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# Meet Gilbane Building Company

Fourth generation Gilbane President William J. Gilbane Jr. (at right) with fifth generation New York Principal William J. Gilbane III

> Beaux-Arts Court at the Brooklyn Museum Architeot: Ennead Architects. Photography: Billy Farrell

Members of the Brooklyn Museum project team: John Bowman (far left), Lydia Gouveia (second from right), and Jason Silverstein (far right) with the Gilbanes. Photography: Billy Farrell

## Gilbane Building Company Celebrating 60 Years in New York... and It's Only the Beginning

Conceived in Providence, Rhode Island, in the late 1800s by Irish immigrant William Gilbane as a family business to ensure his relatives would have work in the States, Gilbane is today a leading national construction management firm with over \$4.4 billion in revenues, ranking in the top 200 largest private firms by Forbes Magazine. The company's activity in the New York market spans 60 years and includes some of the state's premier projects. And yet, says fifth generation family member and principal William (Bill) Gilbane III, who recently moved from the field into a management capacity in the New York region offices, "In the New York City area, we're still in some ways seen as the new kid on the block-the firm to watch."

This up and coming image sits fine with the

33-year-old Gilbane. With 137 years of construction experience and unlimited bonding capability behind the Gilbane name, a perception of youthful enthusiasm, determination and grit combined with the wisdom of time and uncompromising family values puts the firm in a unique position in the New York market.

"Our team has done outstanding work in the New York area over the years, and we are poised to take our presence here to the next level," says Bill Gilbane III. "We're undergoing a strategic restructure, with our offices throughout New York State and New Jersey now reporting to the New York City office. We're committing the full strength of our resources here—building relationships, pursuing opportunities, ramping up our staff in the region; and we're investing in technology at an unprecedented level, incorporating software and systems that will enhance our ability to perform efficiently, avoid duplication of efforts, and ultimately save our clients time and money. "



Thomas F. Gilbane Sr. (far left) at the 1964 World's Fair groundbreaking, Flushing Meadows, Queens.

#### **Meet Gilbane**

Gilbane Building Company has offices in 30 markets throughout the country, and serves every construction segment in the public and private sector: healthcare, transportation, education, water and waste water, recreational, criminal justice, mission critical and more. Ranked 5th largest CM-at-risk by ENR Magazine in 2010, Gilbane's building capabilities include construction management, program management, general contracting, design-build, pre-construction and specialty consulting services. The firm is consistently ranked among the top education builders in the nation. In addition, sister company Gilbane Development offers turnkey real estate development services. And with the recent acquisition of design-build firm Innovative Technical Solutions, Inc., Gilbane will expand its federal portfolio and gain immediate international presence. That's quite a leap from the company's roots as a one-man contracting outfit.

#### The Legacy: Advocacy, Stability and Responsibility

The Gilbane story began in 1873 with the passing of George Brown, the owner of a building company by the same name. Brown's employee, William Gilbane, an ambitious 26-year-old carpenter, took over the existing contracts and renamed the company William Gilbane Contractor and Builder. Ten years later, William's brother Thomas joined him and began the long run of "brother acts"



National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C., the U.S. General Service Administration's first CM-at-risk project. Architect: HOK

that have worked so well for the firm, according to fourth generation family member William (Bill) J. Gilbane Jr., current President and COO of Gilbane Building Company. For the last century and a half, the company has been run by Gilbane brothers, cousins and sons. And, says Bill Gilbane Jr., "Fortunately, we now have terrific women in management roles as well."

Back in the early days, the priority for the Gilbanes was to feed the family and provide work for the men. "With 'No Irish Need Apply' signs up in town, in a lot of ways we had to depend on ourselves," says Bill Gilbane Jr. "We're still working for the family, but now that family extends to our 2,000 employees around the country."

The company moved from strict general contracting to a partnership relationship with its clients during World War II, when third generation brothers William and Thomas were called upon by the U.S. government to help build bases in Quonset and Newport, R.I., a job on which Gilbane was the first private company to win the prestigious Army-Navy "E" award for outstanding performance in wartime construction.

The project entailed \$50-60 million in contracts—a staggering sum in those days—and employed 1,200 workers around the clock. To get the job done,

"I have worked with Gilbane at many points during my 40-year career, and I admire how this family-owned company continues to produce outstanding leaders in each generation. Gilbane has grown steadily but has avoided the pitfalls and quality control problems of overexpansion."

L. Bradford Perkins, FAIA, Chairman and CEO, Perkins Eastman, NYC



Biomedical Science Research Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. Architect: Ennead Architects



National World War II Memorial, Washington, D.C. Architects: Leo A Daly, Friedrich St.Florian, George E. Hartman, Raymond J. Kaskey, James A. van Sweden and Nicholas Benson

Traveler's Insurance underwrote the first construction bond for Gilbane. The firm continues to this day to use Traveler's as its sole bonding company. Because of this long and successful relationship—Gilbane has never defaulted on a bond—the underwriter provides the company with access to unlimited resources for project financing.

The transition from general contractor to construction manager and even a step further to CM-at-risk, which now makes up 70 percent of Gilbane's building business, came naturally to the Gilbanes. As pioneers in the Construction Management discipline, the Gilbane brothers relished the role of owner advocate—taking projects on as their own and assuming responsibility for successful completion.

Since those early days, the firm has gone on to build millions of square feet of facilities throughout the U.S., including some of the nation's most prized projects such as the World War II and Vietnam Veterans' Memorials, the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, and the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. In the New York region, Gilbane was instrumental in constructing monumental projects including the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows and the 1980 Olympic Games in Lake Placid, as well as the British Airways Terminal at JFK.

#### **Family Values**

Being part of a family legacy brings with it great responsibility and the Gilbanes, to a person, take this very seriously. "We have a responsibility not only to our immediate family, but to our extended family of 2,000 employees who work so hard to preserve the culture of the company. We have a responsibility to our customers to maintain our approach—we don't want to change as we grow. And we have a responsibility to the communities we do business in," says Bill Gilbane Jr. "To us, values are more important than profits. As a family business, we have a different purpose than a corporation that's publicly traded for the benefit of shareholders."

The company's philosophy is centered on six core and unwavering values: integrity, tough-mindedness, teamwork, dedication to excellence, loyalty and discipline. To a family of Brown University scholar athletes—All-American football, hockey and lacrosse players—teamwork is the glue. Gilbane is one company, and as such, there are no individual profit centers. Success comes to the whole team, no matter who carries the ball at any specific time. This attitude gives staff the freedom to try new ideas that may not be profitable at the outset, and inspires trust. "No one is ever afraid to come forward with a problem at Gilbane," says Bill Gilbane III. His father, Bill Gilbane Jr., agrees, "If something isn't going right, it's all hands on deck until we fix it."

This approach has worked for five generations—with thousands of successful projects and an unparalleled workforce. The quality and stability of the employees is a source of genuine pride for Gilbane Inc.'s leadership, from Chairman Thomas F. Gilbane Jr. and Vice-Chairman Paul J. Choquette Jr. on down. Many of the staff have been with Gilbane for their entire careers, 20 or 30 years or longer, and it's not unusual for the company to have second and even third generation employees among the workforce.

#### **Gilbane in New York**

While national in reputation and reach, Gilbane Building Company has built a solid business in the New York area over the past 60 years, ranking in New York Construction's 2010 top ten general building contractors, public contractors, program management firms, and construction management firms—in both at-risk and fee-only categories—and the second largest builder of educational and healthcare facilities in the region.

Gilbane's portfolio comprises some very high profile projects in the metropolitan area, both historic and current. Recent projects include: the Brooklyn Museum; Nassau University Health Center; New Haven Schools Construction Program; Rochester Schools Modernization Project; Brookhaven National Lab; Newark's Prudential Center, which took top honors as New York Construction's Best of 2008 Project of the Year; and the U.S. Land Port of Entry in Massena, NY, recently selected as the



publication's 2010 Government/Public Building Project of the Year.

Now with the strategic decision to consolidate its New Jersey and New York offices into a Manhattan headquarters, Gilbane is adding the

Rutgers University Football Stadium Expansion, Piscataway, NJ. Architect: Populous (Fmr. HOK Sport)

one ingredient heretofore missing from the mix—the day-today presence of a Gilbane family member and owner. And that's where fifth generation William J. Gilbane III comes in.

#### **From Generation to Generation**

A graduate of Brown University in the family tradition, Bill Gilbane III came to the New York office after fulfilling Gilbane's rigorous legacy program requirements, which mandate working outside the company for several years. In Bill's case this meant working summers in Laborer's Local 271 for





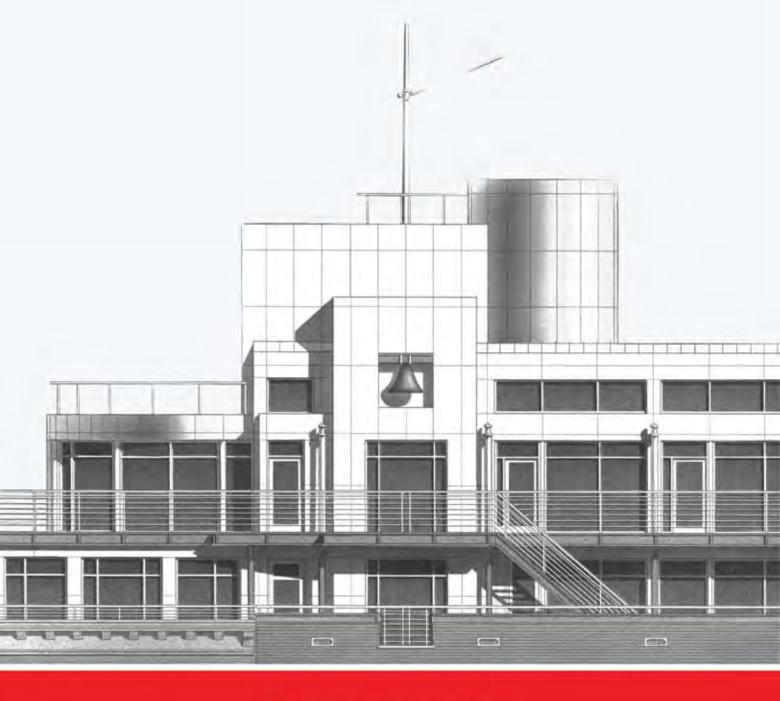
Prudential Center, Newark, NJ. Architect: Populous (Fmr. HOK Sport)

a roadwork contractor at T.F. Green Airport in Providence, as well as a stint distributing 3M building products.

With a love for New York City and its environs, and an eagerness to fill the large shoes of the Gilbanes before him, Bill Gilbane III is working tirelessly to become a force in his own right. And the New York market provides every opportunity to do so. All of Gilbane's core segments are here—transportation,

"We've collaborated with Gilbane on many healthcare and office projects over the last 15 years. The company is very proactive, and the family and senior staff are actively involved. When a project is in the initial, conceptual stage, they're a very good team to work with because their cost data is accurate, and they're very creative when it comes to implementing projects."

James Crispino, AIA, President, Francis Cauffman, NYC



Sciame Congratulates Gilbane Building Company on Decades of Excellence

> Seamen's Church Institute Architect: Poishek Partnership



F.J. Sciame Construction Co., Inc. | 14 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005 | 212.232.2200 | www.sciame.com



Lehman College New Science Building, Bronx, NY, CUNY's first targeted LEED-Platinum building. Architect: Perkins + Will

healthcare, water and wastewater, higher education, K-12, mission critical—in a big way. To ensure continuity and draw on Gilbane's deep experience, Bill has the benefit of learning from Senior Vice President and Regional Manager Walter McKelvey, a 30-year veteran of the firm and true builder, noted for his immense knowledge of the building process and his commitment to developing strong teams. McKelvey has managed complex construction projects in every market sector—private and public—including hospitals, airports, museums and arenas.

According to Bill Gilbane III, the firm's expansion efforts in the New York market will leverage the proven tactics of the Gilbane legacy. "The greatest strength we bring to the New York market," says Bill Gilbane III, "is our unique ability to understand the owner's business. We've been brought up on the core principal of client advocacy. We understand the issues that keep our clients up at night, because they're the same ones keeping us awake. And we make ourselves accessible if there's a problem, our clients know they can pick up the phone and reach one of us to work out a solution."



U.S. Land Port of Entry, General Services Administration, Massena, NY, LEED NC-Silver Certification. Architect: Smith-Miller & Hawkinson (SM+H)

#### **High Performance Building**

Gilbane's High Performance Building (HPB) Program is a Beyond LEED approach to sustainability, with a strong focus on energy efficiency and life-cycle costing for intelligent investment of first costs to maximize return on investment.







Ithaca College School of Business, a certified LEED-Platinum building, features an active double curtain wall, geothermal systems, photovoltaics, solar heating for domestic hot water and daylighting controls. Architect: Robert A.M. Stern Architects

Linear Contracting

Thompson Materials Corporation

#### **Client Satisfaction Above All**

For Gilbane, client satisfaction is the foundation of the building practice. To be a true owner's advocate, staff must possess the utmost expertise in all markets served as well as a distinct client-centric point of view. "It is our chief responsibility to stand in the owner's shoes and make the best decisions that will result in quality and efficient building," says Bill Gilbane III.

To drive this home, Gilbane instituted the position of Director of Client Satisfaction and placed it in an operational, rather than marketing, capacity, explains current director Sue Klawans, a 25-year veteran of the firm. "The conscience of the company," as she calls her role, Ms. Klawans oversees several of Gilbane's key programs, including the Centers of Excellence, the Client Satisfaction Survey and new technology initiatives.

#### **Centers of Excellence**

The Centers of Excellence program is a mechanism for experienced staff with an interest in a common marketing area to share information about everything from best practices, cost solutions and operational issues to sustainable design solutions, current trends and emerging ideas. Gilbane has a Center for each major market it serves: Transportation, Healthcare, Higher Ed, K-12, Mission Critical, High Performance Buildings, Sports & Recreation, Water and Waste Water, Criminal Justice, Life Sciences and Federal. Participants cut across all geographic locations, and often meet via conference call, video conference or webinar, as well as in person.

Thomas Rogér, Senior Project Executive managing Gilbane's K-12 Rochester City School construction project, leads the High Performance Buildings Center of Excellence. A 28-year employee of Gilbane with 15 years in K-12 project management, he has this to say: "The Centers of Excellence concept allows us to develop our area of expertise into skills



University of Chicago Medical Center. Architect: Rafael Viñoly Architects PC/Cannon Design

and output that add value for the owner. It moves us into a consultancy role. The mission in our particular High Performance Center is to help others determine which design and construction features can actually make a payback in energy savings. We use energy modeling in the design interface so the right decisions about cost/benefit, energy analysis and life-cycle cost are made early on."

#### **Client Satisfaction Survey**

The brainchild of Bill Gilbane Jr., the Client Satisfaction Survey is a serious tool for learning and improvement, and not—as Mr. Gilbane is quick to point out—a marketing gimmick. It is disseminated to owners and architects several times throughout the design and construction process, and feedback is obtained via whatever means are appropriate for the client—online, in a phone conversation, or over lunch. Asking clients to evaluate the company's performance, its services and project team characteristics provides vital information on what the firm is doing well and where improvement is needed. An unsatisfactory rating in any area triggers an immediate response from the management team.

The responses go into a database, which informs not only the particular project, but also the company's overall strategic

"We selected Gilbane for our \$147 million building and renovation project, and I can honestly say we've never been disappointed. They advised us on ways in which we could make sure we stay within budget. They are very focused on safety, which is extremely important to us, and they worked well with the contractors. The site was as close to spotless as possible for a construction site. One rainy day, I can remember looking out of my office window and seeing Gilbane employees hosing down the wheels of their trucks before they left the job site to make sure they didn't carry mud out to our neighbors. It was a little thing, but it's representative of the quality of the company, their values, and their commitment to the project, the hospital and the community."

Susan Davis, CEO, St. Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport, CT



Stony Brook Medical Center, State University of New York (SUNY), Stony Brook, NY. Architect: Cannon Design

plan. Gilbane continually uses data from the Client Satisfaction Survey to implement new programs and activities that will ultimately benefit the client.

#### **Technology Adds Value**

According to Klawans, technology is employed at Gilbane to maximize customer value by increasing operational efficiency, innovation, and collaboration and communication.

Project Pathways, Gilbane's recent and significant technology

#### Hudson Valley Roofing



U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Washington, D.C. Client: the Architect of the Capitol. Architect: RTKL

undertaking, meets these goals. A "lean" initiative, Project Pathways is a customized market control program that enables open and real-time communication with project team members.

"We realized that there is no shrink-wrapped solution out there to optimally meet our project needs so we developed our own, starting with iBuild, a software platform already in use," says Klawans. After five months of user acceptance testing, the result is a fully integrated system that tracks projects and allows for dialogue, submittals and approvals from a key module, saving everyone involved time and money.

"Initial feedback on Project Pathways is excellent. We're doing hands-on training with architects, and they are seeing the value," reports Klawans.

Another proprietary tool that benefits clients and enhances decision making is Gilbane's CostAdvisor. Using data from Gilbane's extensive project history, this interactive instrument develops cost modeling for 29 different building types across eight market sectors, including K-12, Healthcare, Higher Education, Mission Critical, Criminal Justice, Life Sciences, Developer and Corporate. With early project information—gross square footage and building footprint the CostAdvisor tool is used collaboratively with owners, architects and Gilbane's preconstruction team to develop realistic construction and total project costs, enhance and speed up the decision making process, and provide realtime "what if" options.

Gilbane provides custom enhancements to BIM as well, combining building information modeling with its own VC Integration tool to design and evaluate construction processes before actual construction.

#### **Quality Environment, Quality People**

Maintaining the well-being of its employees and the external community it serves is in the fabric of Gilbane's corporate culture. Firm leaders are active on the boards of the national ACE Mentor Program, as well as the New Jersey and New York chapters, and in Rebuilding Together, a program that brings together skilled professionals with volunteers to renovate the homes of those unable to perform the work themselves. Gilbane contributes time and financial resources to support many other regional charitable activities in an effort to improve the lives of those in their sphere of operation.

Within the company, Gilbane has two unique programs that underscore its dedication to making the company a desirable place to work.

#### **Gilbane Cares**

"Gilbane Cares" is first and foremost a commitment to safety and welfare, not only to staff employees, but the entire community of people that are affected by a construction project—the contractors, clients, neighbors and the public. Spirited by Chairman Thomas F. Gilbane Jr. and Vice-Chairman Paul J. Choquette Jr., Gilbane Cares is about treating everyone like family. Each person on a Gilbane job is responsible and accountable for their own safety and the safety of others. Gilbane provides the tools to make this happen, earning the highest safety rating in the industry via a robust safety training program, management commitment, safety technology tools such the DBO2 SafetyNet system, and internal recognition awards.

Conveying the culture of caring well beyond the job site, under the Gilbane Cares banner the company has instituted programs to support diversity and inclusion, and to promote sustainable building. The firm has over 500 LEED-accredited professionals and a dedicated group of high performance building experts who all participate in Gilbane's Sustainability Council, a central clearinghouse to share Green building techniques that produce facilities with significantly less impact on our natural resources.

#### **Gilbane University**

Gilbane invests heavily in its people, with a formal and comprehensive training program, aptly called Gilbane Uni-



Case Library Center for Information Technology, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY. Architect: Shepley Bulfinch Richardson Abbott



Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport Capital Improvement Project, San Jose, CA, the third largest airport in California and on track to achieve LEED-Silver certification. Architect: Gensler and Associates

versity, to foster success. Run almost exclusively by Gilbane personnel, the program offers an extensive curriculum of courses for each level and field of work, and everyone in the firm is required to take 30 credits a year. On average, however, most employees go beyond the requirements and take somewhere in the range of 50 credits each year.

The sense of mutual commitment is evident in the awards and accolades the firm receives. Gilbane is consistently ranked among the top companies for training—and number one in the industry—by Training Magazine. And as a nod to their appreciation, employees have voted Gilbane as one of Fortune Magazine's "Top 100 Places to Work" for the past two years. It doesn't get much better than that.

"What is so striking about working with Gilbane is their deep corporate commitment to partnering with design professionals and subcontractors. Their success is built on the quality of the individuals who make up the Gilbane team, their ability to anticipate and resolve challenges before they become problems, and the value-added they bring to projects through the partnering process."

Kevin McClurkan AIA, LEED AP, Partner, Ennead Architects LLP

- Integrity
- Tough-mindedness
- Teamwork
- Dedication to Excellence
- Loyalty
- Discipline

## **Building More Than Buildings**

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Gilbane Building Company

www.gilboneco.com 1.800.GILBANE

#### Office Locations

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Providence, RI Raleigh/Durham, NC Richmond, VA Rochester, NY San Antonio, TX San Diego, CA San Jose, CA San Juon, Puerto Rico Syracuse, NY Washington, DC Wilmington, DE

Project: Brooklyn Museum | Architect: Ennead Architects