltimore County to Baltimore City every day for months until my mother was able to resume her role as the head of our household. In retrospect, this was my introduction to leadership in a very real way. It taught me a value I've never forgotten since that time which is if you stay ready, you'll never have to worry about being ready. At age 14, my mother encouraged me to own a quality that I believe every leader has in their personal and professional character: Accountability. She did this by encouraging me to get a job if there were things I wanted beyond the scope of my needs instead of having an expectation for someone else to provide for me. I've been working ever since I was 14 years old and 1 month and I believe these lessons at ages 12 and 14 were the initial moments in my life that I began to think of myself as a leader. What I didn't know at the time, was how my mother's example of leadership, even with modest means, in the years that preceded her surgery when I was 12, prepared me for the leadership opportunities that were ahead. Special thanks to my mother for being my first example of exceptional leadership.

2. Do you have a vision that guides your body of work? If so, has it changed over time or remain the same?

Absolutely! My vision that guides my body can be summed up by a personal mantra I live by: "Serving is a privilege and I do so at the pleasure of all who give me the opportunity to do so". Over the years, like many others, I've made Vision Boards, and Goal lists etc. It took me quite a few years to notice a pattern in the year over year unfulfilled items of interest as they related to the fulfilled items of interest. In 2013, I realized I was unbalanced almost to a fault. My professional interests were valued above my personal interests which can be summed up more simply by saying, I was never home with my children, although I was always out and about, busy doing something else I found meaningful. Fast-forwarding to the last five years, I've learned how to serve in harmony personally and professionally, and I'm blessed to take this skill and curate an experience for my clients that is memorable and balanced when they are building their dream home or embarking on their Custom Addition/Renovation project. Our clients are Our Family and I'm able to blend my personal and my professional family with the work that I do in the Custom Design-Build space. I'm grateful for this Win-Win opportunity.

3. Does the work you do now play a part in the legacy you wish to leave behind? If not, describe what tools you need to help you achieve your goals.

Yes, the work I do now plays a part in the legacy I wish to leave behind. Curating an experience that's catered to every client and their individual needs while simultaneously partnering with clients to bring their dream home to reality is service, well-executed in my opinion. There's a well-known quote from

Mark Twain that I live by, ““Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” I’m passionate about Real Estate. I’m especially passionate about knowing who I’m serving, in what capacity and to what end goal. Living a life of fulfillment with my work, which I happen to dedicate quite a bit of time to, allows me to live out my core value (Creating Lasting Impact) by being of service to others – personal and professional family.

There’s no way I can achieve my goals fully on my own. My current goal is to grow back our business at Paradigm Homes into my resident area, Montgomery County. 75% of our business in other markets, especially our largest service area, Northern Virginia, comes through referrals from past clients and through inter-industry referrals. Spreading the word about Paradigm Homes as a different kind of Custom Builder, one that cares about you and your family while we partner with you to Design & Build a high-quality Custom Home will hopefully help us meet our goal of service to others in Montgomery, County Maryland and beyond.