



When former Idaho Governor Jim Risch honored Idaho's premier architect with the Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award for the Arts, Charles Hummel graciously accepted the medal in the grandeur of the Egyptian theatre, a work of art crafted by his father, and he restored.

“If you were to name 50 of the most important buildings they were designed by Tourtellotte and Hummel ...”

Charles Hummel has left his mark on Idaho with a sense of innovation and a passion for Boise. His grandfather, father and uncle helped build an architectural identity for Idaho brick by brick. He had kept that vision alive.

"If you were to name 50 of the most important and distinguished buildings in Idaho, they were all designed by Tourtellotte and Hummel," said historian and friend Arthur Hart.

John Tourtellotte came to Boise in 1890 and Charles Hummel arrived in 1895. They teamed up to form Tourtellotte and Hummel and on any street corner in downtown Boise, you can see the firm's work. One of the grandest examples of their work is the majestic and powerful Idaho State House. Further north one can see a touch of Europe bursting from the tree line with the spire of St. John's Cathedral, then there's the classic Egyptian Theatre and a



touch of the modern with the Hoff building. Through the years the Hummel's consistently created architectural masterpieces from Pocatello to Lewiston. Father Frederick and Uncle Frank Hummel took over what is now Hummel Architects from Charles' grandfather, also named Charles F. Hummel. They built churches, homes, and schools developing the unique urban character of Boise.

Charles F.

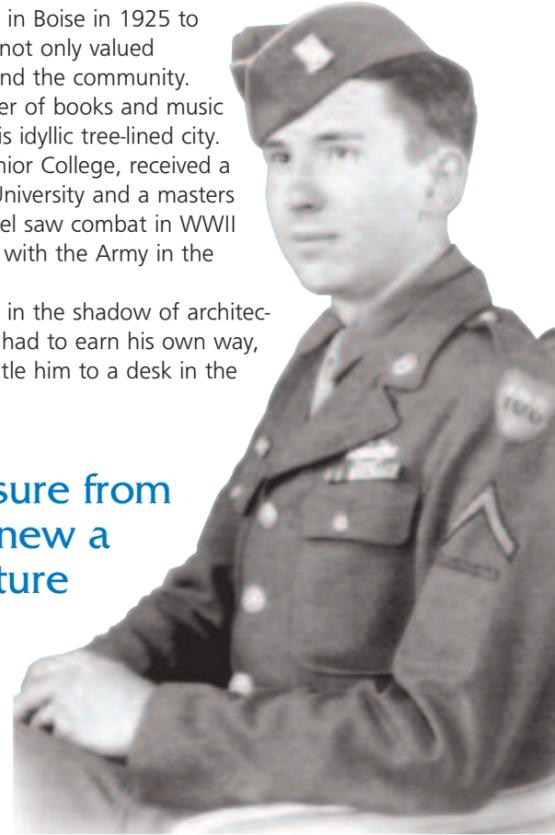
Hummel was born in Boise in 1925 to an active family that not only valued architecture but the arts and the community. He was a curious child, and a lover of books and music and like his family grew to love his idyllic tree-lined city.

Hummel attended Boise Junior College, received a bachelors degree from Catholic University and a masters from Columbia University. Hummel saw combat in WWII and was decorated while serving with the Army in the European theatre.

Although Hummel grew up in the shadow of architectural greatness, he knew that he had to earn his own way, growing up a Hummel didn't entitle him to a desk in the prestigious firm.

“I didn't feel pressure from my family, but I knew a lot about architecture as a kid.”

"I didn't feel any pressure from my family, but I knew an awful lot about architecture as a kid," he says. It wasn't until after the end of World War II that he made up his mind to study architecture "I had an uncle who was



The Ada County Board of County Commissioners is pleased to present its second annual Making History Award to Charles F. Hummel. His contributions to art, culture, and the community of Ada County have been constant, creative, and constructive. We thank him.

“Architecture is our third skin.”
Charles F. Hummel



MAKING HISTORY IN ADA COUNTY 2007



friend Arthur Hart thinks Hummel should get an award for sitting through the countless city council and P and Z board meetings. "Serving on all those committees and I can tell you there is nothing worse than being bored to death and most committee meetings end up being like that," said Hart. It takes a lot to stick to it and not be bored to death ... but he did it and without complaint." Charles Hummel served on the Boise City and Ada County Planning and Zoning Commission, the Idaho State Board of Architectural Examiners, the Idaho Historic Sites Review Board, Preservation Idaho, Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center, The Boise Museum of Art, Boise Philharmonic Association, Idaho Public Television, the Boise Rotary Club, and the Finance Council of the Idaho Catholic Diocese, and served as an officer of the American Institute of Architects of Idaho and a Fellow of the AIA in 1984. Charles Hummel's six decades of service is unmatched and elevates the 82 year old architect to icon status. "He has always been big on city planning and he has served on just about every board we had. He looked ahead and tried not to make mistakes like others had made," added Hart. "He has been involved in designing streetscapes, just so many things I'm not aware of, he has been on many, many city commissions, he is genuinely concerned about his hometown which is Boise and he always has been." Charles Hummel's greatness stems from the fact that he cared deeply about his hometown, his themes were service and smart growth, his goal was to build a community people could be proud of, for sixty plus years he mentored city and county leaders, forever securing the Hummel legacy.





also a partner in the firm and they had another partner so it wasn't like automatic succession or anything." Charles married Calista Ward of Boise in 1951 and returned to active duty in the Corp of Engineers in 1951-2. After the war he returned to Boise and continued to work part time for the family firm and that stint of hard work paid off.

Hummel, Hummel and Jones offered Charles a full time job in 1953. He finally had the chance to work full time for his dad, Uncle Frank and Jedd Jones III. "It was a lot to live up to, I don't think that daunted Charles at all," said long time friend and historian Arthur Hart. "He got to work with his father and uncle; he was growing up in the business."

“Charles is big on the engineering aspect of it.”

Hummel thrived on the engineering aspect of architecture; his friends say he's a natural problem solver. "Charles would deny that he is an important designer in the history of the firm, I think others have been in charge of the design, Charles is big on the engineering aspect of it," said Hart.

Hummel went to work and was responsible for the design of some of the most important contemporary buildings in Idaho. Among his best known works are the U.S. Courthouse, the Boise State University Library and Student Union, The Idaho Statesman Building, Bishop Kelly High School, Our Lady of The Lake Church in McCall, Our Lady of the Valley Church in Caldwell and many historic restorations including the O'Farrell Cabin on Fort Street, St. John's Cathedral the St. Francis Cathedral in Baker, Oregon.

“Architecture is a communities clothing, our third skin.”

Hummel thinks Architecture is our collective coat, a communities clothing. "It's our third skin, public buildings reflect something about us. If they're in a city or town, they have to be part of the urban fabric. They can't work against it. They have to be in the context of their place. Our work always respected that."

Context and the placement of buildings can balance a community; The Hummels looked for that balance and a sense of harmony. Former Governor Jim Risch says it is important to hang on to the balance, the old buildings that tell a community's story. "Out west, we're different than back east," said Risch.

ture is the marriage between a great client and a great architect; you have to have the two."

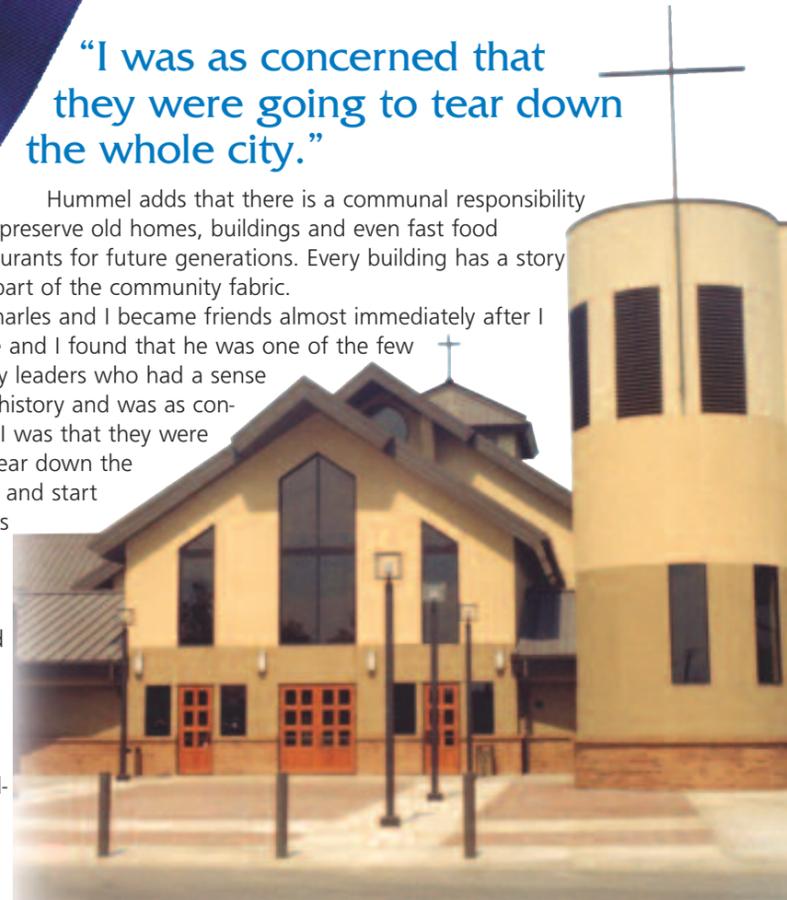
“I was as concerned that they were going to tear down the whole city.”

Hummel adds that there is a communal responsibility to preserve old homes, buildings and even fast food restaurants for future generations. Every building has a story that's part of the community fabric.

"Charles and I became friends almost immediately after I came here and I found that he was one of the few community leaders who had a sense of Boise's history and was as concerned as I was that they were going to tear down the whole city and start over. That's what the urban renewal plan called for, they had no concept that there were buildings in Boise that were historically important," recalled Hart.

"The National Registry criteria says that it's historic if it's 50 years old. There's a lot out there that's fifty years old if you want to use that criterion that's very fragile," said Hummel. "Some of its goofy, some serious but all if it has the collective memory of where we are, where we have been and it isn't necessary to tear it all down."

Hummel says the world has changed, the profession is not the same it



"We've only been a state since 1890, so we don't have buildings that are hundreds of years old, but we do have monuments that are going to be around for a long time like the Capitol and St. John's Cathedral."

As an architect and a Boise resident Hummel didn't like what he saw in the fast growing cities of the west. They were growing too fast with little thought of what went where. He joined every development board and committee he could find.

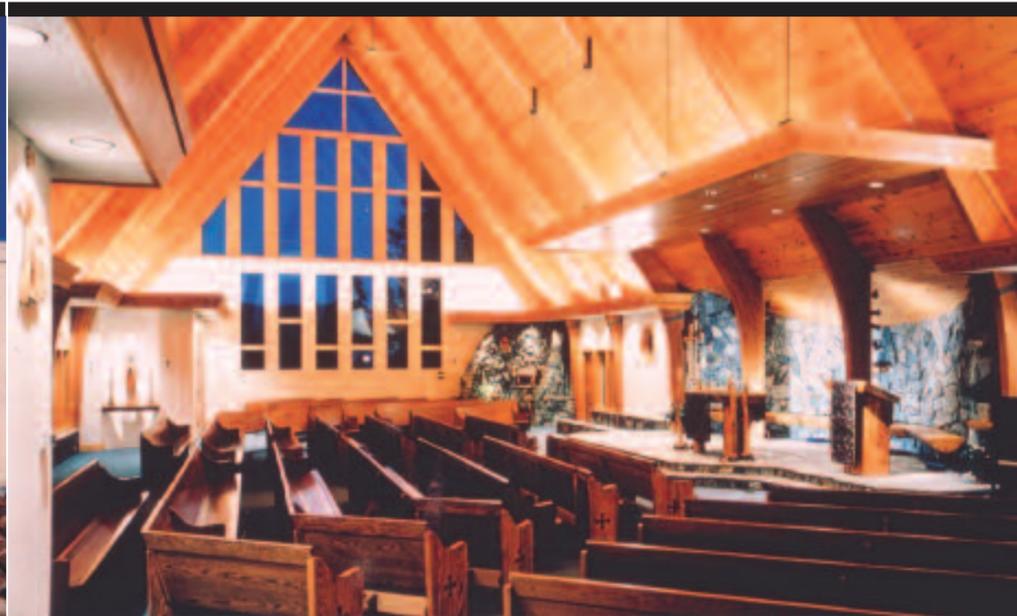
“I became increasingly aware of what was happening to growth in the city.”

"I began to become increasingly aware of what was happening to the growth in the city and that became a preoccupation of mine later on in regard to trying not to reproduce Los Angeles."

Hummel thinks architects need to lend a loud and active voice when developers come knocking on the doors of the communities' planning and zoning boards.

"Architects are not vocal enough. I think architects have a duty to bring to people's attention what ought to be done to preserve the urban fabric. Architects generally accept the commission, do the job, collect the fee and move on to the next job and don't necessarily tell the city fathers what's good for them."

Hummel points out that since the dawn of time architects have always had the uncomfortable task of creating, yet making a living. "Unfortunately, architects have to have a client. If you do nothing but paper architecture, you don't have to worry about what your client thinks, or the size of the client's pocketbook. All of a sudden you realize that in the real world, great architect-



was just a few decades ago, and yet he is confident that Boise and Idaho will have a unique identity for future generations.

“Serving on those committees is nothing worse than being bored to death.”

"Architects ceased to be the king pins long ago. I am skeptical where architecture is going in general, but not necessarily here." For his life's work Hummel was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Idaho but

