

BUILDING Business & Apartment Management



VOICE OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN AND APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP & AWARDS COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

Jason Ruthig and Paul Samartino

Dominick Tringali Architects



Jason, (J.R.) Ruthig and Paul Samartino have many things in common in addition to their affiliation with Dominick Tringali Architects and their 2007 BIA Distinguished Service Award in Architecture.

Both are graduates of Lawrence Technological University with bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture; both worked briefly for other companies before joining Dominick in the mid 1990s; both have begun traveling more as the firm has expanded nationally; both have young families. But, most significantly, both had mothers who encouraged their childhood doodling and drawing, recognizing those early sketches, sometimes from comic books, indicated future careers.

"We're visual people," explains J.R. "Even now, our clients will tell you we're drawing even as we're speaking to them."

Paul recalls that as a boy he would tag along with his father, Nick Samartino a heating contractor, to new construction sites. He mentions he has a creative family: his mother, Joann, is a talented florist and "dabbles" with interior design; his brother, Chris, is in advertising and wife, Michelle, is a free lance writer.

J.R. grew up in the small town of Ubyly in the Thumb where there were few technical drawing classes, but after meeting a recruiter

from Lawrence Tech, he knew he wanted the architecture program. "They weed you out pretty fast," he remembers, but he easily qualified.

At DTA, J.R. and Paul work closely together, but each also has specific and favorite projects. Paul, lead designer, typically juggles five or more large custom homes at a time, each averaging from \$4 to \$6 million. One of his most recent is a commodious Country French home in Franklin with an old world stone and stucco exterior. "It

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will look like it's been there 100 years," he says. Another favorite is a 30,000 square foot French eclectic home on Upper Straits Lake.

J.R.'s expertise is evident in the Birmingham area where he designs a mix of styles including English Tudor, Country French and Shingle Style. His current favorite is a French manor home in Rochester Hills. At DTA he plays an important role overseeing the schedule of the entire design team. It is not unusual for him to juggle 20 or 30 projects at a time. It is also not unusual, he

says, to be working with Dominick at 10:00 p.m. on a Friday night.

Both Paul and J.R. describe Dominick as a role model and appreciate how he has showcased their respective talents. He has encouraged their professional growth. Recently, Paul traveled to Charlotte to judge its Parade of Homes, and J.R. flew to Denver to judge a local architectural competition. They are also accepting more speaking engagements locally. Both are associate members of A.I.A. and have affiliated with local Chambers of Commerce.

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Long hours are not a problem because both men love their work. On weekends their priority is time with family. Paul and his wife, Michelle, live in Shelby Township and have a two-year-old daughter, Alyssa. J.R. and his wife, Corinne, live in Macomb Township and are parents of triplets: Landon, Payton and Paige, almost two. J.R. is a sports fan and loves to play basketball and golf. Paul tries to schedule weekend work-outs.

Announcement of BIA's Distinguished Service Award to Paul and J.R. pleased the DTA staff. Associate Kim Baer exclaimed, "We're not surprised. They're both pretty amazing." ■