

## The Court Co. Has a Clearly Defined Role: Construction of Racquetball, Squash Courts

BEFORE GRADUATING FROM college, Randy Stafford made a phone call that would determine his life's course.

While playing on the professional racquetball tour and after writing a book titled *Racquetball, The Sport For Everyone*, Stafford called Vanderbilt University trying to sell copies of his book for their courses. He was told they would use his book, but their courts were damaged and in need of renovation.

Stafford replied that he could repair the courts. He submitted a bid and Vanderbilt accepted it.

Mike Mattingly, a college friend in need of a job, was contacted to help with construction. That was the beginning of what is now known as The Court Co.

Stafford's earnings from his book and a bank loan were helped with the fledgling company's cash flow.

Contracts were secured as Stafford traveled to racquetball tournaments on weekends. "Basically as I would travel to tournaments throughout the country, I would meet people who were interested in building racquetball courts. Many of the initial courts were built for friends of mine," Stafford says.

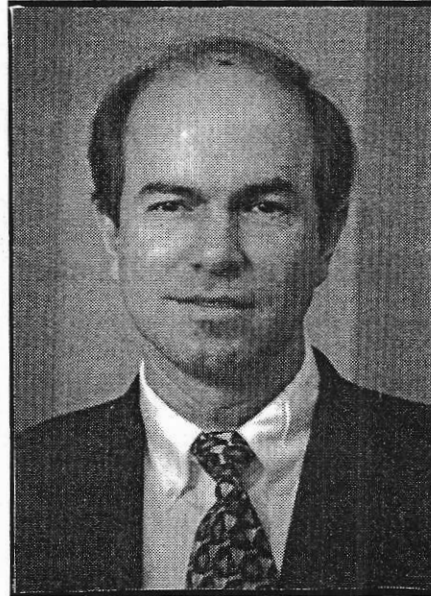
Now, the company is the only one in the world that exclusively builds racquetball and squash courts. Although based locally, "Memphis is a small part of our market," Stafford says.

The 41-year-old says his company has built about 3,200 courts for athletic clubs, apartment complexes, corporate wellness centers, military bases, universities and individuals around the world.

"The courts cost anywhere from \$25,000-\$30,000 each depending on the amount of glass used," Stafford says, adding that "squash courts are smaller and cost a little less — around \$20,000-\$25,000."

While the company has a fair number of competitors, Stafford notes that other companies "do other things in conjunction to building courts."

"We're more successful than they are because we pay more attention to the



Randy Stafford

courts," he adds.

Another reason for the company's success, Stafford says, is its unique relationship with employees. "The average (time) of each team of our construction crew being with The Court Co. is 15 years. The same is true with the office personnel. Virtually, there's no turnover," he says.

"Besides," he adds, "racquetball and squash — especially racquetball — are a few of the sports you can play and, in an hour, have a great time and get a great workout," Stafford says.

According to his estimates, Memphis has about 160 racquetball courts, which might surprise most people.

Although the company builds worldwide and has about 10 full-time employees, they are growing in other areas as well. "We're going through a full integration of computers to streamline the accounting aspect of business and aid in sales. This should be completed in about three or four months and we're really excited," he says.

Stafford adds: "For a big business, this would be no big deal, but for a small business like us it's a major undertaking." §