

From a firm of 4 to 54



The leaders of Alamo Architects

L-R: Victor Castillo, associate; Jason Hyatt, associate; Salvador Garcia, Jr., associate principal; Ariel Chavela, associate principal; Nicole Marrone, associate; Jim Bailey, associate principal; Jerry Lammers, principal; Billy Lawrence, principal; Irby Hightower, principal; Mike McGlone, principal; (not pictured) Michael Lanford, principal

Founding principals of *Alamo Architects*, **Mike McGlone**, **Mike Lanford**, **Irby Hightower** and **Billy Lawrence** came to San Antonio to work with their former professor from UT. But when that didn't work out, they struck out to start something of their own, and they recently passed the 30th anniversary of their firm.

Early on, as young architects, McGlone observes that he and his partners did drawings for other firms, some smaller projects, and everything that came in the door, which he believes was to their benefit.

"We did a lot of different things over time and built up some expertise," he recalls. "I think that's one of the more difficult things sometimes, for young architects to kind of be patient with. You have to do a lot of stuff at the beginning that's not necessarily very glorious."

Soon, more prestigious jobs followed. Their first major project was the relocation of the Fairmount Hotel. They also did the architectural renovation and restoration of the historic building.

Today, the firm has 54 employees, and one of their most prominent local projects is the Shops at La Cantera. They're also proud of their work on the Humane Society on Fredericksburg Road. Their portfolio includes retail, public schools, higher education, multi-family, and quite a bit of interior design, both corporate and for the university systems.

While people undoubtedly recognize examples of the firm's work, they also often comment on the photos of the principals on their website.

"Our website designer used headshots from the band N'Sync as 'placeholders' with a rollover while completing the design of the website," explains McGlone. "We thought it was quirky, funny, and fit our 'don't take yourself too seriously' approach. So, we left it and used it as a standard way to keep the site fresh."

Since then, the principals have used photo alter egos from the themes "The Simpsons," celebrity mug shots, Elizabeth Taylor's husbands – including young and old Richard Burton – famous TV household help, and Bond villains. –mp