

## Design Profile Epstein Turns 90!

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, WARSAW & BUCHAREST

Celebrating 90 Years of Service  
Issue #7 - 2011



Architecture  
Interiors  
Engineering  
Construction

Creative Solutions for a Sustainable Future

## Epstein Turns 90!

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF SERVICE

This month we are proud to celebrate our 90th Anniversary. From our humble beginnings as a structural engineering consultant to our current worldwide full-service AEC capabilities, one thing has remained true- our dedication to service. Over these 90 years we have thoroughly enjoyed helping our clients solve their facility needs, but we also understand that our successes have been through the direct result of our clients' faith in us. We thank you for your patronage and belief in us, and look forward to helping you with your real estate issues in the very near future.

We thought in this issue that we would provide a brief retrospective of our firm highlighting our founding and significant achievements. So without further ado here is the Epstein story, so far...

On July 15, 1921 our firm was founded by recent University of Illinois graduate and Russian immigrant **Abraham Epstein**. Working out of a small one-story office building at 2011 Pershing Road on the west side of Chicago, A. Epstein - Structural Engineer provided engineering solutions for a modest mix of industrial and commercial clients throughout Chicago. These projects included buildings for City Furniture, J.S. Hoffman, Independent Casing Company and the **Live Stock National Bank of Chicago**.

Positive reviews from our client on the Central Manufacturing District in Chicago enabled A. Epstein to be awarded our first contract outside of Chicago for the Central Manufacturing District of Los Angeles. This success was followed by another out of town assignment for the United States Cold Storage Corporation in Kansas City, Missouri. Prospects for the future were looking very bright. Unfortunately, when the roaring 20s came to a screeching halt with the collapse of the US Stock Market in October of 1929, A. Epstein, like most small businesses in the United States, faced an uncertain future.



Abraham Epstein

In January of 1930, the United States plunged into a great economic depression with over 1,300 bank failures and nearly 4.5 million unemployed. A. Epstein was faced with the daunting task of surviving these bleak economic times, but during this difficult period A. Epstein was able to not only survive, but miraculously thrive through incredible hard work, dedication and good fortune. A. Epstein and his small staff worked overtime (without additional compensation and in some cases bypassing pay altogether) to deliver projects for their clients. During the



### Epstein City ... featuring...

*Live Stock National Bank, United Airlines, NIU Convocation Center, SC Johnson Fortaleza Hall & The Commons, Serta International Center, Sara Lee, Jewel Headquarters, Albertson's, University of Illinois Engineering Hall, Cameron International, Sprague Warner, McCormick Place Convention Center West Expansion, Osaka Grand Cube, Zlote Tarasy, Harold Washington Library Center, The Abbey, Midway Airport Passenger Terminal, Apple, McCormick Place Convention Center South Hall, O'Hare International Runway 9L-27R, Keebler, ISTHA Open Road Tolling, 600 W. Fulton, Twin Towers, Mt. Sinai Hospital, 300 S. LaSalle, Borg-Warner Building, Tour Maine-Montparnasse, 300 N. LaSalle, 247 Chestnut, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Smurfit-Stone Container Building, Hyatt Center, Federal Center, 353 N. Clark, Warsaw Financial Center, Rondo ONZ, & Chestnut Tower*

30s, A. Epstein was involved in our first aviation project for United Air Lines in Kansas City, Missouri; a large-scale exhibition center in Chicago, the International Amphitheater; and our most influential project- the **Rebuilding of the Union Stockyards** in Chicago, Illinois. This rebuilding project was vital to the survival of Chicago's meatpacking industry and A. Epstein's timely service helped make a name for our firm in the food processing industry. It was also during the 30s that **Raymond Epstein**, Abraham Epstein's oldest son joined the firm, beginning a career that would last nearly 50 years.

After surviving the economic hardship of the 30s A. Epstein, along with the rest of the United States, was blindsided by the events at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. But with the War came a major push in industrial development and A. Epstein's diverse engineering

talents positioned the firm to be a major player in new manufacturing projects. Our firm was responsible for many steel projects including development for **Fansteel Metallurgical Corporation** and **Indiana Steel Products Company** which helped the War effort and America's growing need for steel. In addition, A. Epstein welcomed **Sidney Epstein**, a recent graduate of the University of Illinois and Abraham's youngest son into the firm in 1943. This event led to our firm evolving into a full-service engineering and architecture firm known as A. Epstein and Sons, Inc. in October of 1946. After the war, the firm began to branch out from a strictly industrial focus and was responsible for many commercial, educational and health-care projects including the headquarters for Walgreen's and the Mt. Sinai Hospital, a state-of-the-art facility located in Chicago.

The 50s was a decade that saw A. Epstein and Sons, Inc. continue to expand its presence in the industrial market but also grow upward through the design of high-rise structures. As many of America's urban centers were reaching for the skies during the 50s, A. Epstein and Sons completed high-rise residential and office buildings including the Twin Tower Apartments, 247 East Chestnut Apartments and the **Borg-Warner Building**. Additionally, A. Epstein and Sons became pioneers in the emerging new project delivery method known as Design-Build. In 1952, we undertook our first Design-Build project for General Electric in Chicago. This fast-track method of producing a building by having the design and construction portions of a project overlap instead of being separated by a bidding process after a design was completed helped position our firm as a leader in the delivery of industrial developments in the United States. Sadly, in November of 1958 our founder Abraham Epstein passed away, leaving his sons Raymond and Sidney in charge of growing our expanding business.



Raymond, Abraham & Sidney Epstein



Epstein Employee Awards Luncheon - 1967

The socially turbulent 60s were fairly smooth and prosperous for A. Epstein and Sons, Inc. This decade saw our firm expand by opening offices both domestically (New York), internationally (Tel Aviv & Paris) and with our first partnership with a world renown architect, Mies van der Rohe, on **Chicago's Federal Center**. A. Epstein and Sons continued to solidify its place as one of the preeminent industrial design firms in the world by delivering manufacturing buildings for Pepsi, General Mills, and Sara Lee. We also continued to expand our commercial practice

through the completion The Abbey, a large resort located in Fontana, Wisconsin, and a high-rise office building for Union Tank Car in Chicago. The 60s also saw the beginning of a new tradition at A. Epstein and Sons. In 1965, an annual **Employee Awards Luncheon** was held that honored special employee achievement over the past year, an event that continues to this day.

The 70s was another decade that involved continued expansion internationally with the opening of offices in London and **Warsaw, Poland**. The Warsaw office came about as a direct result of the A. Epstein and Sons name being known throughout the world as an expert in the design of food processing facilities. The communist government of Poland needed western help in designing food plants and we were asked to bid on the services. Raymond and Sidney Epstein personally put our bid together and



Federal Center

negotiated the terms with the Polish government. A contract was agreed upon and in 1971, our Warsaw office opened. Eighteen months later the first Epstein designed food plant (Polimex-Cekop) opened in Ostroda, Poland. The 70s also saw the completion of a high-rise office building, Tour Maine-Montparnasse, in Paris; a food processing facility for Union Carbide in France; **Air Bases for the Israeli Air Force in the Negev Desert** and a milk processing facility in Rehovot, Israel.



Israeli Air Force Bases

After growing internationally over the past two decades, A. Epstein and Sons, Inc. decided to announce our international presence by changing our name to A. Epstein and Sons International, Inc. A significant percentage of our business was being conducted internationally, primarily in Europe and Israel, and the new name helped cement our international capabilities. In addition, the 80s proved to be very fruitful in terms of completing signature buildings. In 1983, one of Chicago's most famous buildings, the **Smurfit-Stone Container Building** with its dramatically angled roof was completed and the well-received United Airlines Terminal One Complex at O'Hare International went on-line in 1988. The 80s also saw the passing of the leadership baton at our firm. In 1983, shortly before moving into our new world headquarters at 600 West Fulton Street, Raymond Epstein retired. Sidney Epstein became our Chairman and CEO and **Mickey Kupperman**, a 25-year veteran of the Epstein organization, became President.



Mickey Kupperman

During the 90s, A. Epstein and Sons International, Inc. saw a dramatic rise in high-profile corporate interiors projects as well as exhibition/convention centers. Our Los Angeles office was responsible for creating striking space for Hewlett-Packard and Sony, and in Chicago our interiors group designed space for Alberto-Culver and Sears. Our architects and engineers were engaged in exhibition space for Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art and Museum of Science and Industry. In addition we provided design consultation for the Grand Cube Osaka and were the architects and engineers of record for the South Expansion to **McCormick Place Convention Center** in Chicago. Our Polish office also experienced a transformation from a predominately industrial focus to one that featured numerous successful commercial developments including the Warsaw Corporate Center and the first western-style high-rise office building in Eastern Europe, the **Warsaw Financial Center**.



Smurfit-Stone



McCormick Place

Since 2000, Epstein has experienced continued growth in Eastern Europe, the completion of some of the firm's most significant projects, and a move to 100% employee ownership. Sensing a need for western-style expertise in design and engineering due to Romania's impending admission into the European Union, Epstein opened up an office in **Bucharest** in December 2005. In a few short years, this office experienced tremendous growth and now services many commercial and industrial firms doing business in **Romania**.

The past decade has also seen Epstein complete such major projects as a new runway at O'Hare International Airport, a massive mixed-use development in Warsaw, Poland, the world's largest pork processing facility in St. Joseph, Missouri and the redevelopment of Midway Airport in

Chicago. In January of 2010, Epstein was awarded an Institute Honor Award for Architecture from the American Institute of Architects for the design of the 90,000 square foot **Serta International Center**. This award, the highest honor granted by the American Institute of Architects, was yet another example of Epstein's further growth and reputation as a leader in the design industry.



Serta International Center



James Jirsa & Michael Damore

The **Epstein Employee Stock Ownership Program**, under the direction of Epstein's Executive Managing Directors, **Michael Damore** and **James Jirsa**, gives everyone in our firm the opportunity to have vested stake in our operations and profit from the outstanding work we perform for our clients throughout the world.

Some 90 years later, we are proud to say that our firm is designing, engineering and building facilities for a wide variety of clients located throughout the world. We are currently serving as the architect and engineer on the campus of Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital in Hines, Illinois, providing design-build services for Lufkin Industries in Ploiesti, Romania and serving as one of the co-designers of renovation & expansion of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York. This diversity of project type coupled with our full-service AEC capabilities has Epstein poised for further greatness far into the future.

## Epstein Locations

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## 90th Anniversary Logo



## About the *Design Profile*

Epstein's *Design Profile* is a brief in-house publication addressing our recent design and construction projects and discussing today's industry challenges.



Issue #1 - 1958

Since 1958, the *Design Profile* has covered our project history, from warehouse and distribution facilities to award-winning architecture and interior design projects.

Now in our fifth decade, the distribution of the *Design Profile* has now transformed into a completely electronic publication. In an effort to be as sustainable an organization as possible we no longer print and distribute the Design Profile via traditional mail. Each issue is now "published" to our readers through an e-mail message that is linked to our website. We hope that this little step in sustainability inspires you to find opportunities to become "green" with your publications/ communications.

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