

Holy Land Stone Company

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Penny Martin
Holy Land Stone
Company

In April of 1996 for the first time, Jim Martin's career led him to Israel. As he approached the City of Jerusalem, he was inspired by what he described "as the most beautiful site he had ever seen." Traveling throughout the city and countryside, the beauty of the Jerusalem Stone and the connection he felt between the stone and his faith made a lasting impression. When Jim's business required he return to Israel, he searched for a souvenir of the Jerusalem Stone. Unable to find one, Jim researched the possible channels for importing Jerusalem Stone and established contact with the owner of a quarry who shipped samples of the stone to the Martin home. Over the kitchen island, Jim, Penny and Jim's brother Mike began brainstorming product ideas.

In December of 1997 Jim and Penny Martin, Mike Martin, Howard and Sue Rothman, John and Mary Bonenberger founded Holy Land Stone Company, LLC. Penny took on the role of managing partner. The first product was a chiseled cube of the stone with a bronze insert embedded in it that read "Millennium 2000--Prepare the Way of the Lord". From there Jim, Penny and Mike designed crosses, scripture stones, menorahs, plaques...gifts for all faiths. In April 1998, HLSC moved from the garage to a one room office and single manufacturing bay. In 2000, a laser engraver was purchased to enhance the stones with inspirational quotes and scriptures. The company continued to expand over the years to 4 full-time and 3 part-time employees at its current 3000 square foot leased facility.

After struggling through the first years of business and basically learning by doing" as she describes it, Penny Martin heard about the SBDC in Melbourne. In 2002 she began meeting with SBDC Director and Certified Business Analyst Vicky Peake who provided expert guidance with regard to marketing/sales and financial capital needs." As Penny explains, "this relationship with the SBDC and Vicky has continued throughout the years and has proven to be a significant resource. In addition to the direction gained through SBDC sponsored training events, the networking opportunities available to small businesses... are invaluable."

In October, 2008 Holy Land Stone Company purchased a water jet cutting system which provides increased production efficiency. Holy Land Stone Company markets to retail stores, hospital gift shops, funeral homes and cemeteries, long term care facilities, Hospice organizations, QVC, churches and online stores.

As Managing Partner, Penny Martin's diverse artistic and accounting background have led Holy Land Stone from a start up to the development and design of up to 600 products. Penny attributes the company's success to a unique, inspiring product line, belief in the vision, old fashioned hard work, perseverance, the support of her husband and extended family and the "talented Holy Land Stone team who works together and truly cares about and shares in the mission of giving glory to God through the work we do and products we offer."

Penny Martin's spirituality and passion shine in each piece of authentic Jerusalem Stone that is handcrafted in her Melbourne facility. An SBDC client since 2003, Penny has inspired and supported countless customers, colleagues, friends and SBDC clients with her determination to bring the feeling of peace through her more than 600 standard products and her custom pieces for domestic and international organizations. Penny's interpersonal warmth and concern for people she encounters have been most welcome at our Women's Expo's, Women's conferences, business planning, disaster planning, marketing, government contracting and funding roundtables. Penny is a receptive and eager counseling client and acts swiftly upon recommendations. Holy Land Stone Company currently employs 6 dedicated workers who share the dream to distribute the "precious stones" and their symbolism for years to come. In these challenging economic times, Penny diligently seeks opportunities to expand.