

CLEMENS CONSTRUCTION INSIDER OF 23 YEARS GIVES TELL-ALL INTERVIEW

VIP Accountant Reveals Employer's Humble Beginnings, Tattoo

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PHILADELPHIA — WITH LESS THAN 24 HOURS REMAINING in her career, I sat down with Brenda Rice—a key player in the current success of Clemens, a renowned commercial construction company based in Center City Philadelphia since 1979.

Sometimes referred to as “Miss Brenda” by young colleagues, Ms. Rice often announces her arrival to conversations by calling her co-workers’ names from 15 feet away. Easily recognizable by her colorful fashion and peddling of large quantities of fresh fruit, Ms. Rice is one of the company’s most highly sought-after employees (likely because she is the sole distributor of weekly paychecks. Below she shares shocking details of not only her career, but also her future as a retiree.

What was your first job? *Jr. Clerk at the U.S. Marine Corp office on Broad & Washington Avenue.*

When did you get into the Construction Industry? How has it changed since then? *I started as a Secretary/Accounting Clerk at Turner Construction Company in 1984. I can't comment on the field, but I don't think Construction has changed as much as technology has changed how things are done.*

When did you join Clemens? In what role? *In 1995 I was working at the Adams Mark Hotel and looking to change careers. I submitted my resume to the GBCA and Jimmy [Clemens] told Bob [Nedl, former Clemens CFO] and Betty to call me. I joined Clemens as a Payroll/*



Accounting Clerk. I then moved on to Accounts Receivable and assisted Project Managers with invoices. The Accounting Department started small, so I learned many different functions just by helping out wherever I was needed.

How was Clemens different back then? *Clemens was very small in the beginning—there were about 10-12 Office Staff when I started. We felt more like family than coworkers, and that included the Field Staff and a handful of our Subcontractors. We had lots of unplanned office gatherings with our subcontractors where we laughed, joked and hung out. I can remember when those in the office and field got married and when their children were born. I still keep in touch with most of them—their children are now grown with children of their own!*

Do you have any stand-out memories? *There are many but my best one was the night we all went out partying and some of us got tattoos (myself included, compliments of Tom Vento from American Floors!) That evening will always be in my mind...we had a blast!!!*

What will you miss most about Clemens? Least? *This is a hard question because I have a lot of good memories here, and some not-so-good, but that's the case anywhere you work. I will miss going around talking to everyone every morning, and there are some employees I will truly*

miss (not calling out any names).

What was the most rewarding part of your time here? The most stressful? *The most stressful time was years ago when the company grew by leaps and bounds up to three offices—we had all these new people coming in and they wouldn't conform to the way we did things here...especially the Jersey office... LOL. It felt like we could never make things “flow.” There isn't a specific “most rewarding time.” I was always happy here and felt/still feel it's a great place to work.*

Any personal milestones during your time here? *Clemens afforded me the opportunity to get my degree in Social Administration—something I always wanted, and for that I am forever grateful.*

What are you looking forward to in retirement? *Getting this pesky knee replaced is my number one priority. Getting rid of a lot of stuff at home, going to the Senior Citizen Center, volunteering, crocheting, and traveling to Cuba with friends next year.*

Will you still attend C3's Annual Holiday Party? *If I'm invited, I sure will!*

