

Bennett

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language of the trucking business. Among the services are haul-away, flat beds, heavy-haul, drop decks, vans, drive-away and hot shots (for light-duty hauling needs).

In addition to the company's main offices on Industrial Parkway in McDonough, Bennett has terminals and agencies in each region, allowing the company to serve all of the 48 continental United States and Canada.

Describing the company as "a family operation," Mrs. Garrison explained how many employees have worked for the company for years.

"We have a lot of really good people who work here, and when you get good people, that's something to really treasure," she said of her employees.

In addition to the employees that she considers extended family, many members of her immediate family are part of the company. Her sons, Danny and David Lowry are each vice presidents, and her daughter, Lynette McBrayer is a vice president and manager of the affiliated company, Transport Travel.

Of her children, Mrs. Garrison said she was "fortunate" that they like the business and take an inter-

est in it. "One of these days, it will be theirs. This is something to be passed on," she said, explaining how a number of large conglomerates have tried to buy out the firm, but she is determined to remain independent.

Her son David's wife Brenda also works for the company, as does her daughter Lynette's husband, Mark McBrayer.

Mrs. Garrison has three grandchildren, Lisa, Bradley and Katyln, with another on the way.

Among her other employees, Mrs. Garrison called her executive vice president, William T. Ford, her "right hand man," and she relies heavily on her vice president of safety, Barbara Phillips.

The drivers are also important to Mrs. Garrison, who explains that while long-haul trucking is "a hard life," "It gets in your blood and you can't imagine doing anything else."

"There are a lot of really professional drivers left," she said, explaining that her company has at least six husband/wife teams who go on the road together.

"That's their profession, that's their job," she said.

"Drivers usually get bad publicity, but there are a lot of owner/operators who are very safety conscious," she added.

The Bennett company has a D.O.T. "satisfactory" rating, which is the highest safety rating you can



ALICE MURRAY WRIGHT/Staff

Bennett Motor Express President Marcia Garrison keeps her family involved in the business with two sons and a daughter working as vice presidents.

Marcia Garrison Keeps Bennett Trucks Rolling

By Alice Murray Wright
Special Sections Editor

When Marcia Garrison leaves her home in Eagles Landing to drive to work each morning, she never knows what her day will bring.

With 93 employees in the McDonough headquarters of Bennett Motor Express, plus another 700 owner-operators who drive rigs nationwide for her trucking company, each day "is a new adventure," Mrs. Garrison said.

"There is always something new — a different problem, a different challenge," she related as she described running one of the largest independent owner/operator carriers in the country.

When she and her late hus-

band, who died in 1981, bought the business from George Bennett in 1974, the company had about 15 trucks and compact trailers.

Today, while the majority of her owner/operators own their own cabs, the Bennett company owns more than 400 tractors and 800 trailers and provides a wide range of trucking services nationwide.

"If you eat a Sunshine cookie anywhere in the South, we probably hauled it for you," she said of just one of the many products carried in Bennett trucks and trailers.

Under Mrs. Garrison's leadership, the company has grown to include dozens of services, which she rattles off in the short-hand

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Marcia Garrison

get from the Department of Transportation, she said.

In addition to safety, another prime component of the trucking business is service, which Mrs. Garrison stresses to all her employees.

A sign in the dispatching area sums up one of her main business mottos, "Service is all we have to sell."