

**CERTIFICATION:**

Universal Design Certified Professional (UDCP)

NAME:

Kathi Fleck

TITLE:

Co-Owner

COMPANY:

LoneStar Design Build

HEADQUARTERS:

Bedford, TX

Specialty:

Design & Build

Forging a New Career Path through NARI Certification



Kathi Fleck, UDCP, took an unconventional path to a career in the remodeling industry. Prior to starting their business, LoneStar Design Build, Kathi and her husband, Don Fleck, had successful careers in the corporate world. Neither of them had a background in remodeling. Although Kathi had a design degree, her career path had taken her away from using it. The Fleck's always loved homes and renovations, however.

In 2006, when Don was between jobs, Kathi decided to leave the corporate world and embark on an exciting new career path. They started a business that offered small repairs and handyman jobs. Kathi was confident that their business skill set gained in former careers would help them carve a path in a new industry.

Initially, the business plan was to focus on offering small home repairs. A friend of Kathi's had confidence in her ability to handle a full scale kitchen remodel and persistently insisted the Flecks remodel her kitchen. At first Kathi was unsure she could commit to taking on such a large and unfamiliar project but she finally acquiesced and took on the challenge of remodeling her friend's kitchen. The project went wonderfully. They're still friends after all! Kathi has never looked back. Their business slowly transitioned into a full-fledged remodeling company which was established as LoneStar Design Build in Bedford, TX in 2007. Over a decade later, the company has completed over 400 kitchen, bath, and residential remodeling projects. Now their business handles roughly 30 projects annually ranging in value from \$30K - \$200K.

Tackling the Learning Curve

There was a tremendous learning curve for the two remodeling novices. Kathi and Don felt they needed to join a professional trade association which would provide them with the education and networking opportunities needed to become industry experts and grow their business. They identified NARI as an organization which catered to their specific needs as remodelers and joined the local NARI of Greater Dallas chapter in 2010.

Shortly after joining NARI, Kathi excitedly took advantage of the educational opportunities offered and pursued her first industry certification, the Universal Design Certified Professional (UDCP) designation. "I like education and I thought the Universal Design course would significantly boost my skill set and prepare me to better advise clients on making their home more accessible and user-friendly," Kathi says. "At the time I was pretty new to the industry and Universal Design is such a big part of design in general and I felt the course was extremely helpful."

For Kathi, the UDCP certification was "the perfect starting point to venture into certification" and the course offered a well-rounded curriculum with "a good emphasis on business and a comprehensive approach to universal design."

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- Kathi Fleck
Owner,
LoneStar Design Build

“When you are speaking with someone about potentially renovating their home, the most important thing they seek from their remodeling contractor is trust and my UDCP certification gives me the backing of my industry association to help them feel confident that I am the right partner to remodel their home.”

- Kathi Fleck
Co-Owner
LoneStar Design Build



For more information visit
www.nari.org/cert
or call 847.298.9200

Trust Is Key

Kathi passed the challenging 90 question exam under the supervision of an examination proctor and officially achieved the UDCP certification in November of 2010. As LoneStar's Lead Designer the certification positions her as an expert in assisting her clients to design their kitchen and bath remodels with accessibility and ease of use in mind. "I consistently advise clients in Universal Design and incorporate the knowledge I gained from my certification when consulting clients."

Her certification has an additional benefit in assuring customers that she is a reliable resource in their renovation journey. "When you are speaking with someone about potentially renovating their home, the most important thing they seek from their remodeling contractor is trust and my UDCP certification gives me the backing of my industry association to help them feel confident that I am the right partner to remodel their home in a way that will be comfortable for them to live in. It really sets you apart from the competition in being able to assure clients that you are an expert in Universal Design."

Next Level

UDCP was only the starting point for Kathi. In 2017 she enrolled in NARI's Certified Kitchen and Bath Remodeler (CKBR) program, specifically designed for experienced remodeling professionals who focus on kitchen and bath renovations. This was a more challenging endeavor for Kathi because the knowledge required for the CKBR certification encompassed much more technical concepts surrounding kitchen and bath renovations. She felt that in the seven years since her UDCP certification, she was better prepared to tackle CKBR but decided to register for the optional study group offered to help prepare for the exam so she could exchange expertise with other experienced remodelers. "I now have a lot more knowledge in helping homeowners with their designs for kitchens and baths. The spacing codes and standards I learned are tremendously helpful and the study group facilitator provided sample tests we could take." She passed the 200 question CKBR exam and officially became certified in June of 2017.

For Kathi, UDCP was the springboard for her education in remodeling. Passing the CKBR certification confirmed that she had grown from a remodeling novice to a respected industry expert. She even wrote a book, *Renovate, Remodel... Relax!*, to help homeowners successfully navigate the renovation process.

The education Kathi received pursuing her UDCP and CKBR certifications helped her to advance both her own skill set and her business as a whole. She encourages other professionals to invest in their careers through certification because "it can help take your career and your business to the next level."

ABOUT NARI CERTIFICATIONS:

As a leader in certification of remodeling professionals, NARI provides recognition to professionals who have met stringent criteria for experience and have pledged commitment to professionalism, high standards, and the NARI Code of Ethics.

NARI Certification is a robust and challenging process, reserved only for those remodeling professionals who demonstrate extensive expertise in their field and pass the rigorous screening and testing process.

NARI Certified individuals are recognized as highly experienced remodeling experts capable of planning and managing complex remodeling projects to client satisfaction.