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## PROFILE OF THE WEEK

Jeffrey & Smithe Sodine, principals,  
Eagle Transfer Corporation

### Husband and wife team moves to build a legacy

BY LINDA BARR

When Jeffrey Sodine told his mother he was leaving school to work as a moving man, she predicted he was headed down a fast track to no-where.

Twenty-five years on, Sodine is the owner of Eagle Transfer Corporation, one of the most successful commercial moving and storage firms in New York City, and his clients include some of the biggest, most influential corporations in the world.

His focus these days is on building a legacy and taking his firm to the highest levels. "Since its inception over 30 years ago, Eagle Transfer has always been a good company," said Sodine.

"Our objective now is to achieve a level of greatness. To have a great company is to have one that is run well, is profitable and that provides an environment everyone affiliated with wants to be part of.

"To build such a firm and to have our clients share the same sentiments is our ultimate goal – our success will be in building a legacy like that."

Sodine admits he began his career on a whim after a relative hooked him up with the Santini Bros. movers in the mid-1970s. However, it didn't take the young go-getter long to see

that there was indeed a bright future in the business for anyone willing to apply himself.

After six months of lugging office equipment in and out of buildings, Sodine applied for a management position and began his rise through the ranks of the industry. Within four years, he was managing the Santini's complete operations network as well as overseeing warehousing and purchasing needs. In the mid-80s, he moved to Certified Moving & Storage as vice president of operations and, for the next 12 years honed his sales and management skills.

In the late 1990s, Sodine met Alex

Rocca, then owner of Eagle Transfer and a man with whom he enjoyed instant rapport. Rocca was eyeing retirement and actively looking for a succession line for his firm. It was just the opportunity Sodine and his wife, Smithe, had been looking for.

Sodine got on board as executive vice president and worked out a deal with Rocca how he would have the opportunity to buy the firm when the time was right for both of them. The deal was done in April, 2006, and Smithe made the decision to leave behind a successful teaching career to join her husband in his quest to build

a legacy.

While her husband has combined his operations and sales experience with a hands-on approach to management, Smithe has thrust herself into managing the day-to-day operations of the business as well as using her communications skills to expand the firm's marketing capabilities.

Smithe is also working towards solidifying the firm's presence as a Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) and has embarked on an effort to raise the company's profile through membership of industry organizations that include Professional Women in Construction and the NY/NJ Minority Development Council.

A native of Haiti, Smithe has thrived in her new corporate role and is excited about developing new relationships with firms eager to do more business with minority and women owned firms.

"First of all, we can offer clients our expert services because we are the right company to provide them with the very best relocation services available but, if they do have diversity initiatives to fulfill, then we are able to help them with those diversity obligations," she said.

While Smithe has already been credited with raising the firm's profile, her husband has set about solidifying his firm's reputation as a first class commercial mover. As he sees it, "No matter how good we are at selling the company, we have to produce for our clients and we pride ourselves in a reputation for completing even the most complicated projects on time and on budget."

Like most industries, the moving business has undergone a technological revolution that has impacted every facet of operations, from

communications, to storage, to security, and Sodine has successfully led his firm into the future with a confidence he earned on his rise to the top.

He is proud of a client list that reads like a who's who of corporate America, from leading financial institutions such as Citigroup, Goldman Sachs or UBS, to media corporations like with Martha Stewart Living, Playboy Enterprises and Lifetime Television. Eagle Transfer has even been employed by The Library of Congress to undertake delicate moving work.

"It's as impressive a list of any moving company in New York City," said Sodine, who continues to play a hands-on role that extends to visiting jobs sites on nights and weekends when the majority of the firm's work is carried out.

"It's important for people who work for me and for clients to see me on the job. That way, the clients know we are committed to what we do and my staff can see I am taking an interest in how we are performing.

"The labor force is very much part of the team and we believe it is important to include them in daily interaction and through regular meetings that allow staff to keep up to date with the company projections and where we are going forward.

"I remember when my mother asked me if I was sure about what I was doing with my life and I told her after just a few weeks on the job that I wouldn't be a moving man for long because I saw great opportunity for a career in this industry.

"I think she would have been proud, extremely proud, of what we have achieved so far." ■

