

Clayco sets the bar for design-build industry

Building "Beyond These Walls" to make the world a better place



Bob Clark

Executive Chairman & Founder

At the age of 25, Bob Clark founded Clayco, a business venture that would forever change the design-build industry. The company's growth over the years has been remarkable. From its humble beginnings 40 years ago, Clayco today is a leading fully integrated, turnkey real estate, architecture, engineering and construction firm with offices across the country.

Clayco generates about \$6 billion in revenue from commercial, institutional, industrial and residential building projects, mostly in the United States but also in Canada and Mexico. Its undertakings are complex, mission-critical structures, including data centers, universities, hospitals, residential and advanced manufacturing plants for cars, batteries and semiconductors.

What is interesting, however, is Clark's concern beyond growing the business. The company's "Beyond These Walls" mantra is a genuine commitment to the needs of end users of the building. Its new office in Berkeley, Missouri, demonstrates the company's dedication to sustainability and well-being, while Clayco Rising is an umbrella program that promotes diversity. All these initiatives are clear manifestations of the company's adherence to the golden rule of treating others the way one wants to be treated.

Beyond These Walls

While other builders may see a school, hospital or research laboratory as simply a building, Clayco considers the purpose behind every project it takes on.

"What happens inside these buildings and understanding the needs of the people using them are a thousand times more important than the bricks and mortar we're putting together," says Clark, Executive Chairman and Founder of Clayco. "This is the point of our mantra, 'Beyond These Walls,' and the essence of why we exist."

This commitment to the welfare of others is highlighted in the company's unwavering support for the economy of St. Louis, where the company began. This is despite the fact that many businesses have left the area after experiencing economic challenges.

"We're doubling down on the St. Louis area," Clark says. "I started the business here and remain committed. That's why we chose to keep our people here and rehab an existing building to reduce the carbon footprint and make way for 400 new jobs in the St. Louis market."

New Green Office in Berkeley

Clark is referring to Clayco's new site at 8640 Evans Avenue in Berkeley, Missouri. While Clayco's corporate headquarters are located in Chicago, the Berkeley office will serve as home for many of the company's design-build construction functions, including operations, business unit leadership, architecture, process engineering, safety, IT, marketing, finance/accounting and talent management. With a fresh take on sustainability, the site, building and interior, which was designed by Clayco's subsidiary Lamar Johnson Collaborative, blurs the divide between the interior and exterior. Trees seem to encroach into the building, while the atriums and expansive glass walls generously let in sunlight.

Opting to renovate an existing building will cut carbon emissions equivalent to those coming from 1,370 cars annually for the building's lifetime. Moreover, by planting 1,000 trees in Berkeley, Clayco will cut emissions equivalent to those produced by 114 cars annually, according to USDA Climate Hubs. The building's landscape design, including the aforementioned trees, deliberately incorporates native plant species that highlight the importance of water-efficient site design. These and other features have made the facility a shining example of how companies can meet the rigorous emission-reduction goals outlined under the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).



Alana Spencer

Vice President of Sustainability

"We are committed to enabling all our projects to help future generations thrive, and we've done nothing less for our Berkeley site," says Alana Spencer, Vice President of Sustainability at Clayco. "We're doing exactly what we would have done if a client came to us and asked us for impactful sustainability measures."

Taking the Lead on Diversity

Clayco also prides itself on being a diversity and inclusion pioneer, having built one of the industry's most comprehensive diversity and inclusion programs—Clayco Rising. The umbrella initiative aims to break barriers arising from factors such as differences in income, race, gender and sexual orientation.

Part of Clayco Rising is Clayco Connects, the company's strategic relationship-building initiative. Clayco Connects includes, among other things, a weekly call with Clayco executive leadership to share industry best practices and opportunities for small and diverse firms. The goal is to increase the participants' revenue, reduce costs and build their company net worth.



Sandra Porter Marks

Senior Vice President

"There are reasons why different groups are under-represented in our industry, and we want to be a leader in changing that and raising awareness," says Clayco Senior Vice President Sandra Porter Marks, who was the company's first African American female executive.

Clayco has achieved so much in the last 40 years. It is not only the top-of-mind design-build company for some of the most complex structures; it is also a driving force in revolutionizing the industry on all fronts, including sustainability and diversity.

"Clayco, in its essence, is meant to solve the world's most challenging and complex problems," says Clark. "As we look to the next 40 years, we must continue to have a loud voice, a beating drum, demonstrating our commitment to making a significant difference where we work and live."



The glass walls of the Berkeley office generously let in sunlight.



The Berkeley site has about 1,000 newly planted trees.