

EVENTS

GEORGE DIVEN, OWNER, DIVEN CLEANING & RESTORATION

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Diven recalled a situation in 1997 when a homeowner, away for three months on an extended trip out of the country, learned that her three-story home had flooded after an upper-level pipe froze and burst. The homeowner had arranged to have bills paid before leaving, and it was only when a neighbor noticed that water was running out the front door that anyone realized there was a problem. Diven said when he and his crew walked into the Highlands home, they were confronted with something out of a nightmare. "Mushrooms were growing out of the mattresses, there was mold on everything. We picked up a dresser and it just fell apart." Wearing protective equipment and surrounded by a disintegrating building, the crew got to work.

"Not only were furniture and personal belongings destroyed, the water ruined original woodwork and tongue-in-groove pine flooring." The house, estimated to be about a hundred years old, had to be gutted and pieces created to restore the original look and feel of the home. "We ordered custom trim and doors, reidid the floors. All the plaster had crumbled off the walls.

"This was a different kind of job just because the water had run for so long and the mold had a good chance to grow. It was everywhere, and not much was salvageable."

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JOE YATES, ESTIMATOR, PUROFIRST DISASTER SERVICES

One of his team's most challenging jobs involved near-100-degree Kentucky heat. "In July of this year, the team was called in to an apartment building in Louisville a few days after a tenant passed away in his unit." It was a complicated situation because of the person's death and decomposition. "The tenant had been living without electricity for almost six months, so the lack of air conditioning combined with the ambient heat created some unique problems."

The crew was forced to wear professional protection equipment, including a suit with a hood and a face mask. Materials were removed from the apartment, including carpet and carpet padding, then an antimicrobial agent was applied to kill germs and other bacteria. And the walls were treated with Kilz, a brand of primer, and repainted. When work crews finished for the day, a portable ozone generator ran all night to erase the odor in the apartment.

The team was able to restore the unit and remove every trace of odor. "That was quite a situation, but that's all part of this job."



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PAM ROGERS, PRESIDENT, BARRY'S SERVICES INC.

Rogers described a project her company worked on in June, when fire, smoke and water damaged a 1,200-square-foot condo. The challenge was preserving a large collection of art and books. "They had 150 framed prints, African carvings, pottery and sculpture, plus shelves full of books. Every inch of wall space was covered with prints, every flat surface had a sculpture on it."

So that everything could be replaced properly, "every item was photographed and cataloged using a digital camera and a computer, and then items were stored in boxes in the condo's garage."

"We lost one or two prints and a couple pieces of furniture, but there were 70 boxes full of salvageable material."

In a month's time, the restoration was finished, including painting and carpet replacement, and every item was returned to its original place. "Our goal is to put it back the way it was, so it's as good or better than it was before."

**CHRIS CONNER, OWNER, COLONIAL SERVICES INC.**

Conner recalled fire in an apartment on the floor of the Levy Building in downtown Louisville few years ago.

Besides living areas, the Levy Building is home to The Old Spagheti Factory, so when the fire set the sprinkler systems off, the entire building was flooded.

"The challenge here was working against the clock. This was about two days before Valentine's Day, which is a really big day for the Spagheti Factory, so we had to work fast."

The building is older and there a lot of heavy drapes and carpets, and many chandeliers.

"The water from the sprinkler just washed everything out so it was pretty dirty." Removing damaged materials, cleaning and drying out were the top priorities.

In addition to Conner's equipment, he rented a massive diesel dehumidifier (brought in via flatbed truck) and 40 more air movers. "Special ductwork was set up to facilitate drying, an electrician was brought in to wire the temporary electricity, and crews worked shifts around the clock.

"A job like this would normally take about two weeks, but we finished in about two days."