



Left to right:
Randy Lasley,
Mark Humphreys

Dallas Businessman Builds *success upon foundation* Of Innovation

Mark Humphreys, founder and CEO of Humphreys & Partners Architects, conceived and branded the "Big House"™ multifamily dwelling concept with not only residents but his key real estate developer clients in mind. The structure appears to be a large home with a 3-car garage, although it actually is a six to ten unit multifamily structure. Humphreys' firm has already provided design services for more than 200 "Big House" projects nationwide totaling in the area of \$4 billion in development costs. Such innovative real estate concepts are not uncommon to Humphreys.

The "Home-Rise"™ is his firm's spin on the typical high rise. Instead of long daunting hallways that emerge from an elevator, Humphreys' design calls for two separate elevator lobbies that create more of a clustered effect; easily navigable and aesthetic for residents, and once again more cost efficient for developers.

Humphreys says the combined goals of giving its clients a competitive financial edge and providing residents with a unique place to live drive his firm's sense of innovation.

"We think in terms of the economies of each project, much like our developers do," explains Humphreys. "We have a knowledgebase that stores our insights about each of the communities we build in and visit. Many architects do not look beyond their own market,

so here our standard mode of operation has a natural competitive advantage."

Growing up, Looking for a Place to Live

Humphreys & Partners has offices in seven U.S. cities including Dallas that house 140 employees. The annual construction value of residential and commercial real estate projects designed by the firm is roughly \$2.5 billion. In 2004, the company experienced 40% growth, the largest in its 15 year history, with continuing growth of 30% for the last two years.

The numbers, however, weren't always this staggering. Operations began back in 1991 with a Small Business Administration loan that took some effort to secure. Humphreys had approached the then largest bank doing business in

Texas for start-up funds, but the loan amount offered was too low. That bank may well now feel like one of the recording labels that originally passed up the Beatles. The charts, or numbers in this case, reveal a level of success that is just too considerable to forget. To be mildly forgiving, the entrepreneurial set can sometimes be difficult to gauge when overlaid with economic conditions of the day.

Compass Bank, then Equitable Bank and since part of a successful string of Texas-based acquisitions by the Alabama-based Compass Bancshares, Inc., did not take a pass on Humphreys, instead helping him secure that SBA loan. The relationship he has experienced with Compass ever since has reinvigorated the way he thinks about banks, or at least the right one that is.

"I have a relationship with Compass. They apply a personal touch to their service by contacting me proactively on a regular basis to check on things. That's really the way banking should be," he says.

The Long and Winding Road

Just as Humphreys is the go-to guy for many prominent builders, Randy Lasley is his go-to guy at Compass. Lasley, a senior vice president for Compass Bank's commercial banking group, has assisted as Humphreys & Partners has transitioned from its infancy to nationwide success.

"As we got to know Mark better and better, we really transcended the traditional banking relationship," he notes.

Lasley describes his interactions

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