



NEWS

# The Greggs have long history of building in Glendale

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Gregg's Artistic Homes might have lost its chance to develop the Oakmont View V hillside property, but over the past 70 years, the Gregg family has built more than its fair share of Glendale.

More than 3,000 homes in the city have been developed by the Greggs since Alice Lee Gregg started the business in 1934. Gregg homes are mainly in northwest and northeast Glendale and La Crescenta.

"In those areas, it's hard to drive around without seeing one of our homes," Vice President Bob Gregg said.

Gregg's Artistic Homes was established in 1934, when the company's current president, John Gregg, was only a year old. His father fell

ill with tuberculosis, and his mother became the family's

breadwinner.

She used the family's life savings to buy a piece of property on

Cumberland Road near Brand Park. Without a degree in architecture or

engineering, Alice Lee Gregg designed and eventually built a home

that she turned around and sold for about \$6,000.

The home still stands.

"She always liked drawing plans, and she was very talented from an

arts standpoint," John Gregg said. "She had a great knack for

building very usable plans from a women's perspective."

From the success of her first home, Alice Lee Gregg began a

career, buying properties, building homes and selling them. She had

always wanted to be a developer, though she studied history in

college, at her parents' request.

She became the first female licensed general contractor in

California soon after she designed her first home, John Gregg said.

Over the next five years, Alice and her husband, who recovered from his illness, made a living buying property and building homes. Their homes are scattered throughout the city, including on Verdugo Circle and Oak Circle.

The business shut down during World War II because of the slow economy, but began to prosper again after the war.

John Gregg joined the business in 1958, when he handled the development of 14 homes on a 3-acre property on Capistrano Circle.

Bob Gregg joined the business in 1961 and now oversees construction.

John Gregg's son, Lee Gregg, acts as company counsel.

"I should work less, but I want to stay active, and I'm reluctant to hang it up," said John Gregg, 69. "The satisfaction of having taken a piece of land, subdividing it, building a house ... is such a wonderful feeling."

The Greggs built more than 300 homes on a hillside development project called Oakmont View I, II, III and IV. It was when they

proposed building Oakmont View V, a 572-unit housing project on 238 acres, in 1989 that the business ran into trouble.

The project would be delayed and debated and litigated over the next decade because city officials and residents wanted to preserve the open space. The City Council denied the project in March. Last week, it purchased the site for \$25.25 million.

“We are the largest home builder in the history of Glendale,” John Gregg said. “And that business has not been able to get a building permit since 1989. The city has put us out of business.”

Over the past 12 years, the Greggs have made money through some rental properties and joint ventures outside of Glendale. But they have not built anything substantial in Glendale during that time because of the fuss over Oakmont View V, John Gregg said.

The Greggs say they will continue to work in Glendale. The developers are seeking opportunities to build homes that are affordable for the less affluent in the community, they said.

“We’re not ones to give up,” John Gregg said. “We hope to be able to provide more housing for the people of Glendale, and I’m not ashamed of wanting to do it. We’ve always thought that producing housing is a noble pursuit.”