

ST. LOUIS CHARACTER

Building on success

JACK HOLLERAN DESIGNS THE PERFECT CAREER

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With the Vietnam War looming, Jack Holleran doubled down on his education, starting with mechanical drawing classes in high school. Holleran found the classes easy, and as a result, he pursued a career in mechanical engineering.

"I tried that for a year," he said. "I didn't like it as much and they discontinued the program anyway."

Holleran, 68, changed paths and obtained an associate's degree in architecture from St. Louis Community College at Meramec. He dove into his architectural career with a position at what is known today as PGAV after graduation, and he never looked back.

Holleran stayed with that firm for about five years, working under Bob Boland, a prominent developer and architect in St. Louis. Boland left PGAV to start his own company, today known as ACI Boland, and Holleran left with him.

He spent the next 10 years working with Boland, but at some point, Holleran thought he had "learned enough." Holleran launched his own firm, called HDA Architects, in 1986 with his partner Mark Duitsman, who retired in 2015.

"We were too young to be fearful then," Holleran said. "We just took off. Mostly, we were very fortunate that a new startup in Minneapolis had met us and decided to work with us on designing buildings for them."

That startup was TOLD Development Co., and HDA went on to design about 65 buildings for the company over 30 years, including the Crossroads Corporate Center in Brookfield, Wisconsin, and Meridian Crossings I and II in Minneapolis.

The company's success, and Holleran's, continued when the firm designed 13 office buildings along the Highway 40 Corridor in St. Louis in the 1990s, from Magna Place in Brentwood to the Gundaker corporate headquarters in Chesterfield.

"The Magna Place project propelled us to West County," Holleran said. "Another developer came to town and engaged us to design the Timberlake Corporate Center. Then Opus came to town and we designed their building."

HDA's success didn't end there. The company, which included just Holleran and



FAVORITE RESTAURANT

Our favorite is definitely Annie Gunn's. We really enjoy it there.



his partner Duitsman at the beginning, grew to include 18 employees and annual revenue of \$6 million by 2017.

But HDA didn't get there just by designing office buildings.

Eventually, the company expanded into beverage distribution facilities, which started in 1993 with a Pepsi-Cola facility at Union 70 Center in north St. Louis County. After nearly 25 years, HDA has worked with more than 150 wholesalers on projects worth \$820 million for distributors such as Texas-based Del Papa Distributing Co. and Silver Eagle Distributors and Fun Beverage of Montana.

In addition, the firm, with Holleran's leadership, has expanded to include multifamily and craft brewery work. HDA's move to multifam-

ily started with a vision for a project in Clayton in 2007, which became the \$75 million Two Twelve building that opened in 2017. The firm also worked on the O'Fallon Brewery in Maryland Heights and is currently working on a brewery project in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Locally, HDA is working on a multifamily project in the Central West End, wrapping up a \$15 million headquarters building for ADB Cos. in Pacific, Missouri, completing the \$43 million AC Hotel by Marriott in the Central West End and an \$80 million development for Desco Group in Frontenac at the old Shriners Hospital for Children site.

"Jack makes sure that everyone involved in a transaction, deal or meeting comes out a winner," Mark Carlie, a former CPA with Stone

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Carlie, said. “He turns lemons into lemonade all the time. Jack is like a quarter-back – he keeps everyone moving toward the finish line.”

Carlie and Holleran worked together on several projects over the past 30 years, Carlie said. He served as an outside CPA for HDA Architects for a time and retired in 2017. Carlie currently offers consulting services in the real estate and construction markets.

In his spare time, Holleran enjoys spending time with his family, including his wife, three children and 11 grandchildren, at their home at the Lake of the Ozarks. Holleran resides in Chesterfield with his wife.

What’s one of the most memorable projects you’ve worked on? Magna Place. It was

a design competition and it became very challenging. But we won it. We had to complete 17 variances of the project with the city, so it was exciting to win. It’s a timeless design. The Two Twelve building would be another one because of what it took to put it together and getting it to actually happen. Getting through the city of Clayton was tough. It was also my first high-rise. It was the first multifamily building in Clayton when we first started working on it.

Do you have a favorite local project not designed by HDA? The RGA headquarters. Just the design of it, it’s fantastic. It’s so contemporary, and unique and challenging to build. The lobby and the interior, the way it was pulled together, it’s so well done.

How has your style evolved since you first got in the business? I don’t think it has. It’s always been the same approach, even back

to the beginning of now. I’ve always been blessed to be optimistic and making things simple for our clients so they don’t get bogged down with all the work that has to be done.

How has the industry changed since you first started? The biggest change we’ve all experienced is computers and the internet, and computer drafting. There’s all this software today that can be used for projects that used to take us so long to do. It’s a whole different business because of it. I’ve adapted to email, but that’s about it. I still have and use my pencil. It’s all I need.

How do you make HDA stand out in a competitive field? I leave that up to my son, Patrick. He coordinates all of our business development and positioning. That includes locally and across the nation. He’d probably say it’s our speed and creativity.



Holleran with his granddaughter, Maggie Holleran, on their annual Christmas vacation in Chicago.

What’s it like to work with your son in a professional capacity? Patrick has been here for 18 years and he’s a pretty take-charge kind of guy. He gets things done. He makes the right decisions and we don’t have any ongoing conflict. I know what his background is and he knows how to do it, so I allow him to do it.

What hobbies and interests do you have outside of work? Growing up in St. Louis, I really enjoy the Cardinals. I am a huge Cardinals fan. I created a study inside my home filled with Cardinals stuff. Sports are big for me. We also have a place at the Lake of the Ozarks. We bought it pretty small and then the grandkids started coming, so we bought the place next door to expand. It’s usually my wife and I, or we go with the entire family. We just spent Thanksgiving there as a family. The funny thing is that I don’t fish. It’s just relaxing to go down there and hang out.




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