

## MYBIGBREAK

# Dad's tutelage, design of Eiteljorg highlight career

**Who:** Fred Green

President and chief operating officer,  
Cripe Architects + Engineers

**S**ingling out one in a lifetime of "big breaks" is difficult, but I probably can narrow it down to two.

The first might even date back to the day of my birth — being born into a family in which a father expects a young son to work alongside him. I will always be grateful not only for the knowledge I gained, but also for the relationship I formed with my dad.

My father was a licensed plumber who understood all phases of construction, a man who could literally build a house all by himself. It was from him that I gained more than a superficial knowledge of the construction process and how various components fit together.

I didn't start out thinking I wanted a construction-related career.

Somehow I inherited artistic talent that I wanted to cultivate, which led me to complete a degree in fine arts at Indiana University. But after graduation, it didn't take me long to learn that the term "starving artist" is redundant.

My first job was with a company that sold automatic sprinklers for fire protection. I learned that when they were seeking someone with drawing skills, they were really wanting draftsmen. It provided a reasonably comfortable living, however, while I sorted through other career options.

During my time as a contractor, I began to realize that I could meld my artistic impulses with my knowledge of construction through architecture.

I went to architecture school at the University of Kansas. Simultaneously, I was married and greeted my new wife with the news that I was quitting my job and going off to Lawrence, Kan., to study. She never wavered in her support — and never has since, though it took six years after graduation to return to the same level of compensation I had in my last job. Graduating at the top of my class at KU in 1986 gave her some assurance that I might actually succeed in this business.

My second "big break" came shortly after I returned to Indianapolis to accept a position with the Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf firm.

As my first major project, another



Photo provided by Cripe Architects + Engineers

**MAKING HIS MARK:** Fred Green, president and chief operating officer of Cripe Architects + Engineers, was a young architect who teamed with another, Jonathan Hess, to design the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, located at the gateway to White River State Park.

## FREDRICK J. GREEN

- ◆ **Age:** 51.
- ◆ **Job title:** President and chief operating officer.
- ◆ **Company:** Cripe Architects + Engineers.
- ◆ **Description of company:** Cripe is an Indianapolis-based design firm founded in 1937 by Paul I. Cripe. The firm has 83 employees that provide architectural design, civil engineering, transportation engineering, master planning, surveying, geographic information systems, and owner's representation services to clients.
- ◆ **Personal:** Wife, Angela Green; daughters, Rachel (21) and Audrey (18). They live in Indianapolis.

young architect, Jonathan Hess, and I were handed the awesome responsibility of designing the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, located at the gateway to White River State Park. When it

opened in June 1989, it was the only museum in the Midwest to combine Western art and Native American art and artifacts.

What made the project especially unnerving for two young architects was that the principal benefactor of the museum, Harrison Eiteljorg, was still living and every day could watch each stone being placed in what would eventually house his collection of Indian and Western paintings and sculptures. He, like all the Eiteljorg staff, was always especially gracious and understanding in working with us.

My experience at Eiteljorg gave me a resume that later proved attractive to Shenkel Schultz, a Fort Wayne architectural firm, and finally to the Cripe organization, where I became head of the architecture department in 1996. My first projects at Cripe also were "big breaks" — school expansion projects at Mooresville and the relatively new Carmel High School. The rest, as they say, is history.

My career would not be what it is today without that earlier experience of learning alongside my father and the later opportunity at Eiteljorg. I'm exceedingly grateful for both.