New Chairman Greg Dunn Looks to Advance
The Builders’ Association’s Unique Leadership Role

The Builders’ Association welcomes Gregory A. Dunn as its 2016 Chairman. Greg is Vice President of Dun-Par Engineered Form Company, a Kansas City, Missouri-based specialty contractor which provides engineered concrete forms for projects across the United States.

Greg first served on the Board of Directors from 2001 to 2004. His current term began in 2009. He was elevated to the Executive Board in 2013.

He is a member of the General Labor Committee, which determines and approves the individual negotiating teams that represent the Association’s signatory members in the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements. He also serves as a Management Trustee on the Laborers Health and Welfare Fund and the Laborers Training Trust Fund.

He is the second individual from Dun-Par to serve as chairman. His father, John Dunn, was chairman of the Association in 1995. John continues as president of Dun-Par and remains an advisor to the company. Dun-Par has been a member of The Builders’ Association since 1968 and has also been a member of its sister organization, the Kansas City Chapter, AGC, since 1980.

Greg earned a B.S. degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri–Columbia and a J.D. degree from the University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Law. He met his wife Kim, who is from St. Louis, in Contracts class when they were both first-year law students at UMKC. The couple, who were part of the same group of friends, began dating during their second year. They were married in 1986 at the Bingham-Waggoner Estate in Independence, Missouri. The landmark mansion, which reflects Greg’s interest in architecturally-significant buildings, was once home to George Caleb Bingham, the 19th century American artist and Missouri politician, and later William Henry Waggoner, Jr., owner of a flour mill.

Greg’s parents grew up in Independence and were also married there (in a church near the Square). This year John and Jill Dunn will celebrate their sixtieth wedding anniversary. Greg is the oldest of their three children. Terri is the middle child and Brad is the youngest.

Greg and Kim have a son, Tommy (19), who is now a sophomore studying economics at The University of Chicago. The family also has a miniature Japanese Chin named Zooey. When he was younger, Tommy often joined his parents at the AGC Fall Membership Meetings at Big Cedar. Like his father, Tommy enjoys playing golf and, in 2013, they were part of a father-and-son foursome with Past Chairman Jerry Daugherty and his son Brad. The occasion was The Builders’ Association Scholarship Golf Tournament at Milburn Golf & Country Club.

Tommy worked in Dun-Par’s yard during the summer of 2014. “He also worked for us in the field last year before he was able to find an air-conditioned job with another company,” said Greg. “I was proud of him working in the field. It’s hard physical work and by all accounts he did a good job.”

Dun-Par currently uses about eight acres for its yard at 9608 Norfleet Road in Kansas City, Missouri (between Raytown and Lee’s Summit), where it stores the formwork it uses to create suspended concrete slabs. The formwork includes steel flanged forms, lumber, plywood, shores, scaffolding, and other miscellaneous materials.

Dun-Par has maintained a yard at their current location since the early 1970s. In 1990, the company moved its administrative offices into a modest one-story farmhouse adjacent to the yard. “We are in an area that used be part of a little town named Vale,” noted Greg. “Vale now exists only on old maps, but if you continue on Norfleet south past our office and turn right onto the old Vale Road you can see what used to be an old grocery store. This part of town used to be a rural community and was not really connected to the city.”

Rooted in Construction

The Dunn family is firmly rooted in the construction industry. Greg’s grandfather, William H. Dunn, was a general contractor in Kansas City. [William was not related to William H. Dunn, Sr., Chairman Emeritus of JE Dunn Construction Company.] William introduced his son John to construction when John was only 14.

John worked in the construction industry for 10 years before he and an associate founded Dun-Par Engineered Form Company in 1968. John’s partner retired in the 1980s. In 1985, after practicing corporate and tax law for a few years in Kansas City, Greg joined Dun-Par. He recalled his early years at the company.

“The construction industry was in an economic downturn and there had been a transition of employees within the company, so I remember that time very vividly. I talked it over with my dad and it seemed like it would be a good time to come into the business,” said Greg. “Sometimes I joke that we had our first good year about 20 years after I joined the company.”

Dun-Par’s Midwest operations include Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Oklahoma. They are currently involved in a major expansion at Olathe Medical Center; a mixed-use project at 51st and Oak near the UMKC campus; a mixed-use project at the southeast corner of 80th Street and Metcalf Avenue called Avenue 80; and Glass Hall

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loves Kansas City. He did it solely to advance the game in Kansas City and he’s been very successful doing that. It’s now the biggest golf tournament in the city.”

Greg chaired The Watson Challenge in 2008 when it was held at Milburn Country Club. In the summer of 2015, he noted, Chase Hanna, who had completed his sophomore year at KU, beat Tom Watson by a stroke at Mission Hills Country Club – becoming the only amateur to win the tournament in its nine-year history.

Greg is a strong supporter of the next generation of golfers. “I think the best thing the golf community does is to support Junior Golf. The Kansas City Golf Association hosts 500 or 600 of these young golfers every year. I’ve been involved long enough to see a lot of them become part of the business community.”

He is Past President of Milburn Country Club, home to The Builders’ Association Scholarship Golf Tournament, and was Club President on November 29, 2010, when the Milburn Clubhouse was destroyed by fire. Greg watched with Milburn officials Randy Hunt, ret. General Manager/COO, and Bill Maynard, Golf Course Superintendent, as firefighters struggled to bring the fire under control. After the fire, Milburn’s management relocated to modular units and used various parts of existing buildings so they could continue to serve their members.

“There was never any doubt in our minds that the Clubhouse would be replaced,” recalled Randy. “The leadership at the board level and the can-do attitude started with Mr. Dunn that very day.”

“I think the board accomplished major things,” said Greg. “We budgeted, planned, and approved a new Clubhouse within five months after the fire. Outside of family and work, that is one of the things I’m proudest of.”

The Builders’ Association held its annual Scholarship Foundation Golf Tournament at Milburn without interruption in the spring of 2011, and has held it there every year since. The 2016 event will take place at Milburn on May 16.

Baseball is Greg’s favorite sport, even more so than golf. He is a Royals’ fan and shares season tickets with three friends, so he may go to as many as 20 games a year. He and Kim were at Kauffman Stadium for Game 1 of the 2015 World Series when the Royals beat the Mets 5-4 in a 14-inning marathon. They were also among the estimated 800,000 fans who gathered to salute the World Series Champions in downtown Kansas City last November 3.

“The rally was maybe the most amazing thing I’ve seen in Kansas City – not only in terms of the number of fans but how well-behaved they were,” commented Greg. “I think sports really can draw a city together.”

Greg choose Joe Posnanski to deliver the keynote address at the 129th Anniversary Banquet on February 12 because “I think he’s a great writer. He writes on all sorts of different topics and not just sports, and while he lives in North Carolina, he made a name for himself in Kansas City.”

FROM KATIE THE PREFECT TO GALEN FISS

One of Greg’s favorite Joe Posnanski articles is called “Katie the Prefect,” in which Joe writes about his daughter’s interaction with a worker (Katie the Prefect) in the gift shop at Universal Orlando’s Harry Potter World. Another favorite is a tribute to Galen Fiss, who was a close friend of Greg’s dad. Called “Day of Perfection, Life of Virtue,” the article appeared as the banner headline on page 1 of The Kansas City Star’s Sports section on July 20, 2006, three days after Galen passed away.

Galen played fullback and linebacker on KU’s football team and spent two seasons on the Jayhawk baseball team in the early 1950s. He was a linebacker for 11 seasons for the Cleveland Browns and defensive captain of their NFL championship team in 1964. He was also president of Fiss-Clogston Company, a member of The Builders’ Association. His two sons, Bob and Scott, who were offensive linemen for the Jayhawks in the late ’70s and early ’80s, are president and secretary respectively of Johnston Fiss Insurance, the successor company to Fiss-Clogston and also a member of The Builders’ Association.

GOALS AS CHAIRMAN

Identifying and promoting avenues for member engagement is one of Greg’s primary goals as chairman of The Builders’ Association. “One of the things I’ve enjoyed with the Association is meeting so many people at social events and in business situations. A goal of mine would be to identify those opportunities where members can be involved in the Association if they want to be, and communicating what those opportunities are,” he stated.

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“For 45 years, I’ve had the great pleasure of working with Greg and his family and seeing Greg develop into a leader who’s among the very best in the business. As a leader, he listens. He cares deeply about quality and cultivating relationships, all of which speak volumes to me. It doesn’t hurt that he’s a Mizzou grad too. As a former chairman and fellow board member, I’m confident Greg’s talents will lift the Association to the next level, just as I know he’ll carry the Dunn family legacy into an even brighter future.”

– Jerry Daugherty
President, Reinhardt Construction Company, and 2013 Chairman of The Builders’ Association

“2016 Chairman
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“The Builders’ committee structure is ideal for individual members, if they choose, to have input and also get to know other people in the industry who have different perspectives and experiences than they do.

“Being on the General Labor Committee and two Laborers Funds has been very beneficial to me. I have gained a lot of knowledge from contact with people who have different perspectives than I have. They have problems either I don’t have, or that I have and didn’t know I had.”

He added, “The Builders’ Association is a very staff-driven organization. I think that’s the way an association and a nonprofit should be, and fortunately we have a very good staff. I also think that our volunteer board functions as it should, helping to set policy and direction while allowing the staff to manage the organization.”

ADVANCING OUR LEADERSHIP ROLE

Greg describes The Builders’ Association as “certainly the leading Association in our industry and one of a handful of leading community organizations in our city. I think in order for The Builders’ Association to properly fulfill that leadership role, we need to continue to ensure that as many of the leaders of our industry as possible, especially the general contractors, are involved as members.

“The Builders’ Association performs so many services that benefit Kansas City and our regional areas. I’ve marveled through the years at how it represents so many disparate interests. It represents general contractors who appear to be doing the same things when some do public work, some do private work, some do big jobs, and some do smaller jobs. It has always amazed me how the leadership and staff of the Association have been able to address all of those member interests and take positions and provide services that are of value to so many different entities.

“The board and staff are very focused on making sure that general contractors who are not currently members understand and appreciate what a strong Builders’ Association means to them and to the community. The strength of our services will always be fundamental to our success, so I don’t want to imply that general contractors should belong to the Builders’ as a community service, but I almost feel that way.

“The Builders’ Association has played a unique and historic role and I want to help ensure that it continues to be the leader in the future that it has been in the past,” he added.

BACKBONE OF THE INDUSTRY

Greg has a special appreciation for the workers who are the backbone of the industry. “When people go to a QuickTrip and see someone pull up in a muddy pickup truck wearing a fluorescent safety vest, I think they often make a snap judgement about who that person is. People outside our industry don’t always understand how talented the people who work in construction are, and I think that’s been part of the challenge in attracting people to a career in construction. I’ve met countless people in our industry whose character I would describe as exceptional.

“Construction involves hard work and yes, working in the weather can be very challenging and yes, our industry took a big hit during the recession, but I know from my own experience at Dun-Par how talented our construction workers are,” continued Greg. “We’ve got people who work for us in the field every day who are college graduates and manage crews of 40 or 50 workers. I think it’s a huge talent to manage people and to communicate effectively with general contractors, owners, and the others you come in contact with. Construction leaders must have strong decision-making abilities, practical knowledge, and good judgment.”

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In addition to his many outside interests, Greg’s family lends balance to his work life. “I enjoy my work and I enjoy our people, but the most important thing for me is my family,” he commented. “For some, being part of a family business might make it difficult balancing between work and family, but it helps that as owners we share similar goals and ideas about the kind of company and work environment we want to maintain.”

The Dunn family, of course, includes Zooey, whom they adopted 15 years ago, when Tommy was about four. Greg recalled, “I was probably like most husbands and didn’t want a dog, but Kim did, so I put together a contract.” Greg still has the piece of paper on which he handwrote the following:

Daddy’s Rules:
1. Not my dog.
2. I don’t take care of the dog.
3. The dog does not affect my plans.
4. I don’t go looking for the dog.
5. I don’t clean up after the dog.

Then I had both my wife and my son sign it,“ he smiled, adding, “Of course I eventually fell in love with the dog.”

Kim is a practicing attorney who specializes in probate law and administration as well as title work. Greg noted that Kim has an additional talent for sewing, an art which had almost literally gone out of fashion before making a strong comeback in recent years. “I’ve always admired people with creative skills, and she has the ability to make things she can’t find elsewhere.” He added, “There’s often a gift given at the Builders’ board retreat in the fall, and Pam Delaney had quilted a beautiful small purse for the women when Jim was chairman. Kim still has hers, and I’ve been teasing her that maybe she should get started making her own keepsakes.”

Greg enjoys spending time with a wide range of friends who, he commented, “come from all walks of life” and are not necessarily associated with his work. “We have other things in common. I find that also helps me maintain a good balance,” he said.

He also enjoys reading historical fiction and counts Lonesome Dove among his favorite books. “I remember going to an AGC dinner when Jack Senter was president. [J.R. “Jack” Senter was president of the Kansas City Chapter, AGC from 1989-90.] The dinner was cut short early so everyone could watch the miniseries. Shortly after that I read the book and couldn’t put it down.”

PAYING TRIBUTE

Of Scott Kelly, his predecessor as Chairman, Greg stated, “I think Scott did a great job as chairman. The thing that strikes me about Scott is that he is a person of great integrity. You can tell he is genuine and sincere just talking to him for 5 or 10 minutes. I admire the fact that he came to Kansas City as an outsider, and while I think our city is welcoming of outsiders, at the same time Missourians is the ‘Show Me State.’ Missourians want to see what you do, how you perform, and what kind of person you are, and Scott passes those tests easily.

“When Scott first came to Kansas City, the company he was with was involved in a labor dispute. It was resolved with the assistance of the Association, so he was exposed to the services of the Association very early on and was able to see what it could do. Scott has remained very involved in the Association and I admire that.”