



GERARD J. KOTS, JR.

UNION STEWARD & 2003 APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

SPOTLIGHT

On Jerry Kots:

Title Steward for GMI Contractors, Inc. (Bristol, PA)

Hometown Parkwood neighborhood of Philadelphia

Family Wife Lisa, sons Sean (17) and Jared (15), daughter Ava (8)

Pet Teddy Bear the Schnoodle

Favorite Sports Team Phillies

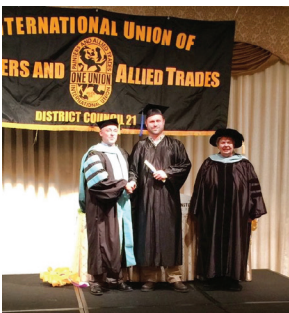


ABOUT JERRY

Twenty years ago, Mike Metz explained a glazier's job responsibilities as Jerry Kots filled out the paperwork to become one. The 1994 graduate of Father Judge and Swenson Technical School spent a year at the Art Institute before realizing that career prospects were limited with an art major. Jerry's union family, including father Gerard Kots, Sr. who was a former vice president of Local 22, encouraged him to join the trades. "I wasn't afraid of heights and it seemed kind of interesting," Kots, Jr. admitted about glazing. He took his dad's advice expecting to make a buck while he figured out what was next. Instead, he has built a career as a glazier and believes it is "one of the best decisions I ever made."

PATIENT STEWARDSHIP

Jerry serves as a union steward for GMI Contractors, Inc., a union delegate representing all trades in District Council 21, and on the Local 252 executive board. The 2003 Apprentice of the Year genuinely cares about doing what's needed for his coworkers and union community. Jerry describes the steward role as unforgiving; he hates reminding glaziers to wear their safety gear as much as the crews hate hearing it from him. He's built up a lot of patience dealing with different personalities and issues, but believes the role has made him a better person. "Guys aren't always going to like you," he describes. "And I don't get paid extra for it. But I'm always going to do my best."





Above: Jerry with his wife Lisa, daughter Ava, and Teddy Bear the schnoodle; Below: Jerry with ACE students

Pictured on front: Jerry earning his associate degree at FTI and at Temple University Science Education and Research Center; The Bridge; Rodin Square

THINKING OF THE FUTURE

Jerry steps to the leadership plate not only with his current union brotherhood, but also with the next generation. As a part-time instructor at the Finishing Trades Institute since 2013, Jerry teaches OSHA 30 and works with the VIP program. VIP offers safety courses to high school juniors and seniors considering joining the trades; the program allows them to earn credentials before apprenticeship. He has participated as an instructor for AGI's Architectural Glass Boot Camp and the Philadelphia University collaborative design challenge.

"I like to give back and see the younger guys succeed," he explains. "I want to pass the torch so younger guys are getting educated." Jerry adds his ulterior motive: "They will be earning the money for my retirement."

ICONIC PROJECTS

Jerry has worked on many iconic Philadelphia projects, and loves driving family and friends around the city, pointing out his work. He led layout and glazing installation at Rodin Square, a \$170 million mixed-use development near the Ben Franklin Parkway, which opened in 2016 as the city's second-largest development project after Comcast. He's currently involved with BRIDGE, a 17-story modern apartment and retail tower beside the Ben Franklin Bridge. The \$65 million project is set to open this spring.

FAMILY TIME

At the end of the day, Jerry enjoys coming home, relaxing, and spending time with his family and dog. He has two sons: Sean, aged 17, and Jared, aged 15, and a stepdaughter Ava, aged 8.

His wife Lisa is an early intervention special education therapist; she guides children with learning disabilities through the early years of school in a similar manner to how Jerry enjoys guiding young apprentices through the early years of glazing.

Jerry puts his unique blend of artistic and tech skills to good use. He enjoys drawing and painting as well as building computers from scratch – a skill for which he is completely self-taught. He also enjoys nine-ball pool and watching the Phillies.

GOOD ADVICE

As Jerry's sons approach adulthood, he offers encouragement to go into the trades. "I'm not going to force my trade on them," Jerry explains. "But they see that I have a lot of fun doing what I do." His advice to both boys – and all the young apprentices he meets – matches the advice he heard 20 years ago: show up 15 minutes early; do what you're told; the more questions you ask, the more you're going to learn." Jerry enjoys watching a "greenhorn" apprentice start, not knowing much, and grow into a proficient glazier.

