

# a team player

## CURTIS PURVIS WINS THE BEST OF THE BEST AWARD

by Krista Berns

When Curtis Purvis, superintendent for Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing, Farmers Branch, Texas, accepted *Professional Roofing's* annual Best of the Best Award during NRCA's 129th Annual Convention in February, he deflected attention away from himself, telling attendees: "Chamberlin Roofing is a team, and this award is for us."

The team concept seems to be one of Purvis' main beliefs regarding his role at Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing.

"He genuinely cares about the guys he's in charge of and believes it's a team," says Larry Johnson, senior project manager for roofing at Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing. "He gets that concept—that everybody's important."

That attitude likely was one of the reasons The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress' MVP Task Force presented Purvis with the Best of the Best Award; the award is an extension of the Alliance's Most Valuable Player (MVP) Awards. OMG Roofing Products Inc., Agawam, Mass., and *Professional Roofing* co-sponsor the award.

"Receiving this award is a great accomplishment for an individual," says Tim Rainey, president of Supreme Systems Inc., Dallas, and MVP Task Force chairman. "It was an honor to review the nominees this year and a pleasure to welcome Curtis Purvis into the elite group of the Best of the Best. We are impressed with the time Curtis devotes to charities, as well as his leadership on the roof every day. The roofing industry no longer can be defined simply as someone yielding a hammer but great people contributing to the community in many ways."





## Finding a path

Purvis grew up in the Farmers Branch area and had an active childhood, spending his time fishing and playing football, baseball and soccer.

After graduating from high school, Purvis attended college at Tyler Junior College, Tyler, Texas, for one semester.



Purvis works on the roof of a State Farm building in Plano, Texas.

“It wasn’t really for me,” Purvis says. “I like to build and use my hands. I went to school for computer engineering, and that was too much of being at a desk—you don’t go outside much.”

Purvis started a job as a shipping coordinator for Flowtronex PSI in Dallas.

“It was a job where I went in at 5 a.m. and left at 5 p.m. and sat at my desk all day,” Purvis says. “I

burned out and wanted to see the sky.”

Purvis’ father was a master plumber, so Purvis grew up around construction. In 2008, he decided to go into the roofing industry by working as warehouse coordinator and maintenance coordinator for a small roofing company in the Dallas area.

An unexpected opportunity led Purvis to Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing in 2012.

“The roofing industry had gotten slow; I had been laid off at my previous job, and they offered me my job back three months later,” Purvis says. “But I came to Chamberlin and talked to Bill Lawson, and the growth opportunities and chance for advancement were better. This was a better learning experience. I wanted to grow in the industry and learn more.”

## Being challenged

Purvis was given the opportunity to grow as superintendent for Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing—in fact, one of the first projects he worked on was Dallas Love Field.

“It gave me experience,” Purvis says. “I came in the middle of the project, so it already was in progress. I had only worked on one small project with Chamberlin before that.”

Purvis says Dallas Love Field also was the most challenging project of which he has been a part.

“When you have a functioning airport that never stops and doesn’t skip a beat, that is the most challenging thing,” he says. “When you have an entranceway or baggage claim and you have to tear a roof off or install a roof, you have to have it done in a certain amount of time. And in Texas, you never know what the weather will be.”

Purvis also found it rewarding to work on a long-term, large-scale project.

“There were a lot of good people there,” he says. “You get to know everybody when you’re on a project for 3½ years—from the parking attendant to the cab drivers to the custodians. You’re there every single day.”

“I grew up with Love Field,” he continues. “I remember going there as a child, flying there as a teenager and as an adult and then going up to the observation tower and looking out over this humungous project I was a part of. The projects are my main satisfaction. The buildings are going to be around for a while, and you get to drive by them and see all the people who can enjoy them. And Love Field—that’s millions of people who will enjoy that building.”

## Growing in the industry

Deric Mount, project manager for Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing, believes Purvis’ work on such projects has helped him grow during his time with the company.

“He’s grown his knowledge of the industry and has become a leader on our team,” Mount says. “I’ve worked on 35-50 projects with him during the past few years, and the knowledge and insight he’s gained has improved dramatically. We’ve found a big leader in the roofing department.”

“He’s detail-oriented,” Mount continues. “He does a lot of documentation and preplanning and makes sure his field workers know exactly what they need to do. He’s great regarding quality control during installations, as well as communication with everyone involved. He’s good at pushing the guys to make sure our production is on point and we are meeting our goals.”

Purvis’ supervisors believe his leadership especially shines when it comes to his crews.

“He’s stern but fair,” says Jason Gibson, field operations manager for roofing and sheet metal at Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing. “He knows what’s going on with the guys all the time. He makes sure they have what they need to get the job done. And he always tries to give credit where credit is due.”

Mount says although Purvis demands hard work from his crews, they respect him.

“He drives our guys hard, which is what we need, and he gives them the ability to learn and improve their own skills,” Mount says. “He helps the guys grow their knowledge to make the team better. He’s results-oriented, and the guys know ahead of time what they’re expected to do to make sure our installations go as planned.”

David Neal, executive vice president and partner at Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing, says Purvis’ attention to safety makes him stand out as a leader.

“His commitment to safety comes first,” Neal says. “His guys go home every day, and they know he has their best interests—and the company’s interests—personally at heart.”

Purvis says he has to be completely comfortable with the level of safety on any project.

“If I feel comfortable the building is safe, it’s safe enough for the client,” he says. “I want to be sure if I’m not there and other people—the architect or fire marshal—need to go up there, it is going to be safe. I want to make it safe enough for my kids—if it’s safe enough for them, everyone else is good.”

Neal says Purvis also holds himself and his crews accountable.

“He does what he says he’s going to do, and he supports them in a positive way,” Neal says. “He doesn’t cover up problems—he fixes them. He’s knowledgeable and respectful. He sets expectations and holds them accountable. That builds respect. Once expectations are set, he follows through.”

Purvis admits his loyalty to and care for his crew members can be a strength and a weakness.

“I have compassion for my guys,” Purvis says. “They’re not the people who work for me—they’re my co-workers. We’re a team, and I care about the guys a lot.”

“But I can be loyal to a fault,” he continues. “I have a couple of guys I probably should have fired, but they work hard and are really good teammates—we all have faults. I’m loyal to them and loyal to the company, but it is business, and we hold people accountable.”

Purvis says he only has fired two people during his career.

“In one instance, we were both crying,” he says. “He didn’t want to get fired, and I didn’t want to fire him. It was a difficult situation.”

The care Purvis takes with his crew is reflected in the way he values them.

“I’m not high and mighty,” he says. “I do my best to help as much as I can. They consider me one of them for multiple reasons—I don’t talk down to them; everyone is treated with utmost respect as human beings and as men; and I ask for their input. I want them to feel important and valued, and I treat them like they have value.”

## Bringing value to the team

It’s also important to Purvis that he bring in crew members who he believes will be valuable team members.

“Our industry is close-knit, and on my crews, we have a lot of family members,” Purvis says. “So when I’m recruiting, I’m OK with bringing in family members, but I also want to have a broader scope. I tell my crew members to look for someone who’s first and foremost a team player. It’s not just about experience—experience is good, but if they have 30 years’ experience, they still need to be willing to pick up trash. When I’m at a job site, if the guys are working on the roof, I pick up trash. I try to lead by example.”

“I want someone who has that type of attitude, who’s not just coming to get a paycheck,” he continues. “I understand providing for your family is important, but I want someone who’s teachable. Just because we’ve been doing it for 15 or 20 years doesn’t mean we all know everything.”

Purvis says Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing stays busy, so he recruits often.

“When we’re out and about, we have guys coming up to us regularly,” he says. “If someone is looking to change careers, such as a mason, we’ll bring him on. So far, we don’t have a lot of turnover—most of my guys have been here way longer than I have.”

Purvis says hiring someone is like bringing him or her into your family.

“I ask everyone, from labor to foreman, ‘How is this guy doing?’” he says. “If someone is having problems, we go to lunch, sit down and talk about what needs to be improved upon. I want all the guys to achieve more than what they are. Some of them are happy where they’re at,



Purvis with fellow Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing superintendents during a holiday safety lunch



and I'm OK with that because some people want to do exactly what they want to do. But some of them aspire to do more, and I want to be the person to help them."

### The extra mile

In addition to being team-oriented, Neal says Purvis also is client-oriented.

"I've seen it first-hand—a client calls here saying he has a leak, and Curtis gets in the truck and he goes," Neal says. "It doesn't matter when it is or whether it's raining. It's great for him and great for the company. We talk about 'expect more, get more,' and he's delivering that."

Johnson says customers respect Purvis' honest attitude.

"He's on Chamberlin's side," Johnson says. "He's a company man and is on our team, and if he needs to stand up to general contractors or customers—not being offensive but just saying 'this is what is right'—they respect that."

Purvis says being honest with customers helps him get the job done right the first time.

"We're trying to achieve their goals, as well as our goals as a company," he says. "I make sure I don't over-

commit myself to something I know I can't do. It's important to be honest. You want to make sure you put a quality roof down and do it one time."

Mount agrees Purvis is direct but open.

"He's open as far as questions he may have or things we need to get our work done," Mount says. "He has great communica-

tion with customers, documenting with email, photos, everything he possibly can to make sure everyone's on the same page."

Bill Lawson, operations manager for Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing in Houston, says Purvis goes beyond what is necessary for his customers.

"He goes the extra mile to make sure we meet or exceed their expectations," Lawson says. "It is part of his personality. He always is asking the client if there is anything else he can do for them and making sure we install a quality roof in a safe and productive manner."

Neal agrees, citing an instance when a customer called

about an issue with a project. Although the issue was not related to the work Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing had performed, Purvis stepped up to help resolve it.

"He got down there, pulled back pavers, tested it and proved it wasn't our issue," Neal says. "And instead of just saying 'I told you so,' he was able to help them bring closure to the problem. He went back there, and he didn't have to. He does it the right way with the right temperament. He has the problem-solving and people skills. It's important for us when we solve the problem that we point the client in the right direction."

Gibson says Purvis' extra effort is evident in his work ethic.

"He's there after hours, on Saturdays or even Sundays," Gibson says. "We're salaried guys, so we're not paid by the hour. If it has to be done, you just have to do it. He's very good about that part of it."

Mount says Purvis always makes himself available.

"I've spent time on the phone with him, nights and weekends, making sure we are planned out properly and everyone knows what's expected, that we're all on the same page," he says. "He's always available to us, and he always takes the time to ask questions to improve his knowledge and skills."

### Helping the community

Purvis also puts forth extra effort in his personal life. He uses his free time to volunteer at his church and mentor young men in his community.

"I got involved because I have sons," Purvis says. "I try to take my dad's values and my grandfather's values and use them every day. Some young men and older men didn't grow up with their fathers. I don't know everything; I'm just here to listen and give advice if I can. It's always good to be able to help somebody."

Purvis says his own life experiences are a great resource.

"You can use biblical references as the foundation going into the conversation, but for me, it's difficult because some people don't want to talk about their religious beliefs," Purvis says. "So you use your life experiences as a door to get in. You want someone to feel comfortable—a lot of young men are closed off and don't want to talk about what's going on within themselves. So whether we're having lunch or just chit-chatting or taking a drive, I am open-minded to who that person is, and I use my own failures and successes."

Purvis has three sons and a daughter in their 20s and a 22-month-old daughter, as well as two stepsons and a stepdaughter, so he already has practice being a role model.

"It's important just being comfortable with another man, to sit there and take his advice or just listen," Purvis says. "I want to help him grow as a person. Being a role model is important. I tell my sons: I want you to be better than me no matter what."

Additionally, Purvis and his wife, Kiki, who were married in 2012, take plates of food to the homeless on holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and the Fourth of July, putting their leftover food to good use.

"That's a family tradition from my parents and my in-laws," he says. "I've been doing charitable work all my life because of my parents. Whether you can give your clothes that are gently used or shoes or food—anything you can give back to the community. Don't throw stuff away. Someone else can use it."

"It's a chain—if you help someone, they'll help the next person," he continues. "That's important to me. It starts with you. If you're a participant in the community, the guys see it, and it will make them better people. Our company is active in the community and lets everyone else be active."

### An open door

Purvis' tendency to go above and beyond likely will be rewarded in the future.

"I definitely see him moving into a project management role or at least a field operations manager position," Mount says. "He has the leadership skills and has gained the knowledge to do so. I can see him continuing to grow in the industry and the field."

Purvis says though he could see himself taking the next step one day, right now he wants to focus on learning more.

"I want to stay in the field as long as I can if my body will let me," he says. "I am focusing on still learning. Our team has been doing this for a long time, and I still feel like I'm brand new."

Purvis says he is lucky Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing offers opportunities for its employees.

"I can even go into waterproofing," he says. "There are multiple things you can do here—it's kind of like changing your major when you're in college. You don't have to go anywhere; you can just go into the next office and see if they have openings. A lot of people don't have that advantage. Everyone here is willing to teach you. It's not like the door's closed, and that's neat."

### A rare example

Johnson says the combination of Purvis' many qualities is rare, and that is why he won the Best of the Best Award.

"It's difficult to find someone who is articulate, loyal, hardworking, respected by the many he's in charge of and has a teamwork concept," he says. "This is my 40th year doing this, and I've only seen a couple."

Neal agrees, saying Purvis' character is something that deserves to be recognized.

"His commitment to safety, his team, his company and his community—he has all those pieces," Neal says. "There are a lot of people in this world who don't give anything back to the community, and that's a big commitment he has. When you have someone of that character and caliber, I would hope he or she would be recognized."

Mount says Purvis embodies everything a Best of the Best winner should be.

"He offers exceptional documentation and communication, always has an eye on safety and always is looking ahead to make sure our guys can be as productive as possible," Mount says. "He has the company's best interest in mind at all times. He is an incredible leader on the job sites, along with being active in his community. He's always helping out. He's an example of a good employee and what a person in the community should be."

Still, Purvis emphasizes it was all about his team.

"I felt like I achieved something," Purvis says. "It's nice to get that pat on the back and recognition for doing a good job. I appreciate the award and the recognition of us as a company. But all the people behind that success—I wish I could give them awards, too."

"I don't like to take a lot of the credit," he continues. "I wish all the guys could have been there. It was us as a team—it wasn't just me. I depend on all the people who help with the process, from the office staff all the way down. I'm just part of the chain. Without the team, there would be no me." 🌟🌟🌟

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Purvis with his family. Pictured left to right: Stepdaughter, Erica; son Romeo; wife, Kiki; daughter Britney; stepson Jerric; Purvis; and stepson David



Purvis with his grandson, Arias, and his wife, Kiki



#### ON the WEB

For more information about the Best of the Best Award and for a list of past winners, log on to [www.professionalroofing.net](http://www.professionalroofing.net).