

JAY YOWELL

PRESIDENT

JY Architecture



Jay Yowell, 36, knew he wanted to be an architect in the sixth grade. Now he has his own firm, is a visiting assistant professor at the University of Oklahoma and is a recognized advocate for "green design."

Yowell owns jy architecture and says his most significant business accomplishment is educating others about sustainable design. He is

the founder and president of the Oklahoma Sustainability Network and a founding member of the Edmond Land Conservancy. He won the Green Award for Sustainability in 2005 from the Environmental Institute at Oklahoma State University, his alma mater, and a RTKL Kagan Design Fellowship, for which he

researched the environmental aspects of projects in London, Amsterdam and Berlin. The fellowship was a pivotal moment in his career, he said,

because it allowed him to see Europe for the first time and it got his name in front of the firm's partners. It also gave him the confidence to push for green design at his firm.

Yowell advises future business leaders not to be afraid, neither of talking to leaders in or out of their field, nor of putting their dreams out there for others to see. It is a strategy that served Yowell well.

He once wrote a letter to his favorite architect, Antoine Predock, not expecting a response. Not only did Predock respond, he and Yowell spoke on the phone for more than an hour and continue to stay in touch. While at RTKL in Dallas, Yowell pushed for green design, even though he knew he was at a disadvantage.

"I was trying to make an impact from the bottom up," Yowell said. "Trying to start the Sustainable Task Force in one of the world's largest architectural firms was frustrating at times. I am not a patient person, and I had to realize how the firm operated and not let what seemed like failures stop me."

In addition to his professional achievement, there are two personal achievements equally important to him – marrying wife Julie and becoming the father of two. There is one thing Yowell hasn't yet done, however – commuting to work via a kayak. –L.T.

