STRENGTHENING OUR INDUSTRY AND ITS WORKFORCE THROUGH DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY
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Advancing The Builders’ Association and Our Industry With Inclusive Practices That Foster Dynamism and Diversity

This issue of Modern Builder represents a departure from our typical format. In lieu of a cover photo of a major new project by one of our general contractors and their team, we have chosen to shine a light on the individual members and Builders’ staff who comprise our Advancing Diversity Committee.

The Advancing Diversity Committee first convened on March 18, 2016, and since then they have met on an ongoing basis to promote the core values of inclusivity and diversity within our Association and industry. Beginning on page 3 and continuing through page 7, we introduce you to three members of the committee and two additional individuals, all of whom represent the growing diversity of our membership and staff.

We are grateful to Alex Gonzalez, Laura Chisholm, Josh Cooper, Marcella Goldsmith, and Romond Holt for sharing their stories with us. Each is having a positive impact on our industry and giving testimony to the importance of a diverse workforce. We did not have to look far to find them, for there are many exceptional individuals like them in our industry.

We hope you enjoy reading about their respective backgrounds, how they found a home in the commercial construction industry, and the contributions they are making to our collective betterment.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MISSION

Soon after it first met, the Advancing Diversity Committee adopted the following mission statement:

It is the belief of The Builders’ Association that diversity and inclusiveness with respect to economic background, race, ethnicity, and gender yield improved financial results and community conditions. Accessing broader experiences and perspectives will result in practical benefits including competitive advantages.

The mission of The Builders’ Association is, in part, to support diversity as follows:

• Communicate that embracing change improves our interdependent economy and community;
• Promote outreach and collaboration through a multitude of channels and programs targeted at increased diversity in business ownership and the workforce;
• Create opportunities and enhanced capabilities by partnering on the delivery of quality education and training; and
• Foster role modeling, relationships, and mentorships between people who are successful in business and people who aspire to be successful.

With these objectives in mind, we believe we can continue to embrace values that make us stronger, leverage the talents of the population at large, and enhance our industry’s ability to meet market demand for workers.

A SPECIFIC MASTER PLAN

The Builders’ Association, through its Advancing Diversity Committee and other avenues, is embracing diversity and inclusivity by:

1) Diversifying the leadership ranks on our boards and committees;
2) Implementing diversity action plans in our marketing and communications, including paid advertisements and earned media, social media, and print publications such as Modern Builder and our new “Six Sets of Services” brochure;
3) Establishing a culture and reputation for being inclusive by, for example, fostering a welcoming atmosphere at networking and business development events, providing leadership opportunities for those who wish to become more involved, and broadening outreach to increase job access among minorities;
4) Partnering with Univision on a recruitment video in Spanish to promote no-cost training opportunities for a career in commercial construction, and airing the video on their Kansas City affiliate station, KUKC-TV;
5) Hiring a workforce Outreach Manager who is a peer of young African-American and Hispanic individuals.

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Advancing Diversity
(continued from page 1)

Americans and a longtime resident of the urban core;
6) Delivering pre-apprenticeship training focused on the recruitment of women and minorities;
7) Collaborating and promoting lending and bonding programs for Minority Business Enterprise and Women’s Business Enterprise (M/WBE) certified businesses;
8) Holding seats on public project boards for M/WBE and workforce diversity goal-setting;
9) Participating in public entity disparity studies and focus groups;
10) Sponsoring multi-cultural coalition and minority and woman coalition events;
11) Providing reciprocal, no-dues memberships to area minority and woman trade associations, chambers of commerce, and a multi-tenant contractor incubator facility;
12) Recording powerful video testimonials by a diverse group of members for marketing to the public;
13) Updating on an ongoing basis listings of prospective M/WBE and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) member companies; and
14) Creating effective calls to action to achieve Association goals.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The objectives of the Advancing Diversity Committee and the Builders’ Advancement Center are interconnected. The Advancement Center, which opened at our North Kansas City Education & Training Center on August 30, 2016, also seeks to strengthen our workforce through diversity.

The mission of the Advancement Center is “To advance contractor productivity and quality construction through education and technology, and to recruit a diverse construction workforce.” The word “diverse” is part of the Advancement Center’s mission not only because diversity is a core value of the Association, but because it is essential to delivering high-caliber knowledge workers in sufficient numbers to meet industry demand.

The Builders’ Association extends an open invitation to members and policymakers to tour the Builders’ Advancement Center and the entire 100,000 square foot Education & Training Center, which houses nine construction apprenticeship programs under one roof. We encourage our members to share with us their recommendations for student groups, scout troops, and other youth organizations who may be interested in using the Advancement Center. For more information, please contact Dr. Richard Bruce, Education & Training Director, or Romond Holt, Outreach Manager, both of whom are members of the Advancing Diversity Committee.

The Advancement Center is an important workforce development resource that is helping us introduce young men and women – from the urban core and throughout the community – to exciting opportunities in construction. In addition to hosting the Advancement Center, the Education & Training team promotes outreach through training and internship programs with area high schools, charter schools, military installations, and career centers.

We salute the Advancing Diversity Committee for its dedication to a stronger and more vibrant commercial building industry. We believe that its ongoing focus on diversity and inclusivity will be an integral part of our future success.

(profiles begin on next page)
Alex Gonzalez: Chair of the Builders’ Committee to Advance Diversity

Alex Gonzalez was born in Mexico City, the second oldest of six children. When he was in grade school, he took odd jobs to provide additional income for the family, typically rising at 4 a.m., going to work for a few hours, attending school most of the day, and finally returning to work until 7 p.m.

He expressed gratitude for the experience he gained working for his grandfather, a builder named Gilberto Gonzalez. Alex started working for Gilberto, whom he calls “Abue” (grandpa), during vacations and on the weekends from age 9 until he was almost 14.

“I learned the trades from him, absolutely,” said Alex. “Concrete, brick, painting, plaster. I love art, and I love plasterwork most of all. Abue did concrete forms and a lot of ornamental plasterwork. He would mix pigments and add them to limestone and polished plaster. I was fascinated by that.”

Gilberto also taught Alex to add pigments to the concrete mix he used when pouring walls, floors, and roofs.

But the first assignment Gilberto gave Alex was to clean the tools of the trade, including the store scaffold and other equipment. He expressed gratitude for the experience.”

Alex said he acquired his entrepreneurial spirit from Gilberto, whom he described as “creative, independent, and willing to take risks.” Armed with these traits, Alex, along with three friends, journeyed to the United States in 1982. Their first stop was Los Angeles, but after just a few weeks Alex concluded that “with the competition and cheap labor, it would be tough for me to start my own business.”

He continued the journey on his own, going east to Columbia, Missouri, where he worked in his uncle’s house painting business.

Alex worked for his uncle until about 1989, when he decided he was ready to start his own business. During this period, he noted, “I was learning to communicate better in English so I could get more opportunities.” He also met Dennis Harper, who owned Harpo’s bar and grill and various commercial properties.

Alex Gonzalez was a member of Cement Masons and Plasterers Local 518 and began performing work for contractors including Allied Construction Services, Inc., E&K of Kansas City, Inc., and PCI (Performance Contracting Inc.). “My experience working for these contractors helped me to open my own company,” said Alex. In 2008, he launched Gonzalez Construction LLC.

Although he currently operates the business from his home, he plans to move it to a warehouse facility in Kansas City, where he can store scaffold and other equipment.

Gonzalez Construction has worked on major projects including Cerner Innovations (as a subcontractor to K Building Specialties, Inc.) and Two Light (as a subcontractor to PCI [Performance Contracting Inc.]).

A Passion for Helping Others

Alex has been a board member of the Builders’ Association since 2016 and chairs the Association’s Committee to Advance Diversity. He was a board member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City from 2014 to 2016, and remains actively involved.

He recalled meeting Don Greenwell, President of the Builders’ Association, during an event at the Builders’ Education & Training Center. “When I met Don I told him about my desire to help other small businesses and minority contractors. I know the challenges for Hispanics and other minorities not only to succeed in business, but to fit into society. I saw in the Builders’ the perfect opportunity for me to help a lot of people, and Don agreed that I could have a positive impact. He gave me the opportunity not only to lead the Diversity Committee, but to be on the Builders’ board.” Gonzalez Construction LLC joined the Builders’ Association in 2015.

Don said he was impressed by Alex’s “drive to succeed as well as his positive and outgoing personality.” He noted that when parting, “Alex will say, ‘Echele Ganas!’ [which Alex defined as ‘Keep up the good work!’] instead of ‘Adios.’”

Alex recently partnered with Univision on a recruitment video in Spanish to promote no-cost training opportunities in commercial construction. The ad concludes with the voicemail message from Alex in Spanish. The video has generated a lot of positive interest, and Alex is also getting the message out via marketing channels including social media and Hispanic radio stations.

Alex concluded, “I love this country. If you have the desire, you can realize the American dream.”

(profiles continue on next page)

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Marcella Goldsmith Brings a Pioneering Spirit to Construction

Marcella Goldsmith has humble roots in Kansas City, Kansas, but her work in the construction industry has taken her from Native American Indian Reservations to rural areas in Africa. Hence the name of the business she operates along with her four partners: Indigenous to Indigenous (i2i).

Marcella’s willingness to pursue a bold and unconventional career path was inspired by her great grandmother Laura Cleveland, who came to Kansas City from Ada, Oklahoma. Laura was a member of the Chickasaw Nation, which is headquartered in Ada. Marcella is proud of her Chickasaw heritage.

“My great grandmother had a strong influence on my life,” said Marcella. “She lived at 26th and Monroe in Kansas City, Missouri. She was the first to integrate her block. She was an evangelist at her church and had her own business. She would tell me, ‘No matter what you want to do, you can do it. Do not ever consider yourself a failure.’

When Marcella was still a child, her family moved to Anchorage, Alaska. Marcella later bought a home in Anchorage and hired a renovation contractor who offered to teach her the renovation trade in return for sweat equity. In 2006, she founded her own construction and home renovation company, Goldie Properties LLC, and in 2009 she returned to the Kansas City area, where she continued to build her Goldie Properties business.

Marcella recalled meeting Robin Norris, The Builders’ Association’s Membership Manager, at a construction industry event around 2012. She credited Robin for taking a personal interest in her success by helping direct her to the appropriate entities for licensure and other credentials. In 2015, Goldie Properties joined The Builders’ Association.

Goldie Properties has been a contractor and supervisor for Project Lead-Safe Kansas City, a Kansas City, Missouri Health Department grant-funded program to assist Kansas City residents with home and rental property lead-based paint stabilization. She has performed work for Blue Hills Community Services and other public entities, and has also completed 27 commercial and residential renovations in Missouri and Kansas in both the public and private sectors.

Marcella met Kevin Blandin at a Turner School of Construction Management management class in 2014. Kevin, a member of the Sac & Fox Nation, is a general contractor who has worked on sustainable and renewable development projects at Native American Indian reservations. The following year, Marcella met John Hall, who has expertise in solar construction and construction safety. John in turn introduced Kevin and Marcella to Andrea and Wasim Kahn. The five formed the Kansas corporation known as Indigenous to Indigenous (i2i), and their formal collaboration began.

The mission of i2i is “to bring renewable energy solutions, job creation, workforce development, and opportunities for cultural exchange to indigenous peoples in North America and Africa.”

Marcella is i2i’s Chief of Diversity Development & Minority Outreach; Kevin serves as Chief of Project Management & Construction Development; and John is Chief of Operations & Technology Development. Andrea, who has spent much of her career as an educator in the United States and abroad, is i2i’s Chief of International Finance Structure. Wasim, who hails from Kenya and has international business experience, is their Chief of International Business Development.

MEETING WITH KENYA’S PRESIDENT

Marcella is a September 2016 graduate of the Builders’ Leadership Course, a professional development opportunity offered through The Builders’ Association’s Education & Training Center. The course provides training in human relations and effective speaking.

Marcella said she used skills she acquired from the Builders’ Leadership Course while on a trip to Kenya in October 2016, when she met with Uhuru Kenyatta, the country’s president.

“We talked about ways i2i could help bring electricity to his country’s rural areas,” recalled Marcella. “I was able to present my thoughts more confidently because of what I’d learned from the Builders’ Leadership Course. It really helped me feel more at ease when I was talking to President Kenyatta.”

While in Kenya, she and her team traveled to rural areas where, she said, electricity is confined primarily to business and government offices. “We explained to the Kenyan officials how we would not only provide the expertise to build a solar farm on an undeveloped site and bring solar energy to their schools, but how we would train the local citizens to maintain everything so it would be truly sustainable.”

Andrea Kahn stated, “There is an ongoing need for women’s empowerment, employment, and training in contracting as in so many other professions. Marcella is a wonderful example of overcoming adversity and breaking down barriers.”

Romond Holt: Advancing the Building Construction Industry Through Outreach

Romond Holt earned an Associate in Science degree from Metropolitan Community College’s Penn Valley campus in December 2009. He earned his Associate in Arts degree in General Studies from Penn Valley the following year.

At Penn Valley, he enjoyed tutoring fellow classmates in math as part of the TRIO program to increase access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, he took several online classes in construction from Dr. Richard Bruce (now Education & Training Director of The Builders’ Association). Although their interaction was exclusively web-based, Romond recalled that Dr. Bruce “was pretty demanding when it came to grading, so you had to stay on top of your work. He made sure you got your assignments in on time and were interacting with the discussion boards.”

In 2011, Romond transferred to the University of Central Missouri (UCM), where he was active in the Student Organization of Construction Managers. As a Community Advisor at UCM, he created and supervised educational, financial and social programs for the school’s student residents. Romond also completed the OSHA 30-Hour General Industry Outreach Training course – a safety and health program that provides comprehensive information on OSHA compliance issues.

Romond graduated from UCM with a B.S. degree in Construction Management and a minor in Safety Management in May 2014.

During his college career, Romond received three scholarships funded by donations to The Builders’ Association Scholarship Foundation. In 2010, while at Penn Valley, he was awarded the James L. Hutton, Sr./William W. Hutton Memorial Scholarship. In 2012, during his junior year at UCM, he received the Pearce Construction Company Scholarship.

GROWING INTO HIS PROFESSIONAL ROLE

Romond was born and raised in Kansas City. At Central High School, he ran track for (continued on next page)
three years and was on the varsity football team, playing defensive back, corner back, and safety. He continues to play football recreationally.

When he was at Central, he said, he started to think about pursuing a career that would not only give him hands-on skills, but would pay well and offer an opportunity to grow. “That’s when I started leaning toward the construction industry.” He credited his mother for pushing him to do well not just academically, but in all aspects of his life. “She didn’t want me to just get by,” recalled Romond. “She wanted me to be a role model for others.”

During the summer of 2012, as a Team Leader for Urban Ranger Corps, Romond helped prepare 12 at-risk inner city youth for responsible and productive futures – supervising them as they painted houses, cut grass, and cleaned empty lots. The following summer, he was a construction intern for a residential design remodeling company. During this internship, he assisted the lead carpenter with framing, ensured that personal protective equipment (PPE) was worn during demolition work, and handled other tasks.

Both of these summer jobs would enhance Romond’s skill set and help prepare him for his eventual role as The Builders’ Association’s Outreach Manager.

In June 2014, Romond joined Kiewit Construction as a field engineer in Englewood, a suburb of Denver, Colorado. On his first project, at the Hayden Station coal-fired power plant, he submitted project documentation including RFI’s (requests for information), change orders, and nonconformance requests. He then switched over to the civil concrete side of the project, utilizing spreadsheets to manage a $3.5 million time and materials budget.

Romond’s next assignment with Kiewit was in Regina, the capital city of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan – where he managed the supply of scaffold builds on a $3 billion industrial fertilizer project (which was located in nearby Bethune) for the mechanical, pipe and electrical trades. Romond subsequently returned to Englewood, where he performed large bore pipe estimate take-offs.

A SERENDIPITOUS MEETING

Desiring to live closer to home, Romond returned to Kansas City to explore career opportunities. While attending the Building Trades Career Fair at the Mohart Multipurpose Center this past March 4, Romond had an unexpected and timely visit with Don Greenwell, President of The Builders’ Association, and Dr. Bruce. Don and Richard were on hand to visit with prospective industry recruits on behalf of The Builders’ Association, a participant and co-sponsor of the fair.

“Don and I had a discussion about Romond immediately after seeing him at the career fair, which in turn led to his hiring,” recalled Dr. Bruce. “We saw in him all of the qualities we had envisioned for Outreach Manager, someone who could advance the building construction industry through recruiting, outreach, and new program development.” Shortly thereafter, they offered Romond the position, and he joined the Association in late March.

As Outreach Manager, Romond develops programs that help local youth, community groups, returning military, and other entities explore careers in construction. He markets and coordinates Build Your Career Days with local schools, and works with them on their career fairs. He also attends career events at local technical schools, and coordinates Builders’ Advancement Center activities. Additionally, Romond is a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City.

“I enjoy giving back to the community,” stated Romond. “I’m able to help minorities and others by spreading the information to the inner city about the apprenticeship programs. I feel like I understand the challenges they face. I also like being able to get out into the community and having a positive impact wherever I can.”

“We have nine construction trade apprenticeship programs at the Builders’ Training Center,” continued Romond. “I let people know that apprentices start at about half the wages of a journeyperson and that typically, after the first six months and then every six months after that, they’ll receive wage increases. They graduate with full journeyperson wages and complete fringe benefits.

“We also have a great thing going on at the Builders’ Advancement Center. The hands-on education and technology that’s available is a great draw for schools and community groups. Every day we’re planting the seeds for our construction industry’s future.”

(profiles continue on next page)
Laura Chisholm: Words of Encouragement for Women
Aspiring to a Career in Construction

Laura Chisholm was working on her core general education requirements at the University of Central Missouri when she decided to visit the school’s Career Services Center. Although she had entertained the thought of studying architecture, she hadn’t settled on it as a career. At the advice of Ken Schueller, the school’s Assistant Director/Career Counselor, Laura took a career test to hone in on her career interests and personality traits. When the results came back, Ken presented her a list of career options.

“Ken asked me to look through the list to see if anything popped out,” recalled Laura. “Construction Management caught my attention. Ken suggested I visit the department, so I went over and talked to Professor Bruce. [Dr. Richard Bruce, The Builders’ Association’s Education & Training Director, was at that time Coordinator of UCM’s Construction Management program.] We talked about Construction Management and I thought it sounded kind of cool. I was attracted to the idea of a career that combined construction, management, architecture and business.”

During her final year at UCM, Laura completed an honors project which involved replacing the roof of an old home that had been donated to the campus. The idea for the project came from one of her professors, Dr. David McCandless (father of Caleb McCandless, Builders’ Association). Laura completed the project and earned her B.S. degree in Construction Management with a minor in Business Administration in December 2011, graduating summa cum laude with a 4.0 GPA.

In the fall of 2010, following a visit to UCM by McCownGordon staff members Nancy Whitworth, Vice President of Human Resources, and Jay Lucas, Vice President of Construction Operations, Laura was offered an internship with the company. At the end of her internship (which took place during the summer of 2011), she was offered a full-time position. She returned to UCM for an extra semester in the fall of 2011, and began as an estimator at McCownGordon in January 2012.

During the summer of 2012, Laura began working as a project engineer on the Corporate Headquarters Renovations & Addition for Epiq Systems, a global technology solutions company in Kansas City, Kansas.

“I worked on the Epiq project under Michael Reardon, a great mentor,” commented Laura. (Michael was at that time a project manager and is now an operations director at McCownGordon.) “Epiq involved a lot of really unique finishes, extensive structural modifications to an adjacent vacant building, and construction of a link building. I gained a lot of insight into how to maintain the ideal level of coordination with the owner, architect and subcontractors, and also got involved in the pricing side of things, so it was a rewarding experience for sure.”

As she was finishing up on the Epiq project, during the latter part of summer 2013, Laura was given the opportunity to work on the new Kansas Department of Agriculture Administrative Building for the KSU Foundation. The three-story steel building houses more than 150 employees and includes offices for the Secretary of Agriculture.

After living in Manhattan for nearly a year, Laura returned to Kansas City in August 2014 to work (start to finish) on the renovations and additions to three elementary schools for USD 497 schools. Laura also assisted on the preconstruction of several other USD 497 elementary schools. When the schools were completed in June, she was promoted to project manager and began working on the redevelopment of downtown Kansas City’s historic Savoy Hotel and Grill, which will be the new home of the 21c Museum Hotel around March of 2018. McCownGordon will soon be in preconstruction on several additional USD 497 school projects, one of which, Lawrence High School, Laura will be managing.

Laura serves on The Builders’ Association Scholarship Foundation Board. She has been a member of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Greater Kansas City Chapter 100 for approximately three years, and will join its board in the fall of 2017.

Laura offered words of encouragement to women who aspire to a construction career: “I would tell them don’t let the thought of it scare you. For me there was a theoretical hump I had to get over when I started my first class at UCM. A lot of my classmates had backgrounds in farming or had worked on construction crews. I was intimidated like crazy and really wanted to make it, so I threw work at it. I tried hard. I studied for every test because I didn’t want to be the girl who didn’t have what it took to succeed.

“There were times when it was tough – when I felt like I was the only one who didn’t know what a particular tool was, and I was afraid to ask. But then I started to realize that a lot of the guys, even if they knew how to run a piece of heavy equipment, didn’t know project management any better than I did, and we would all need to spend time on the jobsite learning those processes.

“If construction is something you think you’re interested in, stick with it and find someone who can mentor you, whether it’s a guy or a girl. Find someone you feel comfortable enough with to say, ‘Hey, I’m struggling with this, do you think I’m going to be OK?’ There are so many people – women and men – who are waiting to encourage you.

“Once I got over the hump, I haven’t looked back. I’ve earned my place in the field just as much as the guys, and it doesn’t even phase me anymore. So if you’re a woman wanting to go into construction, go for it.”
Josh Cooper: A Strong Work Ethic and a Passion for His Profession

Born and raised in Kansas City, Josh Cooper is a Kansas Citian through and through. He has moved away only once—to attend Pittsburg State University for a Construction Management degree. Upon graduating from Pitt State in May 2016, he returned to his hometown to work full-time for E&K of Kansas City, Inc.

Josh inherited much of his work ethic from his mother, who has been a strong influence in his life. When he was growing up, she worked as a pharmacy tech at Research Medical Center.

“My mom always made sure I was around people who worked. When I was younger she took me to Research and I wound up volunteering there for six years. I say volunteer, but she really didn’t give me a choice,” he smiled. “She said this is what you’re going to do. When I turned 18, I started working there as a patient transporter. I would come home from college just about every weekend and work.

“My grandfather had me cutting the grass as soon as I was old enough, but even before that I helped him clean up the yard or do small tasks around the house,” said Josh. He also learned the DIY trade from his uncle, a handy man who the family called on when something needed repair.

All these tasks, said Josh, “gave me the confidence to work with my hands and a passion to see the results, and at E&K, just about everything we do is something you can see. When I walk into an empty space I can see it develop through every stage, from framing it up to getting it sheet-rocked, finished, and painted.”

**Connecting With E&K**

Josh learned about E&K at Pitt State’s annual Construction Company Days job fair.

“E&K was in Kansas City, which really grabbed my interest. KC is home for me. I saw that E&K did drywall and I thought, I’ve got a little experience in drywall, although when I started working here, I realized that the experience I had didn’t really mean a lot. E&K taught me how to do things professionally.”

One of E&K’s representatives at the job fair was Jim Sanford, who at that time was the company’s Kansas City production manager.

(Jim is now chief operations officer at E&K’s Denver office.) Now Josh represents E&K, traveling to his alma mater twice annually to conduct interviews and talk about the company with prospective employees. He said he enjoys helping them make a connection between their academic pursuits and professional endeavors.

During the summer of 2014, after his sophomore year at Pitt State, Josh became a field intern with E&K. He worked four days in the field as a carpenter apprentice and one day in the office shadowing co-workers. He was invited back the following summer and continued to build his career prospects with E&K, primarily doing estimating work but also handling project management tasks including submittals. Following his second internship during the summer of 2015, he was offered a full-time position.

After graduating from Pitt State in May 2016, Josh began his project management career with E&K. His first job was one he bid himself: tenant improvements for Populous Group’s new space at 4800 Main Street in the former Board of Trade Building. Populous is a global architectural design firm. JE Dunn Construction Company was the general contractor. In addition to framing Populous’ gym space and conference rooms, E&K installed linear metal ceilings. “It’s a unique suspended ceiling product and Populous loved it,” he recalled. “We started with shell space and made it into something amazing.”

Josh was soon working on another project: the Disabled American Veterans Chapter Hall, a new 60,000 square foot building which opened in May 2017 at 14605 E. 40 Highway in Kansas City, Missouri. A.L. Huber, Inc. was the general contractor. E&K’s scope was metal stud framing, drywall, acoustical ceilings, structural framing, and rough carpentry.

For several months, Josh was simultaneously running a third project: Zurich American Insurance Company’s office renovation at 7045 College Boulevard. McCownGordon Construction was the general contractor. Performing work inside an occupied building posed a number of challenges, said Josh. “We had people working at night to reduce noise during the daytime. I would work my normal hours of 7 to 5 and then go out to Zurich and sometimes work until 8. Everything was enclosed with plastic Zip wall to protect the employees and offices from dust.”

This past winter, Josh was called on to assist fellow E&K project manager Sara Beckman at Cambridge North Patient Tower, the new 377,598 square foot building at The University of Kansas Hospital. JE Dunn Construction Company is the general contractor. Josh’s responsibilities included everything from pricing materials to doing constraint mapping to ensure that the project stayed on schedule.

“To work on a project this size was pretty intimidating at first, but I learned a lot and feel really good about it now,” said Josh. “I’m very thankful to have been able to learn from Sara one-on-one,” he added.

Away from the jobsite, Josh enjoys getting together with fellow members of the Construction Leadership Council, and this past January he won a Sony PlayStation® 4 in a drawing at the CLC’s Tapcade Membership Event.

“Matt Cline [Senior Estimator, E&K] encourages us to be involved with the CLC because it’s such a great opportunity to socialize with our customers and meet people on a different level,” commented Josh. “When you have that personal relationship with people, it definitely helps keep things functioning smoothly on the jobsite.”

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