

CAPEL RUGS

Cameron Capel likes to joke that her career went “from rags to rugs” when she joined her family’s business, Capel Rugs, 27 years ago.

The company’s president of sales, marketing and the import division didn’t immediately jump into her grandfather’s business after college. Instead, she went to New York and spent a few years in the fashion industry.

“It’s not that I wasn’t interested; I was very proud, but I wanted to do something else,” Capel says. “It’s kind of funny, I went from rags to rugs, because they call the fashion business the rag business, and I’ve never looked back. My first job [at Capel] was running our New York showroom in 1992.”

Capel Rugs was founded in 1917 by A. Leon Capel, but his business originally started very differently. Leon Capel’s father owned a cotton yarn spinning mill. One day, he took some scraps from the mill and braided them into reins for his horse and mule drawn plows. He began selling these all over the East Coast because they were cheaper than the leather option.

Then, while in Atlanta at a trade show, Cameron Capel says her grandfather heard about the new mechanical mule, ending the need

for horse-drawn plows. “He thought, ‘Oh great, what am I going to do now?’ So he bought some sewing machines and sewed the yarn into larger rugs,” Capel says.

The rest is history. Over the past 100 years the company has grown to grown to 150 employees, and includes imported rugs of all constructions from around the world. The braided rugs the company was founded on remain a core offering and are all made in Troy where Capel Rugs is headquartered. One was even featured on the Netflix show “Grace and Frankie.”

Capel helps run the company alongside her two cousins, brothers Ron and Richard Capel. Ron is the president of finance and retail while Richard is the president of manufacturing.

The company has continued to grow over the years, even when many manufacturing and textile industries in the state moved overseas to cut production costs. Capel says she and her cousins remain committed to keeping Capel Rugs in North Carolina and in the family.

“We are proud to be an employer in North Carolina and Montgomery County,” she says. “We hope to go for another 100 years.”



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