

## Mathes Brierre Architects

Firm's success is testimony to teamwork

By June Mathews



From left, Ian Molony, Angela Morton and Edward Mathes of Mathes Brierre Architects examine a model of the \$350 million West Bank Mixed-Use Development.

**For Edward Mathes**, chairman of Mathes Brierre Architects of New Orleans, the key to the long-term success of any architectural firm is teamwork.

"No building is designed by an individual," Mathes said. "It's put together by a team of individuals."

Mathes should know. His decades-long tenure in the profession gives him an intimate understanding of the dynamics that have made Mathes Brierre one of the most respected architectural firms in the country.

An architect for 40 years, Mathes joined the New Orleans-based firm in 1969, working alongside his father until the elder Mathes died in 1976.

"I was fortunate to have had my father's tutelage," Mathes said.

Today's Mathes Brierre has been through a number of name and leader-

ship changes. Begun in the early 1890s by Charles A. Favrot and I.A. Livaudais, the firm was initially named Favrot and Livaudais, Ltd..

The original firm made significant contributions to the architecture of New Orleans, designing some of the city's most prominent landmarks, as well as some of its most magnificent homes. Subsequent names included Favrot and Reed; Favrot, Reed, Mathes, and Bergman; Mathes, Bergman and Favrot; and Mathes, Bergman and Associates Inc.

After his father's death, Ed Mathes purchased the company's stock from his late father's partner and the firm became The Mathes Group.

During the next several years, the firm designed or helped design the spectacular Aquarium of the Americas; Loyola University's Communications,

Music and Theater Complex; Dillard University's Communications and Fine Arts Center; the Lindy Boggs Nursing Home Care Unit and Parking Structure for the Veterans Administration; and the Audubon Tea Room.

The firm's experience on the Loyola project became the catalyst for a number of other music schools and/or performance facilities. Restoration and renovation are also high on the firm's list of specialties.

In 2001, the firm became Mathes Brierre Architects and now thrives under the leadership of Mathes and Creed Brierre, the firm's president. Mathes said the firm operates under a finely tuned organizational structure that meshes owners, designers, builders and landscapers in a quality-oriented process.

"We are a firm of architects, interior designers and landscape architects divided into four studios headed by a studio manager," Mathes said. "Three studios have architects and interior designers working together. The fourth studio has landscape architects who do planning and provide landscape design services for our projects as well as other strictly landscape design projects.

"Somewhat uniquely, we have a construction administration staff of people drawn from the construction side of the industry."

Mathes said each project is assigned to two of the firm's four principals so that someone is always available to answer questions from owners and contractors.

"We are extremely hands-on," he said. "We want to create the best possible projects for our clients and their particular communities. We believe that we have an obligation to our clients, to the community at large and to our firm to create architecture that survives the passage of time and is recognizable for its design and functionality."

Given the New Orleans locale of Mathes Brierre, several of its current projects center on work necessitated by last year's >>

## Top Design Firms

---



The firm is designing the \$90 million expansion of the World War II Museum in New Orleans.

visit from Hurricane Katrina. The largest is the West Bank Mixed-Use Development, a \$350 million project on the

west bank of the Mississippi River overlooking downtown New Orleans. The project will provide much needed hous-

ing along with retail, hotel and conference facility components.

Other Katrina-related projects are the Marsallis Center, a performance/community center in Musician's Village being created by Habitat for Humanity in conjunction with Branford Marsallis and Harry Connick, Jr. to bring musicians back to the city; and the rebuilding of the main clubhouse of the historic Metairie Country Club.

The firm is also involved in a \$90 million expansion of the World War II Museum; an interior design of 11 floors of a downtown office building to provide student areas and administrative space for Tulane Medical School; and master planning for Federal Place, an effort to maintain the military presence at the Naval Support Activity on New Orleans' West Bank. <<