

Westcoast Companies Founder

Leslie Malloy

How Combining Opportunity and Creativity Helped Her Establish Success in the Elevator Industry

by Elizabeth Pate

A fifth-generation southern California resident, Leslie Malloy is founder, owner and president of Westcoast Companies, Inc. in Pasadena, California. She was introduced to the elevator industry by her childhood neighbor, Pauline Park. "She was a wonderful role model and believed women should be free to work and contribute to the business world. I had always gone by my middle name, Linné, but she suggested I use my first name so as not to appear obviously female in such a male-dominated industry," Malloy said.

Park and her husband founded Oliver & Williams Elevator Co. in 1948. "When he passed away in the early 1960s, she was pressured into selling the company. However, with her background in business and three children to support, she decided to run it herself," Malloy said. Park's decision to run an elevator business on her own was not a popular decision during that time, and she experienced gender discrimination. "She hired me as the front receptionist and took me to my first National Association of Elevator Contract-



tors (NAEC) convention in San Diego in 1976," Malloy said.

While working at Oliver & Williams, customers frequently asked Malloy where they could find pads to protect cab walls. "I thought there might be an opportunity for me," she said. Having an AA degree from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising and a BA from the University of California Los Angeles, Malloy had design and business experience. "After learning applicable codes and applying my design background to the manufacturing process, Westcoast was born in 1994," she explains. "I began the process in my apartment by removing all the furniture and leasing an industrial sewing machine, with an option to buy. My first sale was to Westinghouse Elevator in Burbank, which more than paid for the machine rental for the month," Malloy remembers.

Today, Malloy runs an international elevator-pad company and has more than 30 years of industry experience. "We offer premium, green products made exclusively in America," she said. Though she started the company by herself, Malloy credits her family's constant sup-



Pauline Park

port for helping her establish the company. "I've been fortunate to have the support of my mother, father and sister at almost every convention for the last 30 years," Malloy said.

When asked who she admires in the industry, Malloy says Martha Hulgán and "her passion to establish a professional support group for women in the industry" (ELEVATOR WORLD, November 2012). "A group like the Vertical Initiative for Elevator and Escalator Women highlights the contributions women make and offers support to the women taking over family-owned-and-operated elevator businesses," Malloy said.

Additional career influences of Malloy's include her involvement with industry organizations such as NAEC. "During an NAEC convention, I met Michael J. Ryan of Peelle. He invited me to attend a social event after the show closed, where I met several members I would not have met otherwise," she said. "The experience led me to realize the importance of attending conventions and being involved," Malloy added.

Malloy soon went on to be part of NAEC's New Member Committee and applied for a supplier board position, in addition to serving as an alternate chairperson for the Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation (EESF). "I first presented EESF's program in 2010 and find it very rewarding because of my lifelong interest in children," Malloy said. In addition, she is working on a



The Vertical Initiative for Elevator and Escalator Women in 2010

plan to promote the safety program to college students. In 2012, Malloy's university efforts were off to a good start at the University of Arizona, where several students volunteered their time to the cause. "This year, I would like to establish a national campaign and annual fundraising run during the National Elevator Escalator Safety Awareness Week," Malloy explained.

Malloy's role in the elevator industry has also been influenced by attending building trade shows. "They occasionally offer educational sessions about elevator service contracts, repairs, maintenance and modernization issues. I find these to be a great public service, and they present a different industry perspective," Malloy said. She added that attending these shows has helped her understand the issues and concerns facing the end user.

"Our sector of the building industry is on the tail end of the economic slowdown, and I'm guessing it will be on the tail end of its recovery. I am encouraged that jobs are again being bid on and industry growth has begun. I would love to see domestic production of quality goods return to the U.S." – Malloy

Malloy also believes the industry would be well served if more regional elevator groups flourished. "They have a lot to offer but seem to be struggling. The Elevator Conference of New York is a great example of a showcase that attracts attendees," Malloy said. "I would like to

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Malloy participating in the EESF's Gong Evader Show at NAEC's convention in Atlantic City in 2007.

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see networking connections improve by having more conventions and education sessions in the western U.S. It seems difficult to get attendees to travel west; surely, the weather would be a major attraction," she added.

According to Malloy, one of the industry's biggest challenges is being able to maintain quality products at a time when domestic production has left the U.S. "Quality control is a major problem I see with goods made overseas. Despite the increased cost of raw materials and the actual manufacturing in the U.S., I am committed to employing workers from my community and ensure that our products are made in the U.S.," Malloy said. "I believe in providing quality, American-made 'green' products within a healthy, professional environment; it is the cornerstone of my company's mission statement," Malloy added.

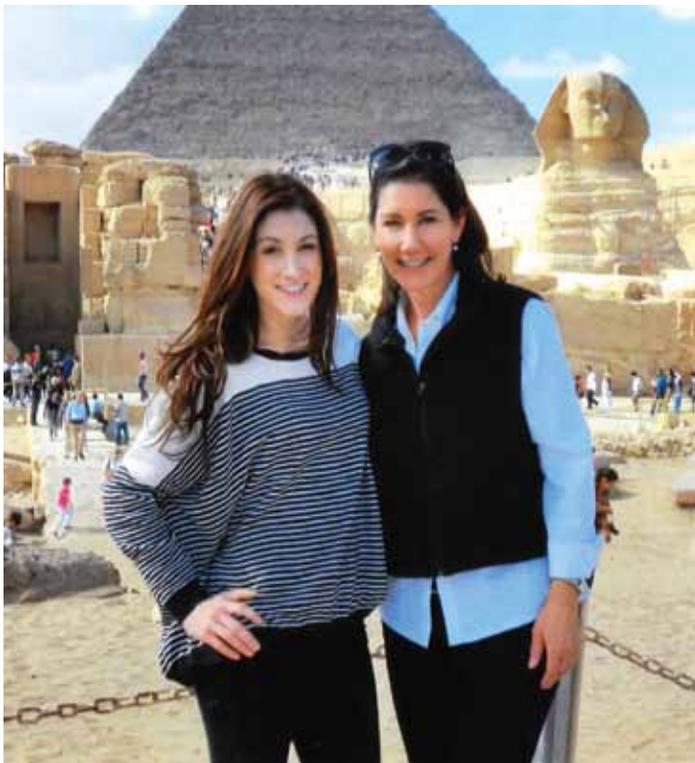
Looking back, Malloy says she wishes Westcoast had developed additional products



Malloy crossing the finish line

sooner. "We now manufacture all types of custom covers for various applications and special interests. Even though I studied computer science in college, I was not interested in the field. I wish I had embraced advanced technology sooner," Malloy said. When looking toward Westcoast's future, Malloy says she is proud to be able to pass the company down to her daughter one day "who has literally grown up in the offices of Westcoast."

In addition to running her company, Malloy volunteers at local charities such as L.A. Works and Project Angel Tree. In addition, Westcoast donates pad pieces to homeless shelters and sponsors girls little-league softball teams. She enjoys baseball, running, hiking, camping, Pilates, reading, scrapbooking, gardening, music, theater and traveling. "The industry has provided me many opportunities to see the world. I love to travel and am ready at a moment's notice with my travel motto, 'travel light.'" 🌐



Malloy and her daughter, Margaret, traveling in Egypt

Professional Organizations

Westcoast Companies, Inc. founder, owner and president, Leslie Malloy, is involved in the following associations:

- ◆ National Association of Elevator Contractors
- ◆ Canadian Elevator Contractors Association
- ◆ Elevator Industry Group of Southern California
- ◆ Chicago Elevator Association
- ◆ Elevator Conference of New York
- ◆ Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation
- ◆ Vertical Initiative for Elevator and Escalator Women
- ◆ Building Owners and Managers Association
- ◆ National Association of Woman Business Owners
- ◆ International Facility Management Association
- ◆ Pasadena, California, Chamber of Commerce