FLATOW, MOORE, BRYAN, SHAFFER, McCABE, INC. Architects Looking Toward The Future

by Van Dorn Hooker, FAIA

Max Flatow and his partners have had a great visual impact on the built environment of Albuquerque. People see the mark of these architects in the Civic Center/Convention Center, the Intel Corporation on top of the western escarpment, the Chaves Federal Building, First National Bank East, the Marriott Hotel, buildings at UNM, hospitals, schools, churches, office buildings, and very important but not too noticed, plans for the future development of the city.

Everyone has his or her own opinion about architecture and art, and some may not like what they see in a particular building as well as others may. But architects, unlike most other professions, put their projects on public display for approval or criticism, so this firm must have done a lot of things right to have accumulated such a large number of repeat clients over the years and to have won so many awards for their designs.

It all began when Max Flatow came to New Mexico in March, 1945, as Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers to be the "Architectural Superintendent of Construction" at Los Alamos for the Manhattan Project. He looked after the day to day construction details and negotiated all contracts for architectural services and construction. Every Tuesday he met with Robert Oppenheimer, director of the project, to brief him on the progress of the work.

Flatow left the service in 1947 and came to Albuquerque, the nearest city, since he had no ties to any other place. He got an option on some land on Washington Boulevard when nothing had been developed north of Lomas or east of Morningside. He started designing and building FHA financed houses which proved hard to sell in that depressed time. He rented an office behind the Berger-Briggs Building which you had to enter from the alley on Third Street one block south of Central Avenue.

Commissions for several small commercial buildings kept the office going, including one in the triangle of Central and Monte Vista, now a restaurant, another on Central Avenue opposite the Nob Hill Shopping Center for Mr. and Mrs. Joe Wingate, and the New Mexico State Bank at Richmond and Central.

In 1947 Flatow was commissioned to do the Zia Company Motorpool at Los Alamos, a sizeable job. Werner W. Dornberger, a professor of architectural engineering at the University of Texas and a friend of Max, was doing the structural engineering on the Motorpool. Garlan Bryan wanted to come west after he graduated from Texas that year, so Dornberger recommended him and Max hired Garlan. He arrived in Albuquerque in October, 1947, and started working on the Motorpool project.

Jason Moore joined Max in June, 1948, after having taught architecture at Texas A & M University following his service in World War II. Jason and Max were roommates at the YMCA across the street from the Architecture Building at the University of Texas while they were in school there. Jason finished school in 1939, but Max went to work fulltime for the Texas Highway Department designing bridges so he didn't get his Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering degree until 1940. That same year he passed the license examination and was registered in Texas.

During that time the United States was building military bases in many parts of the world. Jason was working in Trinidad, British West Indies when Max came there to work for the Walsh Construction Company, which was doing work all over the Caribbean. In 1943 Jason was commissioned in the Navy Seabees and Max joined the army as a private. After doing basic

Figure 1: Simms Building, Albuquerque, New Mexico

training in Oregon, Max went to Officer's Training School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, after which he was assigned to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, then to the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos.

In 1949, Max Flatow developed the Medical Arts Square in Albuquerque, which was the first venture of its kind in the country. He obtained a lease on property at Encino and Las Lomas, set up a corporation with forty physicians advancing $10,000 each to construct the facilities, and built it for less than $10 per square foot. It was composed of single story medical offices built in clusters with covered walkways connecting them. In-fill space was left between the groups of offices. It has been a very successful medical office complex and still operates at near capacity. Max took his fee in stock in the corporation.

More and more commissions came to the firm so that when a promotional brochure was published in 1954, more than a hundred projects had been completed, including many buildings at Los Alamos and Sandia Base, and hospitals, churches, commercial and industrial buildings all over the state. It was Max Flatow, Architect, until 1952 when Jason Moore became a part-

ner and the name was changed to Flatow and Moore, which only lasted until 1954 when Garlan Bryan and Robert Fairburn, who had joined the firm in 1949, became partners. The name was then Flatow, Moore, Bryan, and Fairburn. The acronym FMBF became widely used on signs, letterheads and brochures.

The size of the organization grew very quickly and soon the downtown office was inadequate, so in 1949 they finished a new office at 1840 Lomas Boulevard NE. There FMBF was to remain until 1963. Beyond the usual spaces found in any architectural office of that time, it contained a large library, a very well-equipped work shop and a photographic laboratory.

Albert G. Simms and John Simms, his brother, owned the old Commercial Club, later occupied by the Journal/Tribune, at Fourth and Gold SW; and in 1952 they decided to build a four or five story office building on that site. They selected Flatow and Moore to be the architects, but Max and Jason felt the land should be developed more intensely, so they designed a twelve story building and built a model of it. After Albert and John saw the model, one of them said, "You are crazy!" but after looking at it for awhile, and discussing it, Albert Simms took a few bills from his pocket, looked at them and said, "It's a crazy idea - let's build it! I'll put two million dollars in the bank and you build me that building!"

The Simms Building,(figure 1) was unique in many ways. It was the tallest building built in New Mexico since the First National Bank was completed in 1928. It was built on top of a raft slab poured over driven wood piles, a system not often used in this area. The heating and air conditioning system was based on a heat exchange arrangement between two water wells, one deep and one shallow, with different temperatures to provide chilled water for cooling. The system also was designed so that air warmed by the sun on the south side of the building in the winter could be moved to the colder north side to provide heating there.

Albert Simms wrote Max and Jason in 1954:

"This letter is to tell you that I am much pleased with the architectural design and the functioning of the building. I believe it is unique in the West. It is a twelve story aluminum and glass building and I think I can modestly say that it is much admired by the people of Albuquerque. The colors are vivid and striking, very pleasing, and I am proud to be the owner of this beautiful building and to have had you as architects."

The 1950s saw the firm growing and developing a broad general practice that was not confined to Albuquerque and Los Alamos. There was a "company plane" and Max, Jason and Bob Fairburn were all licensed pilots. They flew to meetings with clients and to projects under construction around the region. Fortunately, Garlan was left to mind the store. A friend of mine at the University told me about a flight he made with Max. Soon after takeoff, Max set the plane on automatic pilot and promptly fell asleep. Needless to say, my friend was wide awake the rest of the trip and vowed never to fly with Max again.

Some other projects completed during the fifties include single family housing projects for Holloman Air Force Base, Cannon Air Force Base, Kirtland Air Force Base, Offutt Air Force Base; Master Planning for Sandia Labs at Kirtland Air Force Base, and for 25 bases for Air Defense Command all across the United States; hospitals at Farmington, Las Vegas, and the Regional Hospital for the Navajo tribe at Gallup; schools and churches and major laboratory test facilities at Los Alamos.

The 1960s was a decade of greatly diversified activity. In 1961, a long lasting relationship with the Del Webb Corporation was established when they bought the land at San Mateo and Central and hired FMBF to design what became known as the First National Bank East (figure 3). It was one of the first tall buildings in the country designed around a central core that contained all the vertical circulation, mechanical chases and restrooms, but was also a structural element as well. It was so functional and inexpensive to build, Webb asked them to do an

Figure 2: Rosenweig Center, Phoenix, Arizona, the "identical" building is at the right, see First National Bank Building below.

Figure 3: First National Bank East at Central Avenue and San Mateo, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

identical building in the Rosenweig Center in Phoenix (figure 2). However, that building had to have a different structural system. FMBF did several projects for Del Webb over a ten-year period, including the design for Clear Lake City, to be an expansion of Houston, Texas, and Fresno Center in California.

Garlan Bryan was the principal in charge of the Del Webb projects. Max Flatow had never met Webb, so one time Garlan took Max with him to Phoenix to meet with him. After the meeting, Del Webb was going down the elevator with Garlan and he said, "Your partner is quite a character, but I like him." Down a couple of more floors he said, "You know, he's the first guy I ever saw wearing a $400 Hickey-Freeman suit and tennis shoes."

After the Bank Building was finished, the firm moved into the entire sixteenth floor from the overcrowded office at Yale and Lomas. They remained there from 1963 until 1976 when they bought a building at Zuni and Palomas SE.

In 1962, FMBF was one of five finalists chosen to compete for the Denver Urban Renewal planning contract and they won. This planning resulted in their doing the Prudential Plaza, a 25-story tower with two retail shop levels and underground parking as a joint venture with Del Webb and Prudential Insurance. Another good result of that plan was the preservation of the old DF Tower, a Denver landmark. (figure 7)

FMBF was also awarded the commission to do the planning for the Tijeras Urban Renewal project in downtown Albuquerque. They teamed up with Scanlon and Associates, Engineers, and opened an office across from City Hall. Max Flatow was the principal in charge of the work. Not all of their plan was put into effect, but the location of Civic Plaza, the Convention Center and the Grand and Tijeras overpasses were established.

Of all the sixties' projects, the one which had the most influence on building design in New Mexico was the College of Education Complex at the Unversity of New Mexico (UNM). After several years of effort on the part of Chester Travelstead, Dean of the College, and Professor Wilson Ivins, approval was obtained to design and build a new facility for the College. They interviewed many firms and finally recommended FMBF to Tom Popejoy, President of UNM, who appointed them to be architects for the project.

At that time, the San Francisco based firm of John Carl Warnecke and Associates was doing the first in-depth campus development plan for the University. Flatow and his staff worked with Lawrence Lackey and Alfred Baxter of the Warnecke firm to locate the site for the College, which resulted in the first closing of a street through the campus. The planning resulted in seven buildings on a mini-campus of their own. Max's idea was to allow passage through the complex by students from the nearby dormitories making it an interesting way to walk to the heart of the campus. The buildings were designed to recognize the influence of the dominant Pueblo Revival style of architecture on the campus, but also to introduce a contemporary interpretation of the style. Sloping pre-cast concrete panels with no windows formed the exterior walls of the complex, but the walls on the interior facing facades were glass panels looking into semi-enclosed patios (figure 6). The feature gave a lightness to the interiors found nowhere else on the campus. Stuccoed masonry walls enclosing patios and planting areas formed the border of the area. A huge, multi-colored faceted glass wall designed and built by John Tatchel, Professor of Art, formed the west wall of the Administration Building.

Figure 4: St. Joseph Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Figure 5: Willow Creek Office Building, Idaho Falls, Idaho.

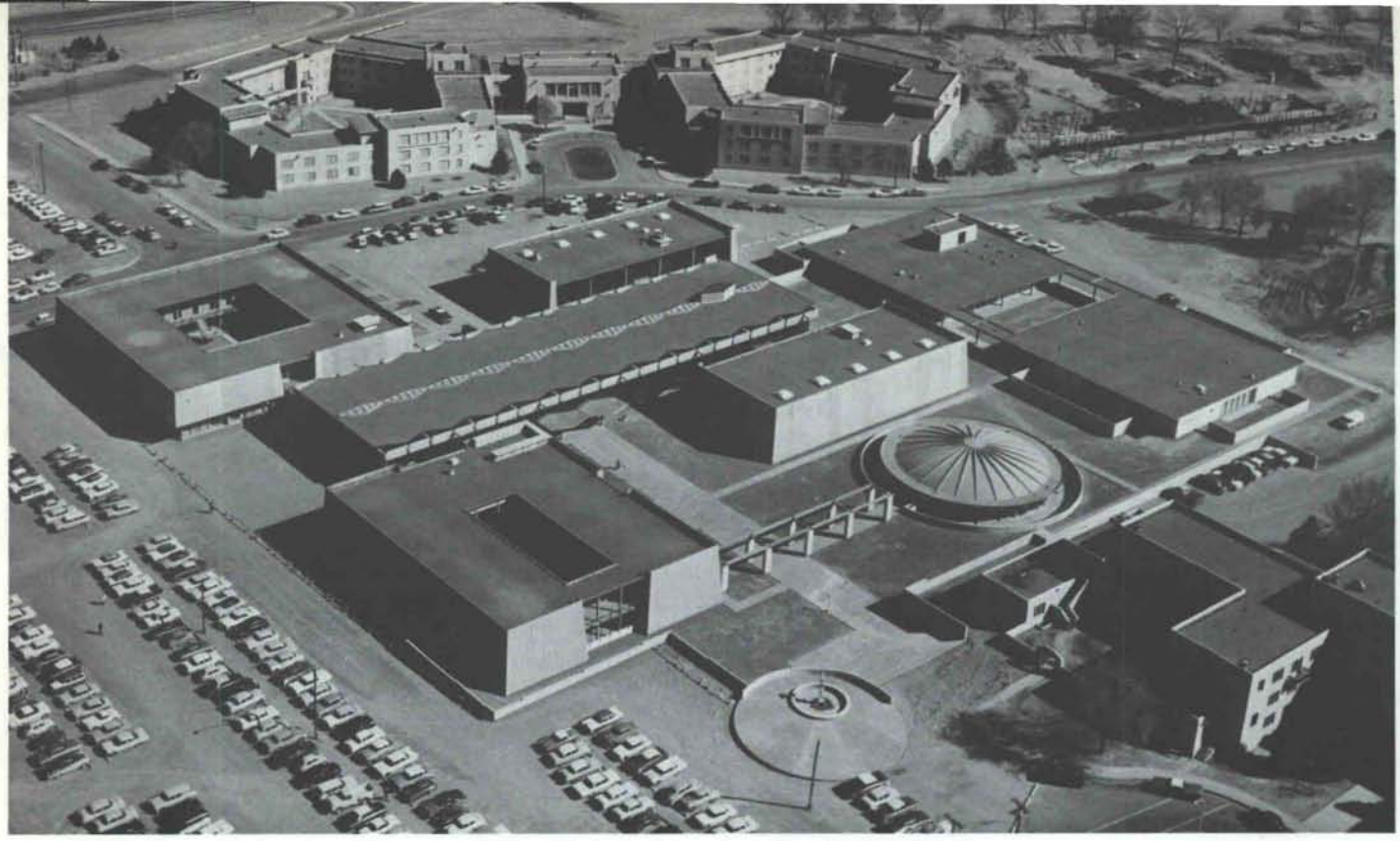

Figure 6: College of Education, University of New Mexico with student dormitories behind.

It was a controversial design which was approved by the College faculty but opposed by others including Myron F. Fifield, Director of the Physical Plant, and Sherman E. Smith, Dean of Students and Chairman of the Campus Planning Committee. Smith later reversed his judgment of the design and converted to a staunch supporter of this concept.

The College of Education design was a turning point in the development of the UNM campus. Following it were much more contemporary interpretations of the campus building style. During the next several years, FMBF designed several buildings on the UNM Central and Medical Campuses including an addition to the Biology Building (1965) with the main entrance made through a two-story greenhouse, Farris Engineering Center (1966) the Psychology Building (1968); the Nursing-Pharmacy Building (1973); the Cancer Center (1974); and two major additions to the University Hospital in 1968 and 1974. Members of the firm most closely involved with the University work besides Max, Jason and Garlan, were Wayne Andrews, William Jette, Bob Sheppard, Leon Ross, Rusty Shaffer, Alex Connell and Tom Mortimer.

George Pearl, a well-known New Mexico architect, stated that the pioneering innovative designs of FMBF had given people a choice of architectural design they had not had before and thereby made it much easier for other architects who came along later to get their contemporary designs accepted. This was particularly true on the UNM campus.

In 1964 the firm of Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Fairburn was incorporated under the laws of New Mexico with offices in Albuquerque and Phoenix. In 1971 the corporate structure was changed so that the two offices could operate as separate corporations with Fairburn heading up the Arizona office. The two offices collaborated on many projects and lent each other technical and design support until 1974 when a complete separation was made and the New Mexico corporation became Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Associates.

Jason Moore has been the principal most involved with medical facilities through the years. In order to stay in the forefront of design and planning developments in this field, he

Figure 7: Prudential Plaza, Denver, Colorado.

For a detailed discussion of the Education Complex, see ***New Mexico Architecture****, "The College Education-University of New Mexico" by Bainbridge Bunting. Volumn 5, nos 5&6, May/June 1963.*

In addition, the remodeling and renovation of the 1930 St. Joseph Hospital into doctors offices (St. Joseph Center, figure 4) was reported by David Weatherman in the May/-June 1985 issue (Volumn 26, no 3) of ***New Mexico Architecture.***

has been an active member of the American Institute of Architcts Committee on Architecture for Health since 1976. Since designing the Medical Arts Square in 1949, the firm has planned new hospitals, added to existing ones in Farmington, Las Vegas, Deming, Alamogordo, Clovis, Española, Belen, Socorro and Crownpoint in New Mexico and in Scottsdale and Phoenix in Arizona. In Albuquerque they designed Anna Kaseman Hospital, did major additions to the University Hospital, and worked on Memorial Hospital and the Veterans Administration complex. Currently the St. Joseph Rehabilitation Hospital is under construction as is an addition to Phoenix Camelback Hospital in Arizona. Some of their largest hospital commissions have, however, been in Texas: Midland Memorial and the Methodist Hospital in Lubbock. There has been a continuing relationship with these hospitals for many years resulting in some $25 million in projects at Midland and $50 million at Methodist.

Through the years the office has designed many hotels and motels beginning with "A Resort Hotel" proposed for Reno, Nevada, in 1954 to several hotels for the Marriott Hotel chain in the 1980's. Along the way they designed Camelback Inn in Phoenix; the Four Seasons in Albuquerque and Colorado Springs for Dale Bellamah; "The Inns" in Farmington, Artesia and Grants and the Classic Hotel in Albuquerque for George Maloof; the Chamisa in Española; and they did some work on the Arizona Biltmore to mention a few. After completing the Marriott Hotel in Albuquerque, the owners were so impressed, they commissioned the firm for hotels in various parts of the country: Irvine, Costa Mesa, Cupertino and Long Beach, California; Scottsdale, Arizona; Kansas City, Missouri; and Elk Grove, Michigan.

One of the most interesting projects in the last few years is the Willow Creek Office Building in Idaho Falls, Idaho, for EG & G Idaho, Inc (figure 5). It received an Energy Conservation Award in 1980 from Owens-Corning Fiberglas for its energy conservation design. Even though three times larger than EG & G's previous building, it uses 22 percent less energy. The design included an internal heat-source pump that obtains heat from lights and people and transfers it to a 200,000 gallon water filled storage tank from which water for either heating or cooling is taken as needed. The designers also used many passive solar features for increased energy efficiency as well as some unique methods of maximizing the use of daylighting to save electrical energy.

Other projects of public and sport fans' interest are the Albuquerque Sports Stadium, recognized as the best AAA Baseball Stadium in the United States, the new UNM Track and Field Facilities and the Los Altos Park and Golf Course.

The most complex project the office has undertaken has to be the Intel microchip manufacturing plant in Rio Rancho, the first unit of which was completed in 1983 as part of an ongoing $150 million project. The 120 foot span manufacturing area uses a laminar flow ceiling system, which is a Class 10 clean room facility and has attained Class 1 at the work benches. The project includes the latest techniques and equipment for the storage, neutralizing and handling various gases and wastes as required by various building and environmental codes.

In my opinion, one of the best projects FMBSM has done in Albuquerque is the recently completed Middle School for the Albuquerque Academy (figure 8). One of the major design considerations was to carefully integrate the new facility into the existing campus which they did by matching materials and building forms used for the original school. The result is a beautiful group of buildings that with well-designed landscaping provides one of the most attractive teaching-learning environments in the region.

Nearby to the Academy is the new Hoffmantown Baptist Church of which Phase I was completed in 1985. It is the largest church in New Mexico with a worship center seating 5,500, a fellowship hall, a full kindergarten through high school, administration and other support facilities. It is described by FMBSM as exemplifying neo-classical architectural forms, material, textures and colors.

In 1970 the principals, cognizant of the fact that the firm has established an excellent reputation and played an important role of leadership in the architectural community, started a promotion program to assure continuance of its services into the future. Key personnel were placed in leadership roles within the corporate structure, and a plan is now firmly in place which assures transition of ownership to younger staff members whereby the qualified architects are given the opportunity to lead the firm.

Figure 8: Albuquerque Academy, Middle School, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Figure 9:
Hoffmantown Baptist Church,
Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Figure 10
Albuquerque Sports Stadium, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

A summary of key events reveals a deliberate and orderly plan of succession aimed at providing growth of the individual and the firm while maintaining the ultimate goal of continuation of the firm:

- Associate level established in early 1970's for the purpose of recognizing key personnel and designating managerial responsibilities.
- Associates promoted to vice presidents and a new group of associates named in 1980 to expand leadership roles.
- The new group of vice presidents became stockholders in 1982 to expand ownership.
- A plan of transition of ownership was implemented in 1984 to the second generation of principals.
- The firm named was changed to Flatow, Moore, Bryan, Shaffer, McCabe, Inc. in 1985 for the purpose of expressing firm ownership.

Tobias Flatow obtained his Master of Architecture degree from Washington University in 1977 and immediately joined the firm. He was acutely aware of the importance of computerizing the operation of the office to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the rapidly developing computer field.

Tobias says that to make the most effective use of CADD you must start at the schematic phase. It is too late to begin at the working drawing stage and not use it on complex remodeling

jobs such as in hospitals, and it is not effective on jobs under $1 million in scope. He sees the computer aided drafting as allowing more time for design and environmental considerations as the practice of architecture goes through some drastic changes in the years ahead.

Robert R. McCabe holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master of Community Planning from the University of Cincinnati. He joined FMBF in 1973 and because of his background in planning, he immediately became involved in numerous planning projects as well as architectural projects. In 1987 he studied the office as it was operating and presented the idea of establishing a "studio" concept of project management. Each studio would be directed by one of the principals who is particularly interested in that type of work and the principals can move between studios as required. The studios could focus on the strengths of the firm and look at the active markets be they high-technology, education, health care, hospitality or other. The plan was adopted and today Bob directs the environmental design studio and the education/health care studio.

In looking toward the future, McCabe feels FMBSM is fortunate in that the transition from the older partners to the new ones has gone very well. That it has is mainly due to the fact that the three partners wanted the firm to continue and they had the people in place to make it happen beginning five years ago. The new partners began running the organization with Max, Jason, and Garlan to back them up. He feels that the firm must continue to expand and to broaden the practice to out-of-state markets. He also thinks that in the process of redefining the direction of FMBSM, it is important that the new principals establish their own identity. McCabe is very active in community affairs, working with the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Albuquerque Museum Foundation Board, the Governor's Business Adivisory Council and other city planning committees. State gross receipts tax in the past had to be paid by architects on work done out of state for out of state clients, but in the 1988 legislative sessions, Bob led the effort to have this part of the tax code repealed so architects could be more competitive on out of state projects.

Jon Moore says that clients more and more want to pick and choose their design/construction team and want a one point responsibility. He feels that architects have the know how to be the leader of this team if they have the in-house computer capability to back up their academic base. Since returning to Albuquerque with a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of New Mexico, and a Master of Architecture from UCLA in 1976, he has tried to put FMBSM into a competitive position in design and project management. He feels that any project in the $10 million plus category must have "project management" and whoever provides that service must know design and maintain control of design.

Many corporations already have financial management and architectural and construction capability in place so FMBSM provides "design management" only. Much of this service is devoted to working with the site adaptation which includes providing "maximum yield" information to the developer telling him how he can use the site most economically and profitably, something that can be done in fifteen minutes on the computer as opposed to weeks on the drawing board in the past. This capability then gives more time for the design work. Like the other new principals, Jon feels that New Mexico cannot support a firm of this size, so they must market nationally.

Rusty Shaffer is the principal in charge of the technical studio. His other responsibilities include construction administration management, quality assurance/control program development and principal in charge of projects assigned to him. He believes that, if design and contract documents maintain a high level of quality, everyone benefits. Rusty says the architect is responsible for educating the client in what to expect in the area of architectural services. The more sophisticated clientele obtain better results because they have a good understanding of architectural services. Intel, for instance, is a very informed and experienced client with in-house capabilities in planning, programming and construction management. They are very demanding, but fair regarding contract negotiations and performance.

Some of Rusty's thoughts about architectural practice: A/E firms must be flexible. They must be capable of adjusting quickly and efficiently to the market, client needs and the emergence of new building types. The firm which specializes will be short-lived. In addition, A/E firms need to be adaptable in offering diversified services. Some clients are looking for "one-stop shopping". For the most part, architects are capable of providing the creative leadership in bringing together a full service team whereby feasibility studies, land acquisition, financing, programming, planning, architectural and engineering design, construction management and facilities management are provided in one organization. The architect of the future must be dedicated to a continuing education program involving all aspects of architectual practice, law, business and management. Being located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is a great asset, in addition to being the greatest place on earth to live and work, it has a fantastic potential for future, high quality development.

Rusty, a graduate of the University of New Mexico, came to FMBF in 1965. His grandfather, Pop Shaffer, a renown folk artist, homesteaded near Mountainair, New Mexico early on in this century. The Shaffer Hotel and Rancho Bonito, which remain today, are prime examples of his creative work and are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. His father, Don Shaffer, was a general contractor in the Albuquerque area during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Among other projects, he constructed homes in the Albuquerque County Club area and spearheaded the development of homes in the Parkland Hills and Ridgecrest areas.

The members of the firm have always been committed to participation in professional and civic organizations, some of which have already been mentioned. Max Flatow, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, was Regional Director of the Western Mountain AIA, and served on the National Board of Directors. He was a member of the Public Advisory Board on Architectural Services to GSA and has served on numerous other commissions and committees. Jason and Garlan are long time members of the AIA and have actively participated in its committees. Jon Moore is a past-president of the Albuquerque Chapter, AIA, and Rusty has been a member of the Committee on Architecture for Education. Bob has been a member of the board of the local chapter and has served on the National Planning and Urban Design Committee of the AIA. They have actively supported participation in AIA affairs by employees of the firm.

Many architects and engineers who are now or were in private practice worked for the Flatow firm at one time or another including: Philippe D. Register, John Work, William Matotan, Ray Chambers, Douglas Campbell, John Reed, John Varsa, George Bolling, Wayne Andrews, Leon Ross, Richard Waggoner, Gerald Lundeen, Jorge de la Torre, George Rainhart, Howard Cottrell, George Bosiljevac, James Ennis, Jack Fickel, Kevin Georges, Harvey Hoshour, Channel Graham, Don Krueger, Patrick McClernon, Tim Miller, David Sloan, Gene Dyer, Robert Biddle, Dayton Molsen, Whit Phillps and Rob Muir.

In looking back over his more than 40 years of practice, Max Flatow said he was proud of his accomplishments as an architect and the success of his organization, but he did have a few regrets. Interestingly, they had more to do with planning than

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