

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## **POOL BUILDER CELEBRATES 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

*Founder Joseph Michael Vassallo, CBP, PHTA Fellow Notes Many Accomplishments*

*Paragon Pools' Milestone beats the odds according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics*

(Las Vegas, NV) July 15, 2021. In July 2001, a thriving economy and a longing desire to take control of his own destiny in business, Joseph Michael Vassallo parlayed his 13 years' experience in the pool industry to open Paragon Pools, a custom in-ground pool and spa design and construction company. Twenty years later, Paragon Pools' list of accomplishments has even surpassed its founder's expectations.

Working side-by-side with Vassallo is his son, Joseph Jr.; both hold the state required Qualified Expert (QE) rating, as well as the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance- PHTA (Formally the APSP) Certified Building Professional (CBP) credentials, the association's top scholastic honors.

Vassallo's company has beat the odds according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics for private sector establishments. Data indicates- of companies that opened in 2001 (between April 2001- March 2002\*) 54.8% survived to year 5 and only 22.9% have a survival rate at year 19. ([BLS- annual opening-year ended March 2002\\*](#)). Vassallo believes the key to success for a small business is to be adaptable to the market and economic climates.

Today, the family-owned business is known locally as well as internationally for their innovative design concepts, industry involvement, consumer awareness, safety activism and community service.

The Vassallo's established the design principle of "AquaTecture™": the discipline of designing, engineering and erecting of water environments and ancillary components, in a harmonious nature with consideration to function, space and aesthetics.

And innovative concepts such as the signature WetFlame™, combination water and fire feature were instrumental in igniting a major trend in the pool industry, as well as obtaining a feature segment on HGTV.

Taking an active role in the PHTA was a natural step for Vassallo Sr. "I initially became involved with the PHTA because of numerous regulations being introduced at the local, state and national levels. I knew it was important to have a say in the regulations that directly impacted our industry and the consumer. In each situation, through my involvement as a representative of the PHTA we were successful in developing reasonable and economical solutions that allowed the industry to prosper as well as protect the consumer."



Both Vassallo's served on PHTA's Builders Education Committee and were contributors to the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> editions of the PHTA Builders Manual- the industry's leading technical publication. And, as a noted educator, Vassallo Sr. has presented higher-level seminars for international expositions. Joseph Sr. served on the PHTA National Board of Directors and is a Past-President of the Builder's Council, he continues to serve on the Builders Council and Education Committee. His work with the PHTA earned him the 2012 *CBP of the Year Award* and in 2014 he was named to the *Fellows Program*.

He shares his expertise with consumers as well as with industry professionals. A former contributing columnist for the Las Vegas Review Journal (RJ)- Home section, his pools and spa column ran for two years (2006-2008). The column resulted in Vassallo penning an award-winning, coffee table book, *The Al Fresco Life: Pools, Spas, Bars & Kitchens* featuring Paragon Pools' projects across the Las Vegas valley. He continued to be a featured writer for the RJ for the next 10 years.

He was also contributing author for the international publication, *Waves: India's Pool, Spa and Bath Magazine* from 2011-2013.

His extensive credentials make him the "go to" expert for the media where he is tapped for advice and commentary on a range of issues from design trends to safety applications, how to select a reputable contractor and the do and don'ts of remodeling.

A stalwart water safety activist, Vassallo Sr. launched "Float Like A Duck" in 2003, a water safety initiative with a mission of "Educating the public on the importance of SAFETY while celebrating the joys of water sports!" The initiative has developed into a multi-faceted, award-winning program. Paragon Pools partners with major supporters including first responders, local media, industry vendors and the YMCA to provide a variety of programs free to the public.

The multitude of design, business and philanthropic awards that line the walls and shelves of the office remind the Vassallos of the importance of delivering high-quality projects to every client, as well as giving back to community.

A collection of international design awards includes numerous PHTA- *Awards of Excellence*, Pool and Spa News- *Masters of Design Awards*, Signature Pool & Spa- Design Awards, ADAS- *Best Pool Award*, PebbleTec- *World's Greatest Pools*, AQUA Choice Awards, and an HD Magazine- *HEIDI Award*, and Las Vegas Parade of Homes- *Best Pool Award*.

As for business accolades, Paragon Pools was named to the *Aqua 100 Hall of Fame*, after receiving the *Aqua 100 Award*, five years consecutively, presented to Top pool industry businesses in the US. Paragon Pools is the only builder in the state of Nevada to attain the Aqua 100 status. In 2009, the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce honored Vassallo Sr. as *Entrepreneur of the Year*. Vassallo Jr was named to the Vegas, Inc (formally InBusiness) 2011 *40-Under-40*. Both were named *Distinguished Men of Southern Nevada* for 2012 & 2015. And Paragon Pools was a finalist in the Nevada Business Magazine *Family-Owned Businesses 2011*.



Vassallo Sr's community work with water safety, the CCSD Title-1 HOPE homeless education program, the Salvation Army Food Bank and other non-profits has been recognized by many entities including proclamations from the Mayor, as well as congressional citations from the state and national level. He has been presented with the *Citizens of Distinction*, *The Jefferson Award*, the *Golden Hands Service Award*, the National Drowning Prevention Alliance- *Community Lifesaver Award*, the National Water Safety Congress- *Award of Merit*, American Country Countdown w/Kix Brooks- *Kidde Hero of the Week*, and the President's Council on Sports Fitness & Nutrition-*Community Leadership Award*.

That leap of faith to open his business has been presented with challenges over the years, especially when the housing industry went bust (2007-2009), but the tenacious Vassallo met those challenges head-on, even altering the business model to accommodate an alternative client base. When the company opened in 2001, its clients consisted of residential projects more specifically new home construction. In 2007, the company's client list became a combination of residential and commercial projects with an increased focus on remodeling and renovations of existing pools, and spas. Advanced education, experience and crucial industry contacts gave Vassallo and his team the credentials and capability to take on problematic and difficult projects.

As the economy slowly improved so too was the growth of new construction in both the commercial and residential sectors. The desire for new pools grew with fewer requests for re-models.

Then, the Pandemic hit in the spring of 2020, and the demand for a backyard pool exploded. "It seemed like everyone in the city was calling us for a pool. And they wanted it NOW," explains Vassallo. "We have always prided ourselves on being very responsive to our clients. However, the industry climate in Vegas and across the nation is making it difficult to operate in a manner that meets our strict standards. There is a decrease in the labor force and a shortage of products. This makes it challenging to complete projects and it also means an increase in prices for the consumer. We have worked through challenges in the past, and this is just another phase for our company to conquer."

"When I look back at the last twenty years I think, "Did we really accomplish all that", exclaims Vassallo Sr. "But when you're passionate about what you do, it's not difficult to share it with others. I believe that passion has been evident to our clients over the years, and they have allowed our visions to become part of their lives. For that we are grateful."

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**Photo Caption:** Paragon Pools Founder/President Joseph Vassallo, Sr. (right) and son/VP Joseph Jr. celebrate the 20th anniversary of the company.

