

Another Mackle makes his mark on Key Biscayne home market

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Standing before a palatial home on Harbor Lane on a sun-drenched Friday morning, Frank E. Mackle IV pointed to many of the one-story, single-family homes within eyeshot and said:

"They really established a reputation, a tradition of building quality houses of enduring value." He noted that his grandfather and great uncles built the houses a half-century ago.

Following World War II, the "Mackle brothers" developed Key Biscayne by lining the island with a series of quaint homes. They also built the Key Biscayne Hotel and Villas and operated the popular retreat for 25 years.

Now, a new generation of Mackle-built homes is sprouting up on the island.

Earlier this year, Mackle IV was contracted to tear down an original Mackle house at 685 Harbor Lane to build a two-story Anglo-Caribbean home designed by Coral Gables architect Cesar Molina.

"We bought this Mackle home in 1988," said Rosa Sugranes, who lives at 685 Harbor Lane with Fernando R. Vila. "We remodeled it, but last year we destroyed it to build another house."

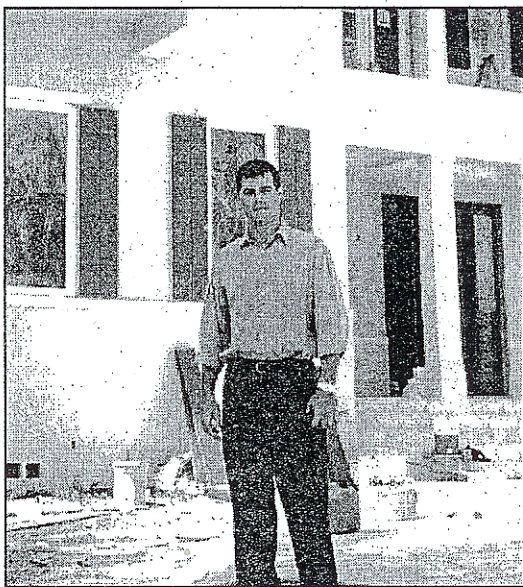
Sugranes, who owns Iberia Tiles, added proudly: "My house is the first house [Frank Mackle IV] built on Key Biscayne. It is a very Key Biscayne story. A new generation of Mackles."

"The new house is a very nice house, and I'm very happy with it. I was sad when they tore the old one down. It was very small, but I had lived there for a long time. I imagine it must also have been very emotional for Frank."

Indeed it was.

"Here I am knocking down a house my grandfather built in 1952 and building a new house," Mackle said reflectively. "It feels great. They built good, solid houses. I want to do the same."

Mackle, 35, joined the construction business in the late 1980s. He has a business degree from Notre Dame University, and a MBA in finance from the University of Mi-



ORLANDO RODRIGUEZ / The Islander News

Frank Mackle, president of Mackle Construction Company.

ami. After graduating from Notre Dame in 1988, Mackle began working as a project supervisor for the family business in Vero Beach.

Then, in 1994, Mackle decided to strike out on his own and formed Mackle Construction Company.

"My intention is to build three to four high-end houses a year," explains Mackle. "I don't intend to get too large. I don't want to be a company that's doing \$100 million a year in residential projects."

Mackle said his goal is to be a hands-on

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boss who gets to know each client on a personal basis. By staying small, Mackle said his company can focus on detail, quality and customer service.

"I want to differentiate myself from the larger companies," Mackle said. "I think I can achieve a higher level of service by staying small."

Mackle, a Coral Gables resident, said his grandfather and great uncles developed much of Key Biscayne after the family patriarch, Frank Mackle Sr., relocated his construction company from Alabama to Florida in the early 1900s.

The island of Key Biscayne was little more than a coconut plantation when they started. Originally, the simple, one-bathroom houses were sold for around \$10,000, "but there were six Mackle houses facing Nixon Beach priced at \$27,000," said Mackle.

"People thought those houses were too expensive," he added.

Although a few Mackle houses still exist on the island, many have been remodeled and augmented with additional wings, and a great deal of these houses (if they go on the market) face demolition to make space for larger houses.

Mackle hopes to continue to build on the island where his family made their name. He has a five bedroom, five bathroom home presently under construction on Mashta Island.

In addition to contract work, Mackle wants to expand into "spec," or speculation building, which means he will purchase a piece of property, construct a house on it and then put it on the market.

He already has a spec project underway in Pinecrest: a six-bedroom, six-bathroom, Mediterranean-style house.