GLASS & METAL ALLIANCE

PATRICK O'CONNOR

2019 APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

SPOTLIGHT

On Patrick O'Connor:

Title Journeyperson Glazier for Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc. (Philadelphia, Pa.)

Hometown Bensalem, Pa.

Family Fiancée Gina and daughter Delia (age 3)

Favorite Movie Fantastic Mr. Fox

Congratulations to Pat and Gina who were engaged on October 19!

ABOUT PAT

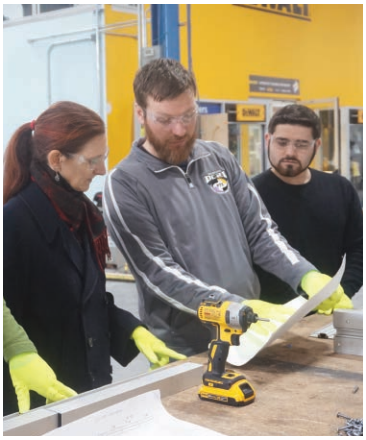
After graduating from Archbishop Ryan High School in 2002, Patrick O'Connor attended Philadelphia University for a few years but found the academic track wasn't a good fit. He took a job at the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market. A third-generation teamster, Pat thought all jobs came with the good wages and benefits afforded to union workers. When, after seven years, Pat was let go, he met the reality that many jobs offer neither. He fabricated yoga mats, worked on a peach farm, and lasted a single 14-hour day as a property manager before becoming a bread route salesman. His workday ran from 2 am and until late afternoon. Pat's realization that he needed to get back to the comfort and stability of a job with a decent salary and reasonable working hours came just around the time a family friend suggested glazing. Pat applied and was accepted in June 2014.

WIDE EXPERIENCES

Since 2014, Pat has worked with five different glazing contractors including one out-of-town company and four GMA member companies. He has been involved with specialty metal and glass, unitized glazing systems, small projects and shower door installations, and larger storefront and curtain wall projects. He greatly appreciates his opportunities to see the industry from different perspectives and to work on a wide variety of projects, including standout projects The Harper apartment building, Rowan University, and Kennedy Health System Medical Office Building. Since 2017, Pat has been a journeyman glazier with Eureka Metal & Glass Services, most recently on scopes of half-inch interior glass. He likes that he's not at the same job site for long. "I need the stimulation of being able to move around and this is the perfect trade for it," Pat said. "Doing a little bit of everything is also good to become well-rounded mechanic."

ADMIT YOUR MISTAKES

"My first job was at Cira Centre South, a job with over 80 glaziers on it," Pat explained. He was introduced to a lot of people in his first days. "Everyone was very welcoming and quick to give me advice." His next assignment had only two glaziers. They demanded a certain amount of work from Pat but recognized his lack of experience. "They told me, you're going to make mistakes, but you have to admit it," he remembered. "That



helped me immensely." Confident enough to learn by doing, and smart enough to admit when he was wrong, Pat earned the respect of his fellow glaziers and built his glazing skills. In March at the annual LU252 Stewards Dinner, he was honored as the 2019 Apprentice of the Year.

Clockwise from top left: Pat, Delia, and Gina celebrating Delia's third birthday; Delia; O'Connor Family; teaching at Boot Camp; with his MERGE teammates; with family at the 2019 Stewards Dinner where Pat received the Apprentice of the Year Award (last two photos © Joe Garvin)

SHARING HIS PERSPECTIVE

Pat shares the same guidance with students at the Finishing Trades Institute, where he teaches part-time in the VIP program for high school seniors. The students have a three-day introduction to each trade. During the glazing session, Pat emphasizes his dual perspectives of attending college and working as a glazier and the pros and cons of each. He tries to make the experience as fun and informative as possible.

Pat regularly teaches in the Architectural Glass Boot Camps, educating design professionals about basic practices and parameters of glazing. He also participated on the MERGE project team that partnered Jefferson University students with glaziers to create an installation for DesignPhiladelphia 2017. In all of his teaching, Pat facilitates communication. He sees communication breakdowns as one of the biggest hurdles in design and construction and hopes his efforts encourage more collaboration and communication to execute projects successfully. "I'm putting a human face on the glazing experience," Pat says. "We all want projects to get done well and we're consummate professionals."

AT HOME

When he's not at work, Pat spends time with his family: fiancée Gina and their three-year-old daughter Delia. They recently bought a house in Bensalem. "My fun consists of working on the house," Pat joked. He recently dug up his front yard to lay sod. When he isn't displacing tons of dirt, Pat likes to read. His favorite book is *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. He's currently reading the *Dune* series.

GOLD MINE

Pat feels like he fell into glazing because he was seeking stability, but he's built a solid career with many opportunities for advancement. He is pursuing his Bachelor of Science degree at Jefferson and will take the Architectural Glass and Metal Technician (AGMT) certification exam in December, to become one of the few certified glaziers in the country.

"I hit the gold mine," he explained "It's a wonderful brotherhood. We have confidence in ourselves and our unity. It's something to be proud of."