

SPECIAL REPORT:
WHO'S WHO IN REAL ESTATE

Dream teams that shape L.A.'s skyline

Getty Center • Walt Disney Concert Hall • Caltrans
District 7 Headquarters • Cathedral of Our Lady of the
Angels • Red Building, Pacific Design Center

Rand Corp. Headquarters

2000 Avenue of the Stars • BP Grand Entrance, Broad
Contemporary Art Museum • The Century • Ronald
Reagan UCLA Medical Center



Rand Corp. Headquarters



► **CONTRACTOR:**
JON BURLESON
*Senior Project Manager,
Turner Construction Co.*



Notable Projects: The Washington Redskins Stadium, building 10 at the National Institutes of Health and the ballistic missile defense building at the Pentagon.

The Headquarters: "The neat thing about Rand

was it is an elliptical building with radius construction. My stadium background helped. The big challenge with Rand was all the raised floor construction, which allows cables to run underneath the floor. It is a new way of how to think about building a building."

Local Favorite: U.S. Bank Tower

Dream Project: Building an NFL stadium in Los Angeles

L.A.: "Historic buildings need to be preserved. There is a whole slew of decrepit buildings that are going down and we need to do better job of preserving them."

Construction: "I am very into keeping my eye on newer and better technologies in our industry. But, one thing I am noticing with the younger, new hires is they lean too much on the e-mail and texting and don't build relationships."

► **MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL ENGINEER:** **CLARK C. BISEL**
*Senior Vice President,
Flack + Kurtz Inc.*



Notable Projects: 801 S. Figueroa St. in downtown Los Angeles, the Pacific Design Center's Green Building, Walt Disney Co. headquarters in Burbank and Westwood's Armand Hammer Museum.

The Headquarters: "Rand was an interested, committed, and forward thinking client. They recognized that they had a unique culture and background – and desired a new facility to match this."

Local Favorite: 777 Tower in downtown L.A. "It's a very large building, but the detailing is excellent."

Dream Project: "A carbon neutral development. Our future depends on this, yet we do not want to talk about this in a meaningful way."

L.A.: "As a frequent visitor, I continually struggle with transportation and the amorphous nature of Los Angeles."

► **DEVELOPER:** **MICHAEL D. RICH**
Executive Vice President, Rand Corp.

The Headquarters: "We believe that the project met our core objectives of inspiring creativity in our research and educational activi-



ties, promoting interaction and collaboration among our staff, demonstrating our commitment to the conservation of natural, client and institutional resources and enabling Rand to adapt effectively to change."

Local Favorite: Griffith Observatory

L.A.: "The challenge for Los Angeles developers is to think about future projects with an eye towards creating synergies with public transportation options, both existing and planned. This includes greater density and a mix of residential, retail, and commercial opportunities near transit stations and along transit routes."

Rand and Architecture: "Rand was founded 60 years ago on the proposition that rigorous and objective analysis produces better policies. That proposition is valid today and our experience shows that it also helps to produce an effective, efficient and beautiful research facility."

► **ARCHITECT:** **PAUL DANNA**
Design Principal, DMJM Design

Notable Projects: General Electric Co. Asian headquarters in Shanghai and the BMC Software Inc. headquarters in Houston.

The Headquarters: "The key point to the design of the building is that it is a physical representation of Rand as an institution and was really formed by the charges that they gave us."

Local Favorite: Pierre Koenig's Case Study House 22. "It was innovative, rigorous and cool – responsive to its time. Today it's timeless, classic and still cool – the spirit of L.A."

Dream Project: "A dream project that I think would be fun and beneficial – to become like Harold (from the children's book, "Harold and the Purple Crayon") with his purple crayon for a day. But, instead of a purple crayon, I'd have an eraser and I'd play across the city, erasing what never should have been, creating new and purposeful open spaces or opportunities for others to fill in."

L.A.: "L.A. architecture is alive and well. A unified vision for L.A. is not. With a shared vision we can leverage our fiscal and creative resources against issues that today are regional and soon will be national ones: mobility, housing, open space, the environment and others."

1776 Main St., Santa Monica

Opened in 2005, Rand Corp.'s headquarters in Santa Monica provided the think tank with a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly office building. The 310,000-square-foot building is comprised of two half circles that with a pedestrian bridge form a rough figure eight designed to maximize interaction between employees. The structure is also one of the few green office buildings in L.A.

Developer: Rand Corp., Santa Monica
Architect: DMJM Design, Los Angeles
Contractor: Turner Construction Co., New York City
Engineer: Wong Hobach Lau International, Los Angeles



After that, Danna began his professional career with a five-year stint at Skidmore Owings and Merrill LLP. It was there that Danna hooked up with a group of like-minded designers and architects with whom he would later start his own company. Danna, who is originally from St. Louis, continues to work with those associates, including Rand building co-designer Jose Palacios, at DMJM.

After his time at Skidmore, Danna left the firm and formed a local architecture firm, KMJR, with his Skidmore associates. In 1994, it was acquired by DMJM.

"A big part of my career is working with the same group of individuals for a long time," said Danna. "This group of 10 to 12 individuals was at Skidmore then KMJR then DMJM and has worked together for nearly 20 years."

Danna, who lives in Laurel Canyon with his wife and two children, emphasizes the importance of working with a team. In the late 1990s, Danna left DMJM for HOK architects. That experience, which ended amicably after a year with Danna returning to DMJM, colors Danna's perspective on architecture.

"I realized there was great value in having a relationship with a group of colleagues that were fine professionals and good friends," Danna said. "We shared a philosophy about architecture, and I realized how much that was worth as an architect after moving away."

To that end, Danna credits Palacios and the rest of the DMJM team for its work on the Rand building. The building, which replaced the old Rand headquarters next door, consists of two half-circle buildings that are joined by a central bridge.

"The thought was that interaction between staff members was crucial to doing good work," Danna said. "The idea was the continuous circulation would sponsor the issue of interaction."

— Daniel Miller

PAUL Danna comes from a family of architects. His parents, Charles and Doris Danna, and sister, Susan, all are in the business, so it made some sense for Danna to follow suit.

But the way he tells it, a career in architecture was never a sure thing for him — far from it, in fact.

"I swore it off, said Danna, design principal at Los Angeles-based DMJM Design. "I was going to be anything but that."

Yet when Danna decided on his college plans, architecture moved to the forefront. "It was something I had to try," said Danna, 48, who received his undergraduate degree in architecture from the University of Michigan. "I really did care a great deal about it and I had an aptitude for it."

After his time at the University of Michigan, in 1985 Danna got a master's degree in architecture from Harvard University Graduate School of Design.



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