



“WITH OTHER MATERIALS, I WORRY ABOUT THEM LASTING, BUT NOT WITH CAST IRON.”

Kelly Ireland, Journeywoman / Local 690



For newly minted journeywoman Kelly Ireland, plumbing is a family affair

“My dad and my grandfather are both plumbers. I never thought I’d be one, but now that I am, I LOVE it. I used to be a commercial baker. I never thought of myself as Kelly the Baker, but I take pride in being Kelly the Plumber.”

As a plumber for the Local 690 in Philadelphia, Kelly has been a part of the Comcast II building, one of the biggest projects ever in the city.

As Kelly puts it, “How can you not be happy going to work a thousand feet in the air?”

Kelly also reports that cast iron is her favorite thing to do.

“Cast iron is quality, and it looks like quality. I especially like the challenge of working with large-diameter pipe. Not only am I a woman, but I’m also only 4’11,” so there were some doubts about me in this field — you have to be able to pull your own weight. I had to learn how to pick up and balance 10-foot lengths of cast iron pipe. My shoulder is basically 4’ off the ground, so no matter how I walk the pipe down, it’s difficult to

catch it in the middle. It took some practice, but I figured it out.”

Kelly enjoys working on larger projects, and tries to avoid doing smaller jobs that use cheap materials.

“Cast iron is a quality material that looks nice when it’s installed. And I’ve never had a leak. With other materials, I worry about them lasting, but not with cast iron.”

Kelly is proud to follow in her family’s footsteps in the plumbing industry and is proud her family tree is made of cast iron. “People don’t think about it, because plumbing isn’t sexy, but without plumbing, you don’t have a city. You have a health disaster.”

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