

Kinslow, Keith & Todd designs their own 25 year history



JESSICA TURNER | Whit Todd, Pat Keith and Andy Kinslow, partners of Kinslow, Keith & Todd

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Kinslow, Keith & Todd designs their own 25 year history Jessica Turner jessicat@tulsabusiness.com | 0 comments

Twenty-five years can add up to be a quick blur, but when you're a reputable architectural firm, it's easy to take a step back and admire the buildings that have made an impact in Tulsa's community and throughout Oklahoma.

Andy Kinslow began this firm as Integrated Space Design in 1989. He saw the need to fill a niche between interior design firms and full service architectural firms; therefore, he focused on interior architecture. In 2000, Pat Keith and Whit Todd partnered to create the full-service architecture, interiors and engineering firm that Kinslow, Keith & Todd is today.

Keith and Todd started their own architectural firm in 1999, and after working with Integrated Space Design on a project, Todd said it made sense to combine resources and join the two firms.

"From there we added structural engineering later, and we added civil engineering later. We've been constantly evolving as what our clients need to be able to service our clients," said Kinslow.

Kinslow, Keith & Todd's growth can be seen in many aspects of their 25-year story.

From only three employees in 1989 to the 47 employees they have now, their gradual growth has developed with the business.

"It's been kind of a slow, gradual growth over the years. This is actually the largest we have ever been. We have never been really big on downsizing. We've tried to not do the hire-up and fire-down kind of thing. We've gradually added people as we need them," said Kinslow.

Since the beginning, the full-service firm has been concentrated on one major aspect: their clients' needs.

"We don't have egos about our design style and all of that. It's whatever is best for the client, and that's what we've always focused on through the 25 years is making our clients happy," he said.

Todd stated that a "client first" mindset has become a part of their company culture. In the interview process for hiring, they search for this mindset along with the ability to work with a team.

"If we get a sense if they are ego-driven or they're difficult or they're my way or no way, we kind of turn away from them, and people in the office who have had that type of attitude don't work here anymore either," said Todd.

The firm has a hand in many different projects in a variety of industries, and their professionals have been able to use the client first mentality to drive them.

"I think a part of our success is that we've been able to attract and keep really talented people in our office that works for us and have bought that into the idea of putting their client's needs first. That's really helped us become who we are," said Keith.

Like many industries, technology continues to change the architectural industry. Kinslow remembers how they moved from hand drafting to computers in 1991.

Technology change can be a large expense; however, it benefits the firm. Keith shared how three-dimensional modeling has been able to help them show a client in and around a building through a computer program to better understand the design.

"Back before there were those capabilities, it was often difficult for a client to see the design you are showing them with two dimensional drawings. The computer and the software available has really helped us communicate the design with the client more effectively," he said.

The communication with clients has been key to creating remarkable buildings. Working with law firms and education projects have helped elevate the company and have brought clients back. For example, the firm has worked with four different expansions with Crowe and Dunlevy over the years, and Tulsa Public Schools has been a client for 13 years.

Tulsa's can see the firms work for buildings like the Woody Guthrie Museum, Riverwalk Crossing, Hardestry Regional Library and many more key buildings throughout the area. The firm even has their touch on downtown residential housing in buildings like the Philtower and Mayo 420. Now they are currently working on three corporate headquarters for Melton Truck Lines, Unit Corporation and First Oklahoma Bank.

"We've tried not to specialize in one thing because if the economy goes down in one area of work, we're not stuck. We have lots of different things going on," said Kinslow.

Although they create beautiful buildings and interiors, the firm still credits their clients.

"What we try to do is help our clients create those things, and that's what makes us feel good. I know the work I do is a lot of projects on schools, and when you go to the opening of the school and you see all of the kids, you really feel good that you've been able to contribute something for them and the people that will be using the building," said Keith.

The future is full of continuing their growth, keeping up with technology and working with new and continuous clients.

“A lot of it is we’re waiting to see what our clients bring to us and what they’re dreams are. We are just ready to help them dream those dreams and realize what their vision is,” said Keith. «