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2020 Ones to Watch: Jay Connolly, President at Connolly Brothers

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Jay Connolly
Connolly Brothers

Who or what inspires you? Pete Frates was one of my best friends; he was diagnosed with ALS in 2012. Most people know him through the Ice Bucket Challenge. It was typical of Pete to turn his diagnosis into a way to help others by raising money and awareness for the terrible disease and those affected by it. He was one of the most inspirational people I have ever met and although he passed away in December 2019, he will continue to motivate me to do more and to never take the little things in life, like hugging my children for granted.

What led you to your current profession? Connolly Brothers is a family-owned business. Founded 140 years ago, I am the 5th generation to run the company. As I was growing up, I never felt any pressure to join the family business. My father encouraged me to attend college – I was the 1st generation to do so – and to get out and try other things. I worked for other companies during summer vacation while in college, but I always knew I would join the family business. It was my lifelong dream to be a part of it.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession? The Connolly Brothers 1880 fund is committed to making a difference in the communities we serve by helping our neighbors, identified by working collaboratively with local agencies, with support where no other support may be available. For example, last year we sponsored a “Build-A-Bed” event at our headquarters in Beverly. Teams of two-four people were given the necessary materials and we were able to build 61 beds. The newly built bed frames were delivered to children in need, along with a new twin mattress and bedding.

What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry? Keep an open mind when entering the industry. There are so many things you can do within the construction industry. Big construction companies like Suffolk and Shawmut have excellent training programs for people just starting out in construction. They rotate employees through different departments to expose new employees to all aspects of construction. It’s a great way to figure out what aspects of construction you enjoy and want to pursue.

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