



May, 2002

Number 11

The new conferencing center at Detroit Metro Airport posed an interesting challenge for designer and former masonry camper, Mike Thompson. The owner, Detroit Regional Chamber, sought to create an “oasis” in the center of a main terminal lobby. It would be a place for visiting dignitaries to meet with local area businessmen to promote commerce in the southeastern Michigan area.

Thompson needed a dynamic design that would mimic the bustle of the airport and allow natural light into the space, yet one which would also act as a barrier to shield the occupants meeting inside.



DETROIT METRO AIRPORT Detroit, MI



OWNER: Detroit Regional Chamber

ARCHITECT: Barton Malow Design
Mike Thompson, AIA from Detroit

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER:
Barton Malow Company

MASON CONTRACTOR:
Leidal & Hart
Livonia, Michigan

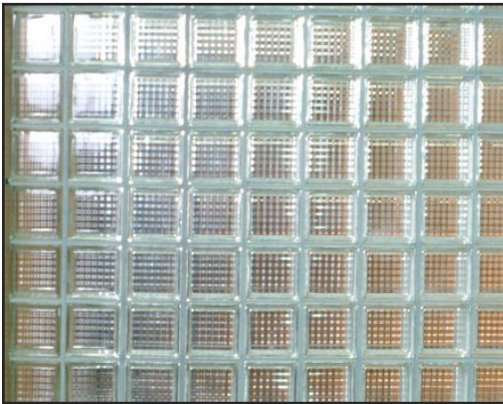
LOCAL UNION:
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied
Craftworkers Local #1, MI

AREA: 600 sq. ft.

PROJECT COST: \$250,000

CONSTRUCTION TIME: June - September, 1999

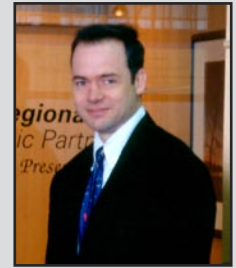
Glass block was the material of choice, allowing for fluidly curving walls and naturally filtered light. Unlike other thin cladding materials used, Masonry added texture and integrity to the overall design. Masonry was chosen for its durability and sound construction, and for its ability to blend with the glass block to form fluid lines and segmented curves.



“Masonry added integrity to the design because of its sound construction, and its honest and skillful hand-laid installation.”

IMI PROFILE: FORMER MASONRY CAMPER

WHO: Mike Thompson
AIA Detroit, Michigan



CURRENTLY: Mike is currently a senior architect with Barton Malow Design in Detroit.

MASONRY CAMP EXPERIENCE: Mike describes Masonry Camp as a “terrific experience” and feels very fortunate to have attended. “As architects, we mostly sit in offices and develop designs in a rather synthetic fashion. We’re like coaches that never played the sport we’re coaching. Masonry camp put the architects in the trenches next to the masons. We learned to respect one another by discovering how passionate and intense we are about our disciplines. Architects spilled more mortar on the ground than on the bricks, while the masons sat in on studio design decisions and gnashed their teeth. Camp went deeper than architecture and masonry. It opened us up to lessons about life and how we work together to create and build as humans.” Mike says he has great respect for the craftsmanship of the mason, and for the permanence and quality of masonry materials.

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**International
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The International Masonry Institute is a labor/management cooperative serving the interests of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers and the contractors who employ its members.

The International Masonry Institute presents programs in four broad categories: apprenticeship and training, market development and technical services, research and development, and labor/management relations.

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