



MICHAEL T. RUSSELL

FOREMAN AND HEALTH & SAFETY INSTRUCTOR



SPOTLIGHT

On Mike Russell:

Title Foreman with Adams Glass (Croydon, Pa.)

Hometown Northeast Philadelphia

Family Wife Megan and daughters Grace (16), Kira (13), and Jacqueline (11)

Favorite Movie Avengers: Endgame

Favorite Sports Teams Eagles, Sixers, Flyers, and Phillies

ABOUT MIKE

When Mike Russell graduated from Father Judge High School in 1992, he followed the college path to Community College of Philadelphia. Over the two years he studied accounting and took general education courses, Mike also worked at a countertop shop. He found that he enjoyed construction, so he left school to install countertops full-time. He worked at the shop for nearly two decades before the economy declined around 2010.

Mike's brother-in-law had gotten into glazing several years earlier and encouraged Mike to consider the trade. "I liked working with my hands and working with tools," Mike said. "The

brotherhood, the pay, and the benefits, I didn't have any of that at the countertop shop." He took the leap and became an apprentice in July 2012.

LEADERSHIP ROLE

In the eight years since Mike became a glazier, he has risen to a leadership role. He works as a Foreman for Adams Glass of Croydon, Pa. The company does a wide variety of smaller-scale glazing installations for commercial projects including retail and restaurants. Mike is responsible for running crews and jobs with scopes that range from curtain wall and Herculite doors to interior glass. Most recently, he led glazing projects at the Piazza in Northern Liberties and the new Police and Fire Credit Union Montgomery Mall Branch on Route 309, which is scheduled to open in February 2020.

FAVORITE PROJECT

Another recent project has become one of Mike's favorites. He served as Foreman for a drug clinic in Camden, N.J., for which the Adams Glass crew installed curtainwall, storefront, and interior



*Mike on the job
for Adams Glass*

glass. The different types of glazing and Mike's ability to run the entire project successfully made it stand out.

EASY DAY

Mike counts his coworkers at Adams Glass among the best parts of his glazing work. "We have a great group of guys, a great crew," he described. "It's easy to get the job done. We have fun and we joke around." Mike explained that getting along with everyone makes it easier for him to run jobs smoothly and ensure work is completed well. "It makes for an easy day."

ALTERNATIVE TO COLLEGE

For the last year, Mike has taught with the Health and Safety Department at the Finishing Trades Institute. It gives him an opportunity to give back to his fellow glaziers. It also affords the opportunity to shape the future workforce with his perspective on the value of a glazing career. Recently, a group of high school students came to the training center when Mike was teaching a caulking class. The students' parents asked if he and some of his colleagues would answer questions and talk about their experiences. "Basically, I said that not everyone is a college person," Mike explained. "I definitely wasn't. College wasn't for me, but glazing is another avenue where you can make good money, earn a pension, and it's not a bad living." He added that LU252 has good people to work with and for.

PROVIDING FOR HIS FAMILY

Ensuring good long-term benefits to support his family was one of Mike's motivations for becoming a glazier. He has been married to wife Megan since 2002 (and together since 1993). She works as a director for SPIN, a Philadelphia nonprofit that provides services to people with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities. They have three daughters. Grace, aged 16, is an artistic high school student who enjoys dance. Kira, a fashionista aged 13, and Jacqueline, aged 11, enjoy middle school pursuits such as bike riding. All three girls – and Mike – are fans of the Marvel Avengers movies and never miss seeing one together. When he's not working or relaxing with his family, Mike enjoys working out at the gym, playing Fantasy Football, and watching whichever Philly sports teams are in season.

BROTHERHOOD

Whether he's on the job or teaching, Mike tries to share his knowledge with apprentices or get them the help they need. "Usually, you can go to someone in our local and they are willing to give you an answer," he explained. To him, the brotherhood is a valuable part of glazing because of this willingness to share. "You go to meetings and even if you didn't work with the guys, everyone is friendly and easy to talk with."

Clockwise from top left: Mike with his family at a recent wedding; channeling his inner Dwight Schrute on Halloween; celebrating his 45th birthday with his father, niece, and some axe throwing; daughters Grace, Kira, and Jaqueline; and attending a SPIN event with Megan

