

GARRISON

SERVICE COMPANY

1960-2010



Charlotte Garrison

Pioneering Women in the Forklift Industry

They say that behind every good man is an even better woman and this is certainly true in the case of Garrison Service Company. Charlotte Garrison, better known to many as “Ms. G,” is the co-founder of Garrison Service Company. She was born in 1934 in Morgan Spring, TN where she remembers a simple, happy childhood and learning the value of a dollar as a young girl. By the time Ms. G was in high school her family was living in Dayton, TN where she took business courses and met JT Garrison. Charlotte and JT were married in 1952. After serving in the military then working for DuPont, JT decided to take advantage of the GI Bill and the family moved to Nashville, TN so he could go to school at the Auto Diesel College.

By 1959 JT was working for Dozier Equipment in Nashville and Charlotte was raising four children at home. With a large family to support JT began looking for a better opportunity and came home one day in 1960 and told Charlotte, “I think I can make it on my own, I think I’ll just go into business for myself” and Charlotte agreed. They began a dedicated-service business out of their home, but before long they rented a little house so they would have a business address. Ms. G remembers that the first time they brought a forklift truck in to work on, it fell through the floor! They fixed the floor and continued to take on new customers.

Ms. G was one of the only female business owners in Nashville at this time. She recalls that she rarely saw other women during her workday and she didn’t know anyone in her personal life who had a job like hers. “I can tell you, when you go to a baby shower or tea party and people ask you what you’re doing and you say you’re in the forklift industry, that ends the conversation right there – they didn’t have anything to ask or contribute.” Ms. G recalls the first dealer meeting she went to in Atlanta, GA - she was the only woman in the room. There were very strong attitudes about a woman in business at this time. When asked how she felt as a female business owner facing these types of attitudes, she said “I never felt intimidated, inferior or insecure, I just did what I had to do – I was too busy.”

From the first day GSC opened its doors in 1960, Ms. G has been part of the foundation of success that has kept this company going for 50 years. Her examples of “doing what needs to get done” and trying new things, taking chances while being responsible and thoughtful are part of what Garrison Service Company is today. She retired from the daily grind of the company in 1998, but is the current secretary and treasurer on the Board of Garrison Service Company.

As Garrison Service Company celebrates 50 years in business, we all – past, present, and future employees as well as customers and vendors – applaud her vision and her integrity and her rightful place as the matriarch of Garrison Service Company. Here’s to you Ms. G!