

## James J. Kozel

### Business



Jim, born to Slovenian parents Ignatz Kozel and Mary Krajic, was raised in the Collinwood neighborhood. After graduating from Collinwood High School in 1945, he received his architectural degree from Western Reserve School of Architecture in 1954.

He is a registered architect in Ohio, an Emeritus member of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, a member of the national and Cleveland chapters of the American Institute of Architects, and a member of the Architects Society of Ohio.

He is an honorary member of the St. Augustine Manor Board of Trustees, a member at the Slovene Home for the Aged for over 20 years, a lifelong member of the Strugglers Lodge #614, a member of the Cleveland-Euclid Elks, B.P.O.E. #18, a charter member of the Euclid Architectural Review Board, and a member of the Slovenian Singing Society, Zarja. He has served in all of these organizations as president, committee chair and committee member of various projects.

From 1950 to 1969, Jim worked for various architectural firms. In 1969 he left the position of corporate architect at Arthur G. McKee and Co. to enter private practice. This private practice quickly expanded, and a partnership was established which eventually led to a corporation. In this practice, Jim and his associates participated in many projects, which included medical buildings, commercial buildings, banking facilities, residential units, and recreational facilities.

Jim has another love and that love is music. He started playing the accordion at the age of nine. By age sixteen, he was a member of a trio playing at a tavern. In the mid-forties he formed a band with Chuck Smith and played at bars, dances, wedding, picnics, and was regularly heard on radio station WSRS. When Frankie Yankovic asked him to play with his band, Jim agreed but only until his college semester began. Jim played all over the Midwest with the Yankovic Band.

In 1974 he was honored as "Musician of the Year". Jim was a charter member of the "Polkats", a polka musicians social club based at the Slovenian Home. He has recorded with many of the polka greats and was a founding member of the American Slovene Polka Foundation.

In 1949 Jim married Victoria Langus, and they have three daughters and three grandchildren. The past few years Jim and Vicky have been enjoying themselves on cruise ships, visiting their children, and visiting casinos.