

Collins keeps Memphis aglow with love of lighting design

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By Morgan Bernal

Throughout the narrow maze of Allen & Hoshall's lobby, Mike Collins' light design twists its way through the exposed rafters, casting a soft glow onto the walls and eclectic chairs.

"I love engineering, but my passion is lighting design," Collins said as he glanced upward, where small, intense halogen bulbs shot out from the ceiling at every angle like chrome spider legs. "I did the lighting in this building."

Collins' journey at Allen & Hoshall began 12 years ago as an engineer-in-training. Formerly an engineering project manager, Collins is adjusting to his new role as vice president of the firm's building systems division.

The fresh challenges include a new focus on production. "I am still involved in design, but my job has expanded to overseeing reports, billings and promotions," he said. Although Collins' new role involves more administration and management, he is quick to share his lighting design stories.

"One of my favorite and possibly most recognized projects is the Blue Note Cafe in the Memphis International Airport," he said.

Nestled between concourses B and C, the Blue Note Cafe has been a chief airport attraction for seasoned Memphis travelers. Another attraction influenced by Collins' light is the Tennessee Visitor's Center, Downtown near The Pyramid.

Aside from various lighting designs throughout the state, including fog lights at the Nashville International Airport, Collins has been working with engineers and architects to design "green buildings."

"There has been a major shift based on the growing consciousness of the environment and conserving energy," he said. Within lighting design, Collins is faced with the balance between the efficient and the aesthetic. Allen & Hoshall is involved in several projects that embody the "green building" philosophy.

"One of our up-and-coming projects," he said, "is University Place," the former site of Lamar Terrace. "The buildings will be multi-income and consist of both single and family units, each with an energy star rating," he said, noting the efficiency of the future structure.

More info:

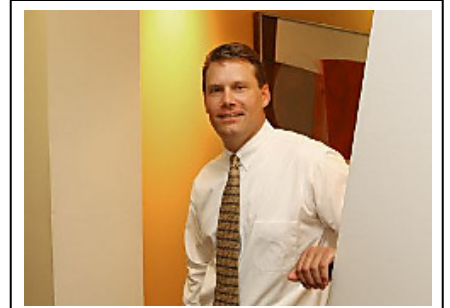
Mike Collins

Position: vice president of the building systems division at the design firm Allen & Hoshall.

Hometown: Michigan City, Ind.

Education: Raleigh-Egypt High School; bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Memphis.

Hobbies: hunting, fishing, golfing and riding motorcycles



Dave Darnell/The Commercial Appeal

Michael S. Collins of Allen & Hoshall, 1661 International Drive, Suite 100, is responsible for the lighting design in many Memphis businesses, including the Tennessee Visitor's Center.