

SPRINGFIELD BUSINESS JOURNAL

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



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Pellham Phillips Architects and Engineers has a staff of 21, including its executive council, from left, co-founder Larry Phillips, an engineer; John Luce, architect; Cheryl Doran, interior designer; Brad Parke, director of marketing; and Phil Young, architect. Phillips says the staff size is optimal and the average age of employees – 39 – is youthful, keeping the firm “fresh and new.”

From Hammons Fountain to Hammons Field

Thirty years of design work produces area landmarks by Pellham Phillips

by *Sandy Clark* · Contributing
Writer

First it was Galen Pellham. Then came Larry Phillips, and later Jerry Hagerman jumped on board.

The three businessmen make up the fabric of Pellham Phillips Architects and Engineers Inc.'s history. While only one partner – professional engineer Phillips – remains at the firm, each has had an integral part.

Pellham founded the company in 1977, having worked for architect Richard Stahl for many years. Phillips joined Pellham in 1979 and says Stahl had a lot of influence on architects of the time.

“Several of them peeled off around

then,” Phillips recalls. “Stahl was kind of the granddad to a lot of the architects around here. He is a fellow of the (American Institute of Architects) and is highly respected.”

Pellham and Phillips had worked on a survey crew together when they were 18 but lost touch until they ran into each other at a Swenson's Ice Cream Parlor. Phillips was an architectural engineer with Hood-Rich Architects working for Jack Hood and Don Rich. He had apprenticed with that firm after graduating in 1970 from the University of Missouri.

“(Pellham) wanted to convince me to take that next step and come work for them,” Phillips remembers. “He had a real strong belief that the

mating of architecture and engineering was a natural step in our industry.”

Phillips says projects at Pellham Phillips are about 60 percent architecture and 40 percent engineering.

“I was a little unwilling at first because I had a good job,” Phillips says. “They were very good to me at Hood-Rich, so it was scary to step outside of that to join a young man and start a whole new entity. It was a nervous first step, but it worked out real well.”

Pellham had made a name for himself with work for the Dickerson Park Zoo. Their first project together was Hammons Fountain at Missouri State University.

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The fountain fostered a design relationship with national developer John Q. Hammons that remains today. Pellham Phillips has designed nearly 100 of Hammons' hotels, including Chateau on the Lake in Branson and another one at Lake of the Ozarks currently in design. Perhaps the most high-profile of jobs for Hammons is the Springfield Cardinals' \$32 million home, Hammons Field, which was named Baseballparks.com's 2005 Ballpark of the Year.

During the middle years of the company, 1985-2004, architect Hagerman was a third partner and the firm was known as Pellham-Phillips-Hagerman. Father and son Jerry and Bo Hagerman broke off to start Hagerman New Urbanism, which was a lifelong dream for Jerry Hagerman.

Pellham left in 1999 to pursue real estate and is now running his own company, Pellham Commercial Realtors.

Connections

The Hammons connection was the firm's first of many long-term relationships, including one with Jerry Cook, president of Loren Cook Co.

"I've used them multiple times," Cook says. "I keep going back to them. They are easy to work with and very competent. They know exactly what they are doing, and on their prices, they are very competitive."

Loren Cook Co. manufactures ventilation equipment used around the world in industrial applications and lab environments. The Springfield company has several facilities, with 17 acres under roof all together. Pellham Phillips designed eight of those acres, most notably a

state-of-the-art sound lab.

"It's called a pure-tone sound lab," Cook says. "It floats on a floor and has 13-inch concrete walls on it. The trains go by and you don't even hear them."

New ideas

Over the years, Pellham Phillips has drifted away from less-interesting work, such as the design of Wal-Mart stores, toward projects that are more challenging and exciting, such as resorts and athletics venues.

The company was larger when the staff was designing Wal-Mart stores, nearly 50 employees, but Phillips considers its current size of 21 employees to be optimal. The average age of staff members is 39, a

youthful number considering the age of the company, Phillips says.

"We are as fresh and new as when we started 28 years ago," Phillips says, adding that it's important to keep new ideas coming in the door. "It keeps the business exciting."

Brad Parke, director of marketing for Pellham Phillips, joined the firm in 2005 following a career in uniform services, lastly with UniFirst. Parke has been repeatedly surprised at the number of buildings Pellham Phillips has designed. Parke's response when Phillips points out some of the firm's buildings around town: "Really?"

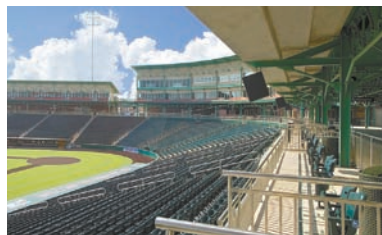
For example, Parke recently learned that Pellham Phillips designed St. John's Whiteside Medical Building, where Parke has taken his kids for years.

However, it's the firm's potential sports venue projects that really get Phillips excited.

"We enjoyed (designing) Hammons Field so much that I often tell people that I hated to take money for doing it, but I did," Phillips says.

"I think this firm is looking to do more sports venues in the future, specifically baseball and softball venues."

Notable projects by Pellham Phillips



Hammons Field



James River Assembly



Juanita K. Hammons Hall

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Employees: 21