Insider

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Architecture and Interiors
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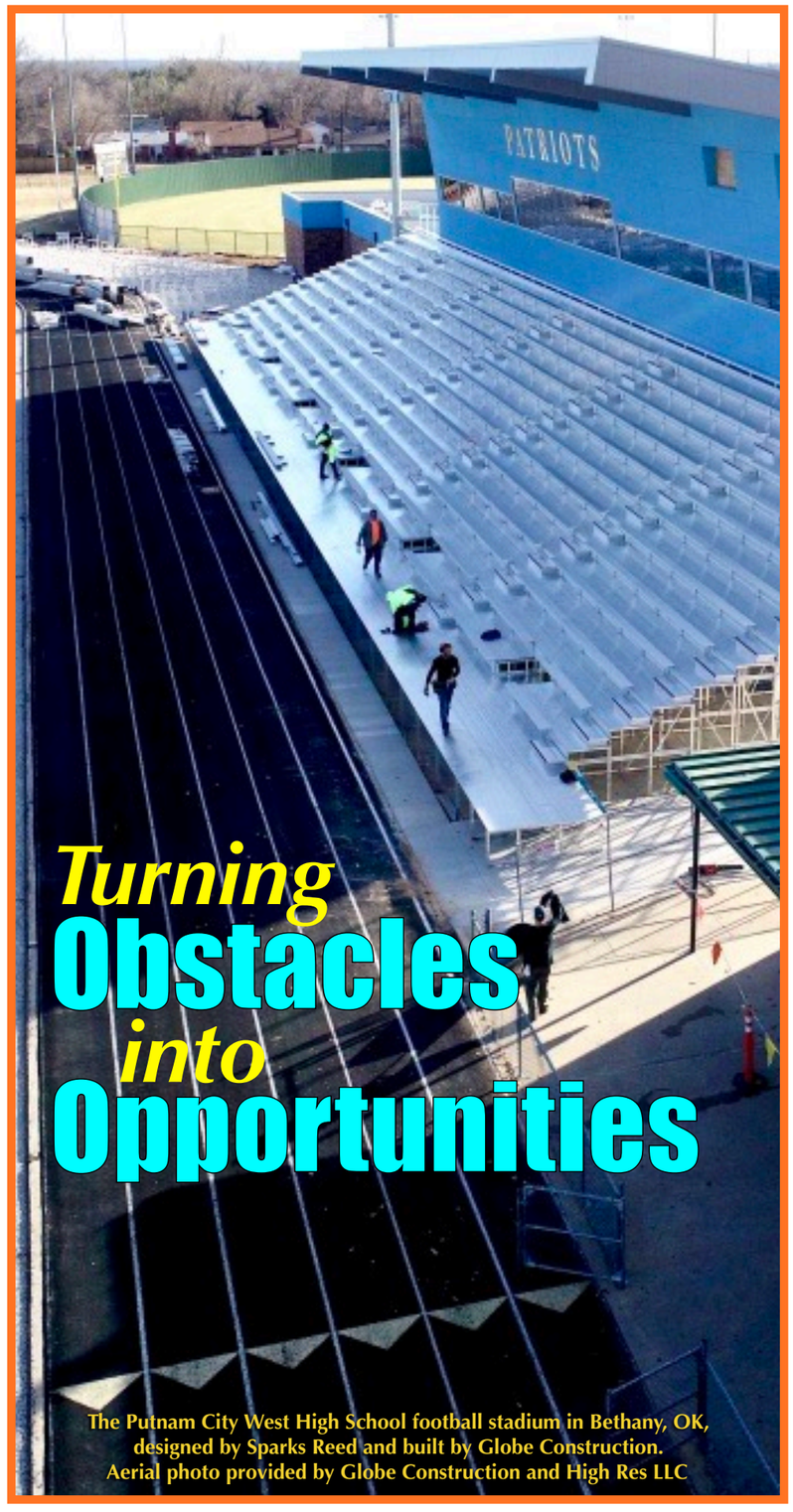


Turning Obstacles *into* Opportunities

The Putnam City West High School football stadium in Bethany, OK, designed by Sparks Reed and built by Globe Construction.
Aerial photo provided by Globe Construction and High Res LLC

Just a bit of **what's inside**!

Turning **obstacles** *into* **opportunities**

... and that's just a sample!

"Thank goodness for the team at Sparks Reed"

"From beginning to end, athletic construction projects can be complex. Thank goodness for the team at Sparks Reed. They understand the business of college athletics and their designs reflect the unique components of college programs. For those wanting to make a difference with facilities, they have a dependable set of tools."

- Joseph Muller

Starting out on the right foot

Understanding the importance of pre-design services

Rendering of an athletic department meeting room by Sparks Reed Architecture and Interior Design

Clients often begin their building process with an idea or concept that excites them. While it's a joy to experience, such exuberance may blind would-be builders to a wide variety of needs and concerns. That's one reason Sparks Reed recommends starting any project with one or more of our extensive **PRE-DESIGN SERVICES**.

These services may take our architecture and interior design customers through vision planning, project and cost analysis, feasibility studies, fundraising options, and many other discovery steps. These services may involve anything from focus group sessions and existing or potential site studies to long-term usage/growth projections and field trips to examine similar facilities.

Through such steps, pre-design services usually deliver multiple benefits.

- They may uncover and identify many issues clients

didn't know or overlooked, such as existing building or site concerns, operational demands, growth needs, regulatory hurdles, and budget options.

- They help form a consensus and unity among users, supporters, and the community.
- They create and chart a path for completing a successful project that everyone may participate and believe in.

Perhaps most important, these services usually end up saving clients time, money, and heartaches, all while delivering a facility that meets everyone's needs in the most efficient, cost-effective manner possible.

Sparks Reed's pre-design services include:

- Programming.
- Feasibility studies.
- Site evaluation and analysis.
- Space planning.
- Project scheduling.
- Cost modeling.
- Fundraising assistance.
- Master planning
- Campus master planning.

The Sparks Reed Way

Many architectural firms start their pre-design services at the project goal stage – learning what type of building the client desires, its purpose, size, and location. Having been hired by a client with a goal in mind, such firms apply their expertise and industry knowledge to outline and develop potential solutions. This approach usually ends with a pitched product that is the architect's vision, not the client's.

Sparks Reed takes a different approach. Through our **PROGRAMMING** services, we start by studying the client's goals, operations, and structural assets. We hold small-group meetings with interest holders – management, board members, and other stakeholders – so that we truly understand the client's vision and mission, operations and scope, potential, and environment needs. We fine-tune these studies through more focus groups to advance everyone's project understanding and footing.

Such gatherings allow Sparks Reed to interact with the client at various levels and learn to a finer degree not just what the client wants and needs, but what the best solutions might involve. Sparks Reed team members may then accompany

Sparks Reed Architecture & Interiors

the team you *trust*

Pre-design services

- Programming
- Feasibility studies
- Site evaluation and analysis
- Space planning
- Project scheduling
- Cost modeling
- Fundraising assistance
- Master planning
- Campus master planning

client leaders and supporters on field missions to study facilities similar to those identified, seeing first-hand what works and what does not.

These steps help assure that the project's nature, purpose, and design remain the client's, not ours. We have a general name for this listening and learning process: the **SPARKS REED WAY**. We'll talk more about that later.

Digging in

Programming studies may suggest needs for **FEASIBILITY STUDIES** – research and quantified analysis to determine if a project is realistic and achievable with the budget or logistics available. Such studies may dive into site conditions, renovation or construction options, material choices, environmental issues, building codes, weather potentials, time and contractor variables, budget requirements, funding, or other conditions involving that project. Such research helps identify the best, most workable options to deliver what the client wants and needs.

Programming studies may also suggest or reveal needs for **SITE EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS.** Quite often clients start their building plans with a location in mind, only to discover that location is not suitable for their operations, goals, growth ambitions, or construction needs. Site evaluation and analysis helps to identify the size property needed for the client's intended and potential future usage. It may plot access and traffic options, environment and environmental concerns, applicable zoning and building hurdles, and other construction necessities. It grounds the client's vision and focuses dreams on reality.

Bringing everything into focus

SPACE PLANNING is another tool that brings vague construction ideas into focus. This pre-design service identifies all the rooms or areas needed to accommodate the client's existing and future operations. It suggests how big or small such spaces need be,

how to arrange them on the property, and how pedestrian, security, mechanical, vehicular, and parking traffic routes might connect them. It helps clients realize and utilize individual, specialized, multipurpose, environmental, community, and safety areas.

We may recommend **PROJECT SCHEDULING** when a client has a specific timetable in mind for completion. This pre-design service would study and compare client building needs to the time required for developing the architectural plans and completing regulatory hurdles. It would consider weather and other environmental forecasts, budget issues, fast-track risks, and construction contractor needs, all to see if the client's timeline is feasible.

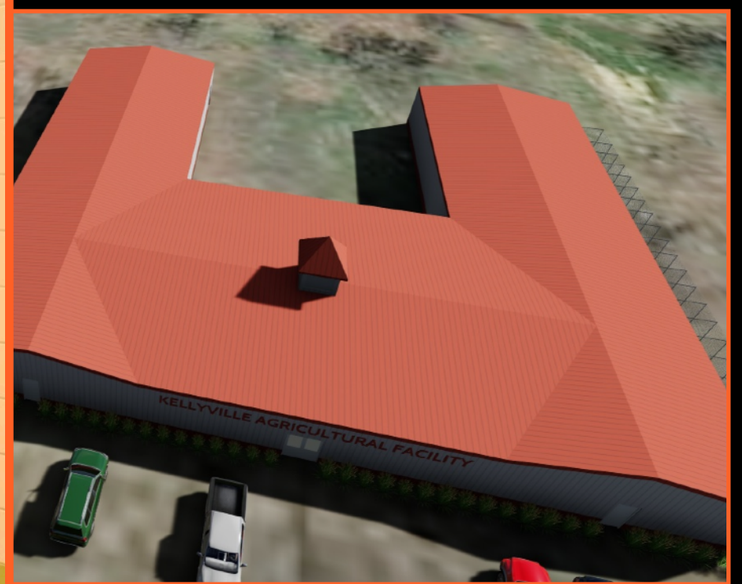
The bottom line

COST MODELING helps all involved understand how all these different issues may impact the client's budget, thereby anchoring their visions in financial realities. To accomplish this pre-design service, Sparks Reed often brings a third party in for expert guidance – a general contractor, construction manager, or an independent cost-estimating company. This service also provides a comparative analysis for when the client's chosen general contractor provides its project cost estimate.

As the cost modeling may suggest, clients may find they lack the necessary funds for everything their chosen project entails. That's when clients may turn to Sparks Reed's **FUNDRAISING ASSISTANCE** services. This pre-design service provides clients one or more potential products – such as renderings, images, graphics, articles, posters, videos, 3D visuals – for

Three projects improved through use of Sparks Reed's pre-design services

Kellyville (OK) Public Schools chose Sparks Reed to design three additions: the Kellyville Event Center (top left), the Kellyville Pre-K Building and storm shelter (lower left), and an agricultural studies building (below), General contractor D.C. Bass and Sons of Tulsa completed all three in 2018.



use in advertising, circulars, mailings, social media, and other marketing platforms. Sparks Reed executives also may participate in public, fundraising, and donor meetings to explain projects and answer questions.

Sparks Reed has enjoyed great success in this arena, helping clients raise more than $450 million for their projects.

Back to the future

If a client enters with a vision and little more, they may hire Sparks Reed to provide **MASTER PLANNING**. This pre-design service may involve some or all of the above services to help clients outline a step-by-step plan for achieving the desired result by a future timeline. Clients looking beyond one goal or project may hire Sparks Reed to develop a long-range **CAMPUS MASTER PLAN** to guide leadership for decades to come.

Through all of these services, Sparks Reed focuses first and foremost on listening to the client and its stakeholders, for the better listener we are, the more our ideas and creative efforts reflect the client's vision. This grounding improves how Sparks Reed explores the options available to clients and their projects. Our passion, you see, is to deliver a design that accomplishes all of our client's goals, fits its budget capabilities, and promises long-term value, all the while wowing our client and its audience with a one-of-a-kind facility. By delivering that special solution, we hit our goal of exceeding your expectations – and not just with the final project, but every step along the way.

That's what we call the Sparks Reed Way: Listen, Explore, Exceed. It's worked for hundreds of clients, many of whom our website lists on different pages.

It will work for you.

The Sparks Reed Way

1. Listen
2. Explore
3. Exceed

Sparks Reed Architecture & Interiors

the team you trust

1. Listen

"Before we begin designing your project, we want to understand your goals. We do this by asking questions about what is important to you concerning design, function, budget, etc. Then we LISTEN to your responses and incorporate your ideas into the project."

2. Explore

"After we have a clear understanding of your goals, budget, and schedule, we can begin to EXPLORE the options available to you for your project. Our passion is to develop a design that accomplishes all of your goals and, at the same time, is a one-of-a-kind facility. There is something about the design that makes it very special, probably a solution no one else would have thought of."

3. Exceed

"When we complete a project, it is always our hope that our clients will say, "I am glad we selected Sparks Reed to design our facility." It is our desire for you to join our list of clients who are excited about their buildings. We want you to tell everyone that we LISTENED to you, we EXPLORED your options, and we definitely EXCEEDED your expectations. We are the team that you can TRUST. "

Turning obstacles into opportunities

Sparks Reed's innovative designs help Putnam City West HS obtain a versatile, unique athletic complex

Aerial photograph of the Putnam City West High School sports complex, with its softball, football, and baseball stadiums. The gridiron appears white as general contractor Globe Construction prepares to place a new field of artificial turf. Aerial photos provided by Globe Construction Co. and High Res, LLC

Putnam City West High School will soon claim one of the most versatile sports complexes in Oklahoma.

Designed by Sparks Reed Architecture and Interiors and built by Globe Construction, the 12-acre PC West athletic campus will host football, baseball, softball, track, and soccer competitions at adjoining facilities just south of the main campus. The new 250-seat baseball stadium stands finished immediately south of the existing softball stadium and parking lot, while the 3,500-seat football stadium construction to their east is more than 70-percent complete.

"It really is a cool site, and it really does say athletics and school spirit," said Cecil Bowles, chief operations officer of the Putnam City Schools district. "You have a group of facilities that are truly multipurpose."

All three venues are clad in Putnam City West Blue, distinguishing the group from the brown brick that dominates the academic campus.

"That is a very important point," said Bowles. "That color scheme shows our pride in our sports programs."

The steel and concrete football stadium helps tie these facilities together through a second-story balcony and hospitality suite overlooking the new parking lot that connects all three facilities. That lot offers an ideal place for pep bands, cheer functions, tailgating, festivals, assemblies, or other large outdoor gatherings.

"You can see everything from up here," said Globe Construction Superintendent Mike Nessman, who enjoys watching his work crews from that balcony. "You could put the band up here and some drummers and cheerleaders and cheer

on the fans as they come to the football game. I think that's unique.

"Once the district and students realize what they have here, they're going to fall in love with this place," said Nessman. "Who else has an athletic complex like this?"

Putnam City Schools gained this asset due to several cost-effective design solutions to difficult site issues, said Sparks Reed principal and co-founder David Reed. These solutions delivered everything the district needed without extending its construction budget or sacrificing quality in amenities, meeting the needs of each sports program.

"This gives the Patriots first-class facilities to be proud of and compete at the highest levels within their district," said Reed. "It provides great opportunities for their student-athletes to excel."

Bowles credited Sparks Reed for figuring out how to squeeze these construction projects onto the available space. To maximize available funds, the football stadium was designed around an existing practice football field and track just east of the softball stadium. Sparks Reed then fit the baseball field onto vacant land south of the softball stadium and parking lot.

"They were innovative problem-solvers," Bowles said of Reed and his team. "They took some things that were obstacles and turned them into opportunities."

Site issues

Those obstacles came primarily from the chosen site. It presented drainage, visibility, and traffic challenges that Sparks Reed's team solved.

- The tight location contained features – the softball field, a locker room building, and a small utility building beside the practice field – that the new structures and construction crews would have to work around.
- To center the gridiron on the new press box, Sparks Reed had to slide the practice field turf nine yards south and keep it inside the track.
- One sideline of that practice field abuts a thriving residential area of one- and two-story houses. That limited the potential for having traditional visitors seating on the opposite side of the football field. Sensitive to that surrounding neighborhood, Sparks Reed came up with a creative press box design: a long, horizontal unit rather than a tall, vertical structure. That kept the stadium from dominating the residential skyline or intruding on its homes.
- The planned baseball diamond ran up against its own busy neighborhood along the right-field fence. At the edge of the area also lives a beautiful 100-foot-tall pine tree that everyone wished to protect.
- The football practice field lay eight feet above Eagle Lane, the primary vehicular traffic artery bordering the west side of the campus. The planned baseball field added to this elevation problem, sloping 10+ feet from east to west.
- A small access road ran across the chosen area.

Sparks Reed attacked these design issues organically to save district funds. The site's squeezed quarters forced all vehicular traffic to Eagle Lane. The access road was taken out to allow the baseball field to fit inside the property line adjacent to the neighborhood.

The sloping ground forced Sparks Reed and Globe to regrade the area so that water drained to a large retention pond south of the football gridiron and east of the baseball field, away from the residential areas and Eagle Lane. Sparks Reed used dirt scraped from the east side and retention pond to raise and level the baseball field and provide optimal drainage. This also saved the district from having to remove or add earth.

"It's very expensive to haul off dirt, and even more expensive to haul it in," said Reed. "You don't want to spend $200,000+ just hauling in or moving dirt. You want to spend those dollars on the building. The ability to balance the site was a big cost

The steel and concrete football stadium helps tie these facilities together through a second-story balcony and hospitality suite overlooking the new parking lot that connects all three facilities. That lot offers an ideal place for pep bands, cheer functions, tailgating, festivals, assemblies, or other large outdoor gatherings.

savings in the project budget."

Sparks Reed and Globe also saved district monies by installing all utilities for both projects while contractors moved the earth, said Nessman.

Height opportunities

These grading efforts left the ball diamond three feet above the baseball stadium concourse. Sparks Reed turned this height difference into an asset by:

- Raising the bleachers, which provided spectators a unique field-level perspective rarely found at high school ballparks.
- Installing sunken dugouts – a beloved feature of classic baseball stadiums that's usually missing at the high school level.

"We wouldn't have had the dugouts otherwise," Reed said. "With our unique site conditions, we were able to design the dugouts with ADA access from the concourse, along with gravity drainage from the dugouts. Those factors usually prevent most ballparks from having sub-field dugouts."

Sparks Reed augmented these touches with several consumer-oriented aesthetics.

- A tension cable system upholds the backstop netting, providing the ballpark audience a less obstructed view than the typical high-school backdrop.
- The Patriots stadium boasts 75 chairs with backs behind home plate under a shade canopy that extends from the press box.
- Another roofline covers the concession and bathroom entryways, allowing patrons to stay under cover while getting a hotdog and drink or going to the bathroom.

Like the football stadium, the baseball field features a low-profile press box to not intrude on the neighborhood skyline, Reed said. It also employs a 30-foot-tall net above its right field fence to keep homers from reaching or damaging residences.

For its part, the football stadium uses a security fence and tree clusters to help buffer backyards from game activities. The scoreboard also was placed along this line, facing away from homes.

"This complex was designed to protect the integrity of the neighborhoods while enhancing the Patriots' game-day experience," said Reed. "It fits the high school campus as well as the surrounding neighborhoods and will not overpower the homes."

Solutions for elevation and drainage issues allowed Sparks Reed to work sub-field dugouts into the PCW design.

With the east sideline unavailable for the traditional visitor grandstand, Sparks Reed designed the PC West football stadium with three sets of bleachers. Small 1,000-seat aluminum units rise behind each end zone, one for visitors and their band, the other for PCW students and their band. The main grandstand seats 1,500 behind the home team's west sideline.

"We came up with a design more like a NASCAR track, where the bleachers run from the center point of one end zone to the center point of the other end zone," said Reed.

Bowles considers this a major asset.

"It allowed us to have a stadium that basically faces east, with a big overhanging, cantilevered roof," he said. "You're never going to be staring into the sun, and the main grandstand seats are always going to be in the shade."

The first floor offers concessions and restrooms on each side, along with a separate visitor and home ticket booths and locker rooms. That allows easy access to and from the facility without mixing opposing fans.

"The grandstand's second floor has a hospitality suite as well as coach boxes, a box for the announcers, video board operator, and press," said Reed. "There's also an exterior balcony that oversees the parking lot, so those folks in the hospitality suite and press box can watch the fans arrive."

Sparks Reed designed these structures for easy winterizing and shutdown when not in use. Wet areas operate in close proximity whenever possible to minimize plumbing and maintenance costs. The football stadium's visitor locker room contains a roll-up door, allowing its division into two separate facilities when needed, with a common wet area for greater efficiencies.

"That's been a design concept Sparks Reed's developed for years," said Reed.

Bowles said he really appreciates the design integrity of this complex.

"None of the structures really looks that much bigger than the other," said Bowles. "They all look very unique and important, which is good to me as we don't appear to favor one sport over another."

He praised Sparks Reed and Globe for obtaining this creative result while working through unusually wet weather, ongoing school activities, and personnel changes in four key Putnam City Schools positions that brought some design and philosophy adjustments.

"It wasn't a challenge because they handled it well," Bowles said of Nessman and Reed. "For all practical purposes, we're still pretty much on schedule. For a multimillion-dollar project, that's good."

Reed thanked Nessman for Globe's flexibility and efficiency. Nessman echoed Bowles.

"David Reed and his whole team, they've done a wonderful job," said Nessman. "They respond quickly, they're willing to work with us, and they listen to new ideas. They work with the contractor and customer to get a job done and completed as soon as possible."

The Wesley Foundation @ OSU, designed by Sparks Reed (top)
Gary Sparks (center left) with his family (bottom)

Wesley Foundation honors Sparks for design, ministry

The Wesley Foundation at Oklahoma State University honored Gary Sparks on Feb. 22 for his design work on its new Stillwater home. Rev. James Hunt, director of the OSU ministry, said student participation had picked up tremendously since the three-story facility opened last fall.

"Our worship attendance, small group participation, and Women's Conference sign-ups have all grown significantly," said Hunt, campus director of the 823 W. University Ave. facility. "We have had over 120 different students join us for worship, and we see new faces every week.

"Those are the tangible things," Hunt told his audience. "There are intangibles as well. We are building stronger relationships with student organizations, university faculty and staff, and community leaders. We are building new bridges with local churches around the Oklahoma conference and they are sending their college students our way."

While giving thanks to God, Hunt pinned some of this success on the beautiful and functional building design by Sparks and the Tulsa firm he co-founded, Sparks Reed Architecture and Interiors. Hunt also noted Boone Pickens Stadium, Gallagher-Iba Arena, and other OSU building designs handled by Sparks through his career.

"The quality and creativity of your work, your relationship with your clients, and your integrity as a person makes us proud to call you a friend of the Wesley, and happy to welcome you up here tonight as our honoree," said Hunt.

"Had I not been able to get free housing at the Wesley Foundation, I would have had to drop out of school. That would have been the end of my efforts to become an architect, as I probably never would have come back."

Sparks told the audience how his faith had shaped his professional life. He also shared how he had lived in the basement at the previous Wesley Foundation building, serving as a janitor and securing the site each night.

"When I came back to school in 1962, I didn't have enough money to make it through the year," said Sparks. "Had I not been able to get free housing at the Wesley Foundation, I would have had to drop out of school. That would have been the end of my efforts to become an architect, as I probably never would have come back."

About 100 supporters, directors, OSU faculty, and other people attended the Friday gala to celebrate the building and ministry. Hunt hopes to turn this into an annual fundraiser.

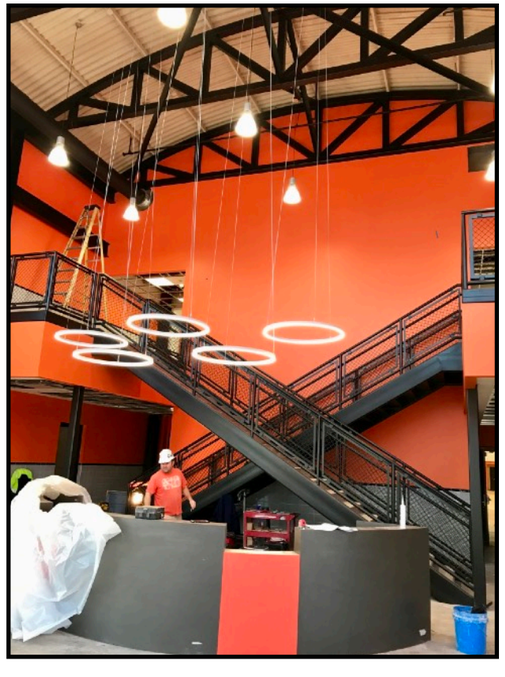
"We owe Gary Sparks, Jill Selman (a co-founder of Sparks Reed and Gary's daughter), David Reed (the third Sparks Reed co-founder and principal), and the rest of Sparks Reed an incredible debt of gratitude," said Hunt. "This is the finest Wesley Foundation building in the country. It's a place worth celebrating, and it's the kind of place that challenges the staff and I every day to use it to its fullest potential."

Three views *of an iconic entryway*

The place:
Putnam City
High School
gymnasium, OKC
The architect:
Sparks Reed
Architecture
and Interiors
The builder:
Flintco

Exterior view

Interior ceiling view



Pedestrian view

Welcome
to our quarterly
newsletter!

Please let us know what
you think!

Have a
wonderful day!

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