Fayetteville, Ark. – The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees has selected the architects to design Willard J. Walker Hall for the Sam M. Walton College of Business. Allison Architects Inc. of Little Rock, Ark., is the architect of record in association with Machado and Silvetti Associates Inc. of Boston, who is the design architect.

Funded in part by an $8 million gift from the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation, Walker Hall will house the Walton College Graduate School of Business, three research centers and conference facilities. The building was named to honor Willard J. Walker’s success in retail management as an exceptional business leader and his contribution to the creation and development of Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

“It is a testament to the success and national recognition of the Walton College that we are able to attract such a distinguished group of architects and consultants for our project,” said David Hyatt, assistant dean for finance and administration. “We are thrilled by the talent represented by the design team.”
The 75,000 square foot Walker Hall will be constructed adjacent to the existing Business Building and across from the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Enterprise Development. Hyatt added: “This is an important building for the Walton College, the university and the state. As the flagship business school in Arkansas, the Walton College can increase the quality and quantity of its programs, increase enrollment, and reinforce the national perception that this is a college on the move. The advanced facilities that this building will offer our graduate and undergraduate students are part of our strategy to increase the value of our programs to Walton College students and constituents.”

Total project cost, estimated at $20.7 million, will also be paid in part by $4 million in bonds and an additional $8 million to be raised. In 2002, alumnus Ken Shollmier made a donation to the Walton College for the construction of the Linda Sue Shollmier Plaza – in honor of his wife. The Linda Sue Shollmier Plaza will form the connecting green space between the business campus buildings and is included in the $20.7 million estimate.

John Allison, AIA, founder of Allison Architects Inc., is a 1971 graduate of the University of Arkansas School of Architecture, where he has served as chairman of the Professional Advisory Board. “We are honored to be selected as the architectural team for Walker Hall,” said Allison. “Everyone in our firm has admired the work of Machado and Silvetti for many years, and we are extremely excited to be working with them at a place to which we have such strong attachments.”

Allison Architects’ relevant experience includes the University of Central Arkansas, Conway - Master Plan, Academic Administrative Space Analysis, and Harrin Hall Addition/Renovation; Wakefield Elementary, Little Rock; Springdale Public Library Interiors, Springdale; William F. Laman Library Interiors, North Little Rock; Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock; and Conway County Library Addition, Morrilton.

Rodolfo Machado, a principal and co-founder of Machado and Silvetti Associates, said, “I first visited the university about a decade ago, when I lectured at the School of Architecture. The campus has since been very much on my mind. We are delighted to have an opportunity to contribute to its improvement and to the growing national presence of the Walton College through this very significant building.”

Machado and Silvetti Associates is an architecture and urban design firm established in 1974 that has extensive experience in designing buildings for major educational institutions, including
Harvard University, Princeton University, Rice University, the University of Utah and the University of Cincinnati. The firm is currently completing the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business for the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, a residential and academic village for Arizona State University in Tempe, Ariz., as well as a $200 million center for the study of classical antiquities, archeology and comparative ancient cultures now under construction at the Getty Villa in Malibu, Calif. In addition to their architectural practice, principals Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti teach at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, where Silvetti chaired the Department of Architecture from 1995 until 2002.

Richard Burck Associates of Somerville, Mass., will be the prime landscape architect. The firm has worked previously with Machado and Silvetti at Harvard and Princeton Universities as well as on the AIA Honor Award-winning Honan-Allston Branch of the Boston Public Library.

The design team will collaborate with Stephen Baker of the Baker Design Group (BDG) in Boston, specialists in the design of learning environments and classroom technology integration for educational and corporate training environments. BDG has worked with Harvard Business School, the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, Stanford Graduate School of Business and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Other project team members include Sharon Hoover, AIA, associated Fayetteville architect; Engineering Consultants, structural engineers, Little Rock; The Batson Firm, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, Little Rock; EB Landworks, civil engineers and landscape, Fayetteville; and Grubbs, Hoskyn, Barton & Wyatt, geotechnical, Little Rock.

Willard Walker was the first manager of Sam Walton’s Five and Dime on the Fayetteville Square. He retired from Wal-Mart in 1972. He was active in the Northwest Arkansas community over the years holding leadership positions in a number of civic and professional organizations, including the Springdale Chamber of Commerce, the Springdale Public Library and the Salvation Army. His wife Pat Walker has been honored for her philanthropic work by organizations across the state and recognized as one of Arkansas’ most distinguished women. The Springdale High School Performing Arts Center was named for her in 1996. In addition to the $8 million gift to fund Walker Hall, the Walker Family Foundation donated $3 million in April 2003 toward the construction of a new student health center, which the University of Arkansas named the Pat Walker Health Center in her honor.
Walker Hall will feature state-of-the-art teaching classrooms and student learning spaces, including graduate consulting project and team meeting rooms, a financial markets trading room, computer lab, gathering/study space and Graduate School of Business administrative offices. In addition, the building will provide support for the important relationship between business research and graduate education by housing the Center for Retailing Excellence, Supply Chain Management Research Center, and Center for Business and Economic Research, including research/library facilities and conference rooms. Additional spaces will complement the outreach units in the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Enterprise Development.

Hyatt added: “An important concept that we have embraced is that of a business ‘campus.’ A visionary concept recommended by Jill Anthes, project director for the UA Community Design Center (UACDC), this model will remove the congested parking areas from the spaces between these buildings. Those areas will be made green with plantings, pedestrian pathways and other landscape features.” The UACDC has an advisory role to the Design Review Board through the office of Campus Planning Coordination.

Next fall, the University of Arkansas is scheduled to begin construction on the four-story, 95,000 square foot Center for Academic Excellence in a space just north of Walker Hall. The Center for Academic Excellence will house several of the University’s multidisciplinary technology research centers and laboratories, including the Walton College Information Technology Research Center and behavioral research laboratory. Perry Dean Rogers Partners, Architects, Boston, is designing the Center for Academic Excellence with Wittenberg, Delony, and Davidson of Fayetteville.

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