

Builder Profile: Discover the Passion Behind Wisconsin Log Homes



Many people have dreams. But only a select few have the fearless ambition and dedication to turn their dreams into reality.

Dave and Kathy Janczak, founders and owners of Wisconsin Log Homes, have exactly what it takes. It started as a love for each other and turned into a passion for helping other people build the lives of their dreams.

After 40 years of building, their log homes have been featured in national magazines, such as *Log Home Living*, and television programs, including the show *Epic Log Homes*.

We spoke with Kathy Janczak about how this custom home builder got its start and what makes Wisconsin Log Homes so unique.

When friends first introduced Dave and Kathy to each other, the pair found they both had a deep love for the outdoors, and as Kathy puts it, "a desire to get away from a world that was too congested, too fast, and too sophisticated."

The couple got married in the early '70s. Just like most newlyweds, they spent a lot of time dreaming about what their life together would be like. One thing they both wanted was their very own log home nestled in the countryside, away from the distractions of modern life.

Not long after their wedding, the Janczaks found 20 acres of land in Pittsfield, Wisconsin and fell in love with it. Dave promised his wife he would build a cozy log home for the two of them on the property.



Dave and Kathy in their younger years

Dave had plenty of experience in construction. He'd helped his father remodel homes as a youngster and learned all about carpentry while working for a local builder during high school and college. Those skills proved to be quite useful as he took on this initial project.

The Janczaks hand-cut and peeled all the logs for their home, and during that time, they caught the attention of many people.

"We became the talk of the town when Dave was building our log home," Kathy remembers. "Newspapers and TV stations came to do stories, and that's when we discovered that people around the country wanted the same feeling that we loved."

People even began showing up at the Janczak's rustic home asking Dave to build one for them. Public reaction was so strong, the couple decided to dedicate their careers to designing and building custom log homes.



While Dave focused on building and designing the homes, Kathy began taking on marketing initiatives, educating people about the value of owning a custom log home. The couple takes pride in helping people enjoy the beauty of Wisconsin and beyond while fulfilling that desire to escape into nature.

"The idea of relaxing and feeling like you're on a permanent vacation while you're there is probably what attracts people to a log home the most," says Kathy. "Our homes are built in all kinds of gorgeous settings where people feel that both themselves and their home can be one with nature. Being home should be comfortable and peaceful, and a Wisconsin Log Home makes that possible."

WLH is also recognized as an innovator and industry leader. Dave talks about how much work it was cutting and peeling all the logs for the first few log homes he built. He knew there had to be a more efficient way. That's why they developed the groundbreaking Thermal-Log™ building system in 1976.

It's an eco-friendly system allowing for flexible design options, a structured framework that prevents shrinking and settling, as well as an insulated core to promote energy efficiency. The result is a beautiful home that is easy to maintain.

Projects from Wisconsin Log Homes are anything-but cookie cutter. In fact, Dave points out that every single home they've ever constructed is one-of-a-kind.

Kathy says one of the many things that sets their company apart from the competition is how deeply involved their team is throughout the entire process.

WLH has its own sawmill featuring computerized equipment for precise cutting. Plus, they employ their own in-house architects, interior designers and other experts. The goal is to help customers manage every aspect along the way.

"We have the people, the knowledge, the experience, and the capabilities to bring each custom home project full circle. Clients can choose how much or how little they want us to do. We can hand-hold every step of the way from start to finish, or we can help where needed," Kathy explains.

Of course, with all the growing WLH has done in the past 40 years, the number of people behind the company has grown far beyond Dave and Kathy. She says their team's dedication is an important part of continuing the vision they had as a young couple.

"They are as passionate about these homes and our clients' experiences as we are. They truly care, and act as if each home is their own. We are a big family, and our homeowners become part of our family as well."

Included in that family are industry partners like Pella Windows & Doors of Wisconsin. Kathy says it means a lot to work with companies that have the same commitment to quality and service.

"Pella's friendly, professional, and prompt service is an extension of the service we personally provide our clients," Kathy says. "Any issues that arise, such as maybe a family pet running through a screen door, they are there and ready to address whatever the situation may be. Their service reflects us as a builder, and we are very grateful for their exceptional staff and the way they treat our clients during and after construction."

Kathy understands how trusting someone else to build your dream home can be "a huge leap of faith for anyone." She notes that it's one of the biggest choices and investments many people will make during their lives. Beyond that, the kinds of homes her company builds are much more than a roof and walls with windows and doors.

"It's a place where memories will be made. It's a place where you will raise your family or enjoy retirement. For some it's an heirloom and a legacy that you are leaving behind," she says. "Knowing that we have played a role in bringing so many dreams to life around the world is truly incredible. Each home has a big piece of our heart."