

Jackson and Gulf Coast architectural leaders announce merger:

Eley Guild Hardy Architects offers increased capabilities to create more great places throughout Mississippi

Eley Associates/Architects of Jackson, distinguished by its portfolio of award-winning buildings across Mississippi, and Guild Hardy Architects of Biloxi and Jackson, one of the state's fastest-growing firms, announce their merger and new name, Eley Guild Hardy Architects, effective September 5, 2008.

Eley Guild Hardy Architects emerges as one of Mississippi's largest practices with 16 registered architects and two licensed civil engineers on its staff of 72. The firm maintains its Biloxi office and will combine its Jackson staffs in spring 2009, when renovation of its historic building at 329 E. Capitol St. is projected to be complete.

"Eley Guild Hardy Architects provides increased depth and breadth of services for clients throughout Mississippi," stated James H. Eley, FAIA, whose firm's experience includes landmark buildings in Jackson and on the campuses of Mississippi's major universities.

W. Taylor Guild, III, AIA, whose father co-founded Guild and Grace Architects on the Gulf Coast in 1953, said that the new firm is strengthened by the complementary experience of the two merging companies as well as by the traits they share: "a commitment to architectural excellence and stewardship of clients' resources."

"We are excited about combining the talents, capabilities, and energies of our companies to build more great places throughout Mississippi," added David J. Hardy, AIA.

Joseph B. Crain, AIA; Mark E. Lishen, AIA, LEED AP; and Stephen A. Stojcich, AIA, are also principals in the new firm.

Eley Associates has served institutions statewide for over 30 years – with the Mississippi State University School of Architecture, the University of Southern Mississippi Polymer Research Building, and the new University of Mississippi School of Law Building among its work – and teamed with other Jackson firms on significant structures, including the Mississippi State Supreme Court, the William Winter Archives and History Building, and the new Guyton Research Building at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Guild Hardy, having focused primarily on the Coastal region, is handling the \$92-million restoration of the Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center, undergoing expansion as Hurricane Katrina hit. Guild Hardy has extensive experience in elementary and secondary schools and community colleges, along with commercial, mixed-use, and federal government projects, including the Ocean Sciences Laboratory at NASA Stennis Space Center. The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, designed by Frank O. Gehry, and Infinity Space Center at NASA are among its joint ventures.

Eley praised Guild Hardy for its ongoing contributions to rebuilding the Coast. He said he has been impressed by Guild Hardy's long-term client relationships; its forward thinking in embracing LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification for its offices; its success in recruiting outstanding architectural interns; and its use of cutting-edge technology – Building Information Modeling – to improve quality and cost/time efficiencies in design and construction.

Guild Hardy Architects was the statewide small business winner of the 2004 Governor's Cup, awarded by the Mississippi Development Authority and Mississippi Economic Development Council, and was named one of "Mississippi's 40 Fastest-Growing Companies" for 2007-2008 by *The Mississippi Business Journal*.

Guild, who worked with Eley as he began his career, said that the Guild Hardy partners have long respected the Eley Associates' portfolio, noting, "Jim Eley's passion for architecture and service to clients are well known in the statewide architectural community." Eley is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), an honor only two percent of architects nationally have received for outstanding achievements as voted on by their peers.

Eley represents the Gulf States region on the national AIA board. He and Hardy are past presidents of AIA Mississippi, and Crain is president-elect. Guild, serving his third term on the Mississippi State Board of Architecture, is secretary-treasurer currently and will serve as president for the third time next year. Eley also is a past president of the state board. He holds a B.S. in architecture from Auburn University.

Guild, Hardy, Crain, Lishen, and Stojcich received architectural degrees from Mississippi State University. Crain serves on the MSU College of Architecture, Art, and Design Advisory Council.

Eley Guild Hardy Architects has offices in Biloxi at 1041 Tommy Munro Drive and in Jackson at 418 East Capitol Street and 106 South President Street, Suite 300.

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