

Cawley Architects at 30: Continuing its evolution

Celebrating 30 Years in the Valley, Cawley Architects nurtures a company culture of progress and evolution

By PETER MADRID



CAWLEY ARCHITECTS PARTNERS: Rafael Macias, Paul Devers, Kevin Fawcett, David Fulk, Sherman Cawley and Lynette Dreitz Fort.

"**E**volution" perfectly describes the growth and development Cawley Architects has attained. In 2024, the Phoenix-based firm celebrates 30 years of dedication to architectural accomplishment in the Valley.

Cawley Architects is now ready to take the next step in its continued path of ever-increasing achievement, leadership, and capability with a

transition of leadership.

"Sherman Cawley and I will both be taking a back seat in the firm on January 1, 2024, and the new leadership of Kevin Fawcett, David Fulk, Rafael Macias and Lynette Dreitz Fort will assume the company's reins," according to Cawley Architects President Paul Devers.

Company founder Sherman Cawley

has the highest confidence in the new leadership.

"Kevin, David, Rafael and Lynette possess a deep reservoir of knowledge of the practice of architecture and have used this understanding to transform our office into a fully functional advanced services firm. Over the past 10 years, they have provided the impetus and professionalism to

“ This is where the firm's new leadership will achieve new heights in design and project achievement – Paul Devers

participate in and forge the growth of our office,” Cawley says.

“They have contributed at every level to our company's evolution. So, it is only natural that they take the reins while Paul and I take a step back. Neither of us is disappearing. We'll be involved with the office during the next few years providing transition support and working on special projects. But these four will be the new principals, directing and managing the firm.”

A cultural reboot in 2013

Every office has at least one transition in its history, and Cawley has had several. One of these started in 2013 when Cawley and Devers hired new directors. They hired Dreitz Fort and Fawcett first and Macias and Fulk shortly after that. Together, the four began adding new proficiencies to the office. The next phase had begun.

Among Dreitz Fort's immediate contributions was to recommend new accounting and project management software that has developed into a powerful tool giving the firm granular control over all of its projects.

Macias quickly introduced a highly organized set of procedures and provided leadership early in construction by implementing a full suite of CA services that quickly became the standard of the office and a stand-alone department.

Fawcett and Fulk together advanced the office's design profile with larger projects and more sophisticated designs, initiated its associate's program, initiated the graduation to a Revit office, participated in the office and lobby redesign, improved proposals, and improved capabilities to become an office that can provide any level of design services.

Together, they expanded the firm's capabilities and brought design and performance solutions to any level of design challenge and any product or building type.

Managing the office and delivering the projects takes a unique blend of talent and intellect.

“This is where the firm's new leadership will achieve new heights in design and project achievement,” Devers says.

A history of working and learning

For 30 years, Cawley Architects has focused on delivering a successful service. All the elements of a successful architectural service also form the foundation of a successful workplace environment.

“A company culture guides the professionals at Cawley Architects that is reflected in the phrase, ‘All of Working is Learning.’ That begins with a deep dedication to the work and is reflected in an equal commitment to each staff member,” Cawley says.

Since its founding in 1994, Cawley Architects has grown from a sole proprietorship to a medium-sized commercial firm focusing on light industrial, office, institutional, and commercial projects. Beginning in the late 1990s, Cawley Architects grew into a well-organized, high-volume, responsive firm primarily devoted to a creative collaboration with a local design-build firm. Together, they created a unique mutual and dedicated effort, mainly in the light industrial field.

“Paul and I have spent our careers focused on overcoming many of the shortcomings of established architectural services. We solved the issue of overbudget designs by partnering with contractors at the outset of every project. We train religiously and visit most of our projects. We invest heavily in supporting our staff to provide them with the tools necessary to document a project thoroughly to result in a smooth construction process. And we provide opportunities for advancement in the office that engage each staff member in their career,” Cawley explains.

“Paul and I have a great deal to be proud of. We have constructed a successful firm that will continue to evolve. And we are excited to hand the firm to such a talented and competent team,” Cawley adds. “Our achievements have laid the foundation for their future success. They will be able to elevate our office under their leadership to the next level of design accomplishment, leadership, and client satisfaction.”

The next phase of evolution at Cawley Architects is in great hands.

Cawley Architects timeline: 30 years of design excellence, evolution

- 1994** ● **Cawley Architects** initiates a creative and successful partnership with the team at LGE Design Build, designing and permitting light industrial, office, retail, and institutional projects throughout the Valley.
- 1999** ● **Paul Devers** joins Cawley as a partner and commences to build a new stable of clients and projects. Cawley goes into high gear.
- 2008-2013** ● Cawley successfully weathers the recession and keeps 11 staff members busy for 5½ years. **The firm emerges from the recession** with a larger market share and award-winning projects.
- 2013-2016** ● Cawley hires **four new directors**. Lynette Dreitz Fort comes on first as Director of Finance and Administration in 2013. Rafael Macias joins as Director of Construction Administration and QA/QC in 2014. Kevin Fawcett (2013) and David Fulk (2016) come aboard as Architectural Directors.
- 2015** ● Cawley Architects builds a stand-alone **Construction Administration department**, one of the few in the Valley for a mid-sized firm. Directed by Rafael Macias, it is a three-person staff focusing on the feedback loop between construction and documentation.
- 2019** ● Cawley announces the addition of **four new partners**: Kevin Fawcett, David Fulk, Rafael Macias, and Lynette Dreitz Fort.
- 2020** ● Cawley Architects announces **three new Associates**: RoseAnn Linsmeyer, Justen Cassidy, and Gordon DuSell.
- 2021** ● Cawley announces the formation of the **Cawley Design Studio**. It is directed by RoseAnn Linsmeyer. The firm also announces the promotion of Paul Devers to President and the addition of Bob Erickson as Director.
- 2023** ● Cawley Architects announces the transition to **new leadership**. Kevin Fawcett, David Fulk, Rafael Macias, and Lynette Dreitz Fort become Principals and will guide and direct the firm for the next 30 years.

Cawley Architects' signature projects



Phoenix Rescue Mission

Developer: Phoenix Rescue Mission // **Contractor:** GCON // **SF:** 56,252 // **Year built:** 2021 // **Location:** 1801 S. 35th Ave., Phoenix

Details: The Life Recovery Building at the Transforming Lives Center is a collaboration between the Phoenix Rescue Mission, Cawley Architects, and general contractor GCON.

The \$9 million project includes

new construction of a four-story administration and housing building with 280 beds, a dividable chapel, classroom spaces, expanded meeting spaces, and inviting outdoor spaces.

Cawley Architects designed the

building as a place of hope, healing, and new beginnings for men struggling with homelessness, addiction, and trauma. The Life Recovery Building, which replaces a barrack-style building, will foster self-worth.



Heidi's Village

Developer: Virginia Jontes Foundation

Owner: Heidi's Village

Contractor: Chasse Building Team

SF: 48,245

Year built: 2020

Location: 600 N. 40th St., Phoenix

Details: Heidi's Village is a non-profit animal welfare organization that partners with existing animal shelters and rescue organizations to provide temporary boarding for dogs and cats. Its mission is to foster a community where animals are treated with respect, dignity, and compassion to decrease the number of animals abandoned and euthanized. The project is a nine-building campus.



Ottawa Sports Complex

Developer/Owner: Ottawa University

Contractor: Haydon Building Corp

SF: 110,300

Year built: 2019

Location: 14470 W. Tierra Buena Lane, Surprise

Details: The Ottawa University Athletic Facility for Indoor and Outdoor Athletics features two recreational facilities. The complex is adjacent to the governmental campus of Surprise City Hall. The outdoor venue, named after its donor, is the O'Dell Athletic Complex. It adjoins a state-of-the-art, multi-purpose football, soccer, and lacrosse sports field.



Modern Flames

Developer/Owner: AF Steel

Contractor: LGE

SF: 39,132 SF

Year built: 2016

Location: 3515 E. Atlanta Ave., Phoenix

Details: Modern Flames is known for being a cutting-edge and innovative leader in modern, contemporary electric fireplace design and sales. Its parent company, AF Steel, is recognized as the leader in the steel fabrication industry. This building provides support spaces for both businesses. The clean, modern facility strengthens and complements the surrounding industrial park. The use of color, steel and metal paneling set it apart.

Meet the principals

Here's what Cawley Architects Founder Sherman Cawley and President Paul Devers say about the four principals who will be leading the firm, and how these principals see the future:



LYNETTE DREITZ FORT **Cawley and Devers' view:**

"Lynette Dreitz Fort is a highly skilled finance professional with a robust financial and administrative background who has created an office culture that has led to being the No. 1 small architecture office in Ranking Arizona for the past six years. Lynette is an organized thinker and influential leader passionate about driving business growth and profitability. She knows that leadership is about respect, understanding, and the self-awareness to recognize the strengths and weaknesses to empower others."

Lynette Dreitz Fort:

"My vision for Cawley Architects is to embrace our corporate values by empowering creativity to advance and grow the firm for the next generation. As a highly profitable company, we will be called upon to support a workplace that embodies core values and principles. Our goal is to help others see beyond the building and provide a service that embraces our client's vision."



RAFAEL MACIAS **Cawley and Devers' view:**

"Rafael Macias is adept at maintaining and refining our construction documentation process, mentoring staff, and all construction administration follow-through. He strongly believes that his role is the cornerstone of the office's services, ensuring the coordination and confirmation of every set of construction documents it produces."

Rafael Macias: "My vision and inspiration for the future are crystal clear. It is up to me to find the best way to move forward. I will focus on making strategic decisions, mentoring, and daily operations. I listen to our clients' needs and help them achieve their goals. My goal is to advance the firm as the leader in every market we serve. We must do this for the benefit of our clients and provide high quality design and services with honesty and integrity."



KEVIN FAWCETT **Cawley and Devers' view:**

"Kevin Fawcett is a dedicated architect and director focusing on design, project delivery, firm management, and mentoring. He has created the majority of our industrial projects, and his designs stand out. To Kevin, architecture is the intersection of art and commerce, and a good architect is cognizant of the importance of both to their clients."

Kevin Fawcett: "Sherm and Paul have built a company with a great reputation in numerous sectors in this market. I am grateful to have this leadership role to build on their success and continue the evolution we have all started together. I am excited for what I feel is an extraordinary opportunity for the company and our new leadership team."



DAVID FULK **Cawley and Devers' view:**

"David Fulk is a successful architect who directs, manages, and mentors those in the firm. He brings an in-depth love of design that focuses on the deeper relationships possible in the project. And he has a way of conveying them through sketches and descriptions that captivate our clients. He believes architectural leadership is about great solutions from even greater architectural design."

David Fulk: "I'm excited for the opportunity to grow the business and focus with staff on our core values and capabilities. Part of our role as principals is to mentor the project management staff. I want to see our next generation of architects take our projects to the highest level of design." ■■■