

## The Next Generation

Cannon, now 53, is working his way out of day-to-day operations. His children, who grew up around self-storage construction, are being groomed to take over the business. Starr was installing roofs and partitions when she was 15. Tom Garbutt, Cannon's eldest son, oversees the company's nationwide construction. "Tommy started at 13 screwing buildings together," Cannon says.

"I kept the business small while Starr and Tommy were young," he continues. "As they've gotten older and come into the business, the business grows by about 25 percent a year. That's due in direct relationship to their abilities. Over the past several years, they've done quite a bit. More or less, I'm the guy who sits over their shoulders."

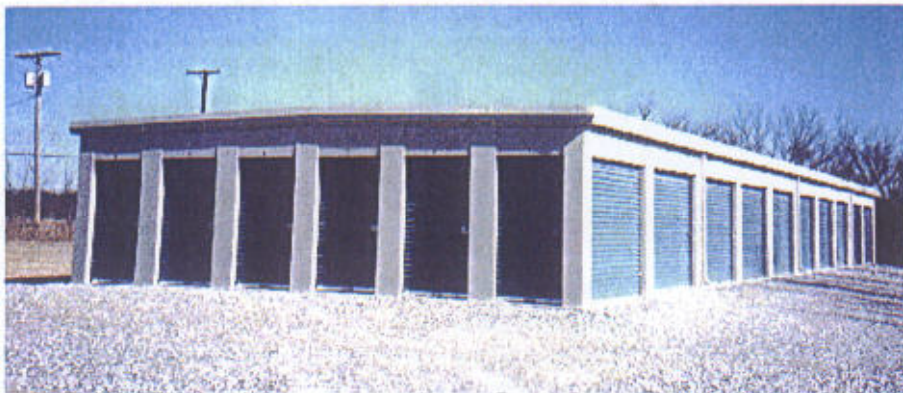
The decision to expand came with Starr's continuing on-the-job education.

"We waited for the right time," Starr says. "I needed to learn more about the business. I had been a teenager when I first started really working for Dad. Once I'd been in the office and learned as much as I could, that's when we decided to do it." Starr also sees the company growing as her younger brother, David, works his way into the business. "I've tried to do my best through the past three-and-a-half years to learn, because Dad started with nothing and built it up," she says. "I just want to make sure I continue to help it grow."

Longevity sits in the employee ranks as well. There are people working with Cannon today who were superintendents when his idea for self-storage construction came to life in '79. "Most of the people who run my crews have been with me for more than 20 years," Cannon says. "More than 60 percent of the people who are still working for me have been here for 10 years, which is very rare."

Self-storage has grown by leaps and bounds in the last 20 years, and Cannon has been there to see it through the good times and bad. Cannon says the public's perception of the industry has improved, allowing it to grow to the billion-dollar industry it is. Cannon Storage Systems has also evolved from a one-man operation to that of nearly 40 employees working throughout the country. But for all the money to be made erecting piers, headers and standing-seam roofs, it's still a people business. Just ask Vern Cannon.

"Our success is due to the people who work in the field," Cannon says. "We're very good here in the office, but it's the people in the field who satisfy the customers and work during the rain, snow and wind. That is where the money's made. That's where your reputation's made."



For more information, call the corporate office at 888.500.3299; fax 580.248.6091; visit [www.cannonstorage.com](http://www.cannonstorage.com). The Arlington, Texas, office can be reached at 817.784.6611.