



VFLA Celebrates longevity



Contact Information

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Year founded

1986

No. of employees

20

Management team

Justin Larson, CEO

Robin Pelkey CFO

Frank Vaught, President

Chris Aronson, Vice President

Primary service

Vaught Frye Larson Architects is a full capacity architectural firm offering comprehensive in house services including architectural design, interior design, land planning, graphic design, construction phase services and LEED certification services.

Celebrating 30 years of business, Vaught Frye Larson Architects (VFLA) has grown its award winning reputation along with its architectural services.

A full capacity architecture firm, VFLA has offices in Fort Collins, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming, offering an array of services including architectural design, interior design, land planning, zoning process assistance and construction phase services.

“We are a generalist practice which means we offer everything under the sun,” says principal architect and partner Frank Vaught.

VFLA’s services have garnered notable awards for its projects including the Governor’s Award for Downtown Excellence, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Colorado North Honor Award, and an Urban Design Award from the City of Fort Collins among numerous others.

Principal architect and CEO, Justin Larson attributes the success to the company’s basic philosophy that architecture is the art of construction. “There are two types of architectural approaches. There’s the construction of art where the idea of the design is put ahead of construction,” he says. “We strive for the art of construction where we can create a beautiful design that is thoughtful in how it drives the construction.”

VFLA’s history began when Frank Vaught and Joe Frye met while freshmen at the University of Houston’s School of Architecture. They moved to Fort Collins in 1971 and, in 1973, they founded Design Associates, working primarily on design/build house plans. Later, with two other partners, they formed ZVFK in 1975. In 1986, the two left ZVFK and opened Vaught Frye Architects.

“We were sustainable before sustainable was cool,” says Robin Pelkey, VFLA partner and CFO. “We have a commitment to sustainability and were the first

professional office to join ClimateWise (VFLA is now at the Platinum level).”

That commitment to sustainability brought another opportunity. “There was this young tenacious architect we would run into at AIA conferences,” Vaught recalls, saying there was an immediate connection with Larson who owned JCL Architecture. “We found a lot of similarities between our businesses especially in a sustainability philosophy,” Vaught says. “It was a good mix. We had seasoned senior veteran employees and Justin was young and energetic.”

In 2011, Vaught Frye merged with JCL Architecture and formed Vaught Frye Larson Architects (VFLA). Architect Chris Aronson joined the team just after the merger and, in 2014, he became a partner.

VFLA promotes a team effort. For example, VFLA’s office building also houses landscape architecture firm Ripley Design, Inc. “We have an advantage over other architectural firms because of our relationship with Ripley. We’re teammates,” Vaught says.

The open design of the office area fosters that exchange, says Pelkey. “We deliberately put people of different disciplines together and it gives us so many resources for diverse perspectives.”

“We meet as a group and discuss our ideas and design solutions,” says Aronson. “It’s energizing and beneficial for our clients.”

The result has been signature projects throughout Northern Colorado, southern Wyoming and into Denver and Colorado Springs.

VFLA’s efforts extend beyond the workday with volunteer activities such as Crossroads Safehouse, Animal House, and the Boys and Girls Club. VFLA is a founding member of United Way of Larimer County Business Cares.

“It gives us a chance to work with each other on another plane,” says Pelkey.

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