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Texas Forestry Association Announces 2011 Excellence in Wood Design Awards

Lufkin, Texas – Texas Forestry Association presented its 2011 Excellence in Wood Design Awards at their Annual Convention held in Galveston last month. Awards were presented in the Residential, Commercial and Special Projects categories.



Henry Dara of Plano was the recipient in the Residential Category. Dara designed a library for a home in San Antonio capable of holding upwards of 3,500 books of varying sizes. The challenge was to design the bookcases to fit into an existing 12' x 15' room, while carving out a spot as a reading area.

Out of the 15 proposed layouts, the owners chose the one with a curved book wall, interior room, swinging hidden door bookcase, all using sliding dovetail construction.

As a luthier, Dara presented design elements typical to guitar detail, including laminated moldings using three woods – cocobolo, walnut and basswood – laminated together to give an effect similar to the backstrip found in guitars. The project took six months to complete, with over 1,500 hours invested. Walnut was the main wood used in the project.

The second Excellence in Wood Design Award was in the institutional category and was presented to David Morris, Architect, for the 2010 addition and renovations to the Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Houston.

There are 3,000 square feet in the new addition with about half within a large multi-purpose space and the remaining in ancillary spaces consisting of a food & beverage serving area, storage for tables & chairs, restrooms and the north and south entrance vestibules that also provide separate access into the east transept of the existing church.

The concurrent renovations within the existing church provide for a new cry room, bride's room, two additional accessible restrooms and a new accessible entrance utilizing the wood doors, stained glass windows and wood frames from the original east transept entrance that was removed for the addition.



Many forest products were used in the renovations, including: Glued-Laminated Wood Arches spanning 49 feet and 35 feet high with laminated wood decking in a compatible design to match the

original church built in 1964 with similar wood construction; plywood wall sheathing to back up moisture barrier with face brick and stucco finishes; oak frames and solid core oak doors; oak frames and trim at the glass side-lites and the large sound rated vision windows; plywood cabinets, countertops and under window panels; dimension lumber and plywood for all concrete forming, sheathing on secondary roofs and all edges, soffit sheathing, flooring for the mechanical equipment platform, access walk boards in the attic and various blocking.

The third Excellence in Wood Design was in the special projects category, and was awarded to Donna Liebbert of the Galveston Tree Committee and the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy.



When Hurricane Ike slammed into Galveston, Texas in September 2008, the accompanying saltwater surge killed more than 40,000 trees - some of them 100-year-old live oaks planted after the hurricane of 1900. In a classic case of “making lemonade out of lemons” some of those dead trees were carved into sculpture and Liebbert was the driving force behind the Tree Sculpture Project in Galveston. Currently there are at least 37 sculptures around the Island, ranging in style from SpongeBob and beloved pets, to angels and a Geisha, celebrating Galveston Island’s wildlife and Giant, famous boxer Jack Johnson.

The first two sculptures resulting from Liebbert’s willpower were a Dalmatian and a fire hydrant with water flowing from it at the fire station at the Galveston City Hall. Clear Lake artist Jim Phillips donated his time to carve them, and the Conservancy provided the equipment and materials.

Local artist Earl Jones has also done work on a number of sculptures and donated his time for the Hand with Diploma at Wright-Cuney Park. Other sculptors are Dayle Richardson of Indiana and local artist Hazen Reich. The sculptures have become the No. 2 tourist attraction on the island.

“The Excellence in Wood Design award winners created amazing uses of wood or trees,” said Ron Hufford, Executive Vice President of Texas Forestry Association. “Their craftsmanship and use of Texas wood products make each of them very deserving of the Excellence in Wood Design Award,” he added.

Each year since 1967, Texas Forestry Association has given special recognition to design projects, which utilize wood and wood products in Texas. Nominations are open to projects that have been completed within the last five years, and awards are given in the following categories: Institutional, Commercial, Residential and Special Projects.

To submit a project, contact Texas Forestry Association by calling (936) 632-TREE or toll-free 1-866-TXTREES, or email tfa@texasforestry.org. Nominations for next year’s awards must be received by mid-July 2012.

Texas Forestry Association is a non-profit trade association representing 3,000 members who grow, manage, harvest and process Texas’ forest resources.

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