

Eight Over 80: ANNE-MERELIE MURRELL

SPECIAL REPORT: Eight Over 80

By [David Nusbaum](#)

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ANNE-MERELIE MURRELL, 81

Chief Executive, Giroux Glass

Anne-Merelie Murrell has a simple explanation of why, at 81, she doesn't want to retire.

"It's much more stimulating to be in a social environment and working," she said. "I have no personal interest in golf, tennis or bridge. Business is just more interesting."

Murrell has spent the last 18 years working as a glass contractor – an unexpected outcome for her. She moved to Hollywood in 1936 and acted in 50 movies as a child. Then, wanting to be in a more stable career, she became a dental assistant. That's how she met her husband, George, a dentist. Eventually, she got into real estate.

"In the early 1980s, I wanted to improve the community around USC because that is our city," she said.

So she bought several properties and fixed them up. One building was home to Giroux Glass, a 10-person glass subcontracting firm in downtown Los Angeles.

"I had to buy the glass company to buy the building," she said. "You always want to do the best you can, so we just kept growing the company."

She made the purchase in 1991. At the time, Giroux Glass generated less than \$1 million annually. This year, the company will generate approximately \$76 million and now has 450 employees. Murrell's company is considered one of the leading glass contractors in the nation.

Murrell works five days a week, but is considering taking a day off once a week. She wakes up at 4:30 a.m. and makes a 35-minute commute from Rolling Hills. She arrives by 6:30 a.m. to avoid traffic.

"I drive a Denali because I'm in the construction business and I usually have a lot of stuff to haul around," Murrell said.

Once at work, she meets with clients, or heads out to walk job sites.

Over the past two years, Giroux Glass has done more than \$50 million worth of work at the MGM City Center site in Las Vegas. Murrell travels to Vegas once a month to oversee the job.

Her company built the glass-bottom “skywalk” that hangs over the edge of the Grand Canyon, and it is bidding on the LAX Tom Bradley International Terminal project.

In order to keep up with technology, she helped launch a research project at USC’s School of Architecture on glass and glazing. The university wants to put together a studio that will explore what’s best for the environment and energy savings in glass production.

“Every day there is something new in the field of science and technology, and that is a wonder,” she said.

Murrell has two children and five grandchildren. She said she works more hours now than when she was younger because she had more responsibilities to her family as a young mother.

She said the best advice she ever got is to live by the golden rule. That’s what her mother and her mom’s twin sister taught her while she was growing up.

“It’s a good way to live,” Murrell said.

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