

An INTERVIEW with GREG KIL
about his work, his firm and his associates who received the
2013 Award for Service.

How long has you and your architectural firm been operating?

I've been a registered Architect since 1984, and the firm's been in business since 1991. This July 1st will be our 22nd year. *A guess of how many projects you've worked on?* I have never calculated that, but it's in the hundreds, since we do many smaller to mid-sized projects.

About how many projects do you think you've done in Mishawaka?

Our firm designed the Mishawaka Main Junior High Apartments, Main Street Grille and River Walk Townhomes, to name a few. Prior to starting Kil Architecture/Planning, I was Project Architect on the LaSalle Elementary Addition and Renovation while at Cole & Associates.

What sparked your interest in this architecture?

I always was interested in design and construction. Our family built our house when I was 13.

What made you choose to house your offices in an older building?

Any surprises during its renovation? The building was a good fit. I have always lived in older homes, so it was a natural to select our 1904 American Foursquare, although it was more of a project than I initially had anticipated. I ended up re-plastering all of the interior walls, once I started the work. My office-hands were not cut out for that, but I did learn how to thin-coat plaster interior walls with the help of my dad and brother.

Any thoughts about restoring older structures compared to new construction?

We feel strongly that the re-use and retrofit of our architectural heritage is critical to a healthy community. We do not do many suburban projects and where it's possible we enjoy the challenge of dealing with the code and program challenges of a client who wants to rehab an existing building for a compatible new use.

Do you have a special or favorite memory about your projects?

I always enjoy the schematic design phase, where the concept comes together; and the construction phase where the project becomes real.

Did you ever get surprised by a place you were restoring or renovating?

Old Republic in New Carlisle was a memorable project. *(Editor: It's an 1861 Italianate-style mansion which was converted to a bed and breakfast.)*

Any special memory about old houses or historic places before you began working on them?

I do think about the former owners who put the time into the initial construction and those who have maintained or changed the buildings since then.

Which project are you especially proud of?

The projects that have an impact now and for future generations, especially those in the city center and neighborhoods. I was especially humbled by the opportunity to design my original parish's new Church for Holy Family on the west side of South Bend. I am also grateful to and proud of the fantastic staff I have on board. Over the years, I do believe that any success the firm has garnered is directly attributed to their focus and skill.

Any current or future projects you're excited about?

The Rushton Apartments in South Bend is under construction presently -- a 1908 building to be rehabbed into Seniors Apartments. Also The Homestead, an 1835 barn rehab into a wedding event center in New Carlisle, IN, set to open in a week or so.

Any person or place that inspired you to become an architect?

I went to the World's Expo in Montreal in 1971, a year or two after it opened. I enjoyed that along with the historic buildings in Old Montreal.

Anyone you'd credit or thank for aiding your success?

There are too many to thank, but I will mention my parents, Richard and Elizabeth Kil; and my wife, Diane Kil, who encouraged me to start the practice back in 1991 and who supported me along the way.

Brian Crumlish and Don Sporleder, the firm where I worked after graduation from Ball State, in 1982. Virgil Magerfliesch, my boss at Cole Associates, who was a wonderful person to work for, as he challenged me and gave me opportunities that otherwise I would not have had.

But most importantly, my present staff who do the heavy lifting every day, and my past staff. Without them I would not be able have as much fun on a daily basis. I always look forward to coming in to work.

Dan vonBergen, Lesley Annis, Jennifer Feeney, Carolee Miller, Sam Lima, Angela Henry, Madeline Kil and Miles Doyle are presently employed at the firm.

Please add anything else you'd like us to know.

I have enjoyed traveling and especially enjoyed my semester in Grad school in Rome, where my wife, Diane, was able to join me. I was also the staff architect at an Etruscan Excavation for five seasons from 1991 through 1995. ::

Gathered and edited by
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