

Theresa Miller BA'05, MA'07: constructing a vision for success

After spending years in the male-dominated steel industry, Theresa Miller was in need of the nurturance and camaraderie she found at Ursuline. "I realized it was a very welcoming place and I quickly established relationships with peers and began building, what I now see as, lifelong relationships," said Miller. "What the College promises – *Values, Voice and Vision* – spoke to me from the beginning and those words became my mantra. Ursuline helped me learn to use my voice and they worked to guide me in the right direction."

Miller is now the vice president and co-owner of *Start to Finish*, the construction firm she began with her husband, Robert, in 2002. The former LTV Steel staff member says she acquired a wealth of skills and information while earning both her undergraduate degree in business management within Ursuline College's Accelerated Program (UCAP) and her graduate degree in management. The mother of two adult daughters also asserts that the gifts for the soul she found while at Ursuline were as important as the rest of the skills she learned.

"In 2007, while I was working on my master's, I sadly lost two of my brothers and I was going through a painful personal struggle," said Miller. "Sr. Christine De Vinne, OSU, Ph.D '73, was a professor of mine at the time and she was an angel to me, she greatly deepened my compassion and understanding and I will always appreciate that."

The Miller's entrepreneurial venture, with Theresa handling the administrative end of things, is taking off nicely. "Just recently," Miller observes, "we were given a pretty lucrative contract to work on the new juvenile justice center, and we have moved into our first commercial real estate headquarters building. We have been following our business plan and by the grace of God, everything in the plan has been materializing."

Seeing herself as a feminist, Miller is consciously striving to help other women find a niche. She says, "I'm looking forward to bringing a different orientation to the construction industry. Things are definitely getting better for women in construction, but we still have a way to go. People are receptive to change, and I think it is a matter of how you build those relationships. Overall, though, I believe that your goals can be achieved if you are diligent, persevering and true to yourself."

Miller says working with your mate is not without challenge, but that she and her husband agree that irrespective of what happens at the office, "family comes first." When she's not implementing that business plan, Miller likes to hang out with her family, garden and listen to jazz.

