



Greg L. Barron (BBA '91), President & CEO, The Barron Companies, Inc.

A Dialogue with Greg Barron, President and CEO, The Barron Companies, Inc.

September 9 — In an economic recession, organizations often struggle just to survive. It's extraordinary that [The Barron Companies, Inc.](#) is growing and thriving during the worst of economic times. With offices in Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston, the firm provides seamless architectural, engineering and construction services through its three subsidiaries: G. L. Barron Company, Inc., Barron Design Group, LP and Barron-Stark Consulting Engineers, LP.

The firm's founder, Greg Barron (BBA '91), is President and Chief Executive Officer of The Barron Companies. He presently serves on the board of First Financial Bankshares (FFIN) and MedCon Alliance and serves on the College of Business Advisory Council. He is also Founder and President of the National Association of Church Design Builders.

Greg recently spoke with *Dialogue* about the company's success and its obligation to giving back to the world "abundantly, strategically and often."

What is your favorite memory as a student at UT Arlington? *Greg Barron: I was a terrible student; working full time, married and interested in one thing, starting a business. So graduating was special for me, and it didn't come easy with my attention span. I still wear my ring to remind me that the struggle was worth it.*

What did you want to be when you grew up? *GB: My father was an airline pilot so our natural discussions at the dinner table were around flying. I worked my way through college instructing and flying commercial corporate charters.*

You've been fortunate in your life and career. Is it important to give back and if so, how does your company do that? *GB: I believe that in life you should do three things when you're able: give abundantly, strategically and often. Our company has been blessed, even in difficult times, and several years ago we began starting and sustaining schools for impoverished children in Bombay, India as well as drilling water wells in villages. I've been fortunate to have traveled several times to visit the kids in India to see firsthand the results of our giving and our missional approach. When you mature as a company and as a person, it's important to move from success to significance.*

As CEO, do you still have things to learn? How do you continue to learn? *GB: I realized that I'm only going to attract great individuals if I continually learn how to lead at a higher level. For me, it's a process of life-long learning. I'm presently finishing a three-year program at Harvard Business School for owners and presidents. I spend one month a semester on campus with some of the sharpest minds around the world.*

What advice do you have for a young business student ready to conquer the world? *GB: Try first to discover how you're wired, what really makes you passionate. Then, never cease to pursue great people in that field. Then, ask questions! The brightest people I know are very curious and continually ask questions.*

What is the most difficult part of your work? *GB: In this difficult economic season, it's prediction. We have to take risk without having a lot of historical background. We're in uncharted territory so the stakes are higher for each decision.*

Which of G.L. Barron's projects had the most impact on you personally and why? *GB: Almost always the ones that were financial busts or caused extreme pain. We don't learn near as much from the victories as we do the defeats. I prefer victories, though.*

G.L. Barron is fortunate to have grown by more than 25 percent in sales over the past year. How has your company flourished during these tough economic times? *GB: We knew we had to answer the "so what?" in the new market paradigm with the recession. Others could also say we design great buildings, we build on time, we engineer for efficiency..."so what?" We knew we immediately had to answer this question clearly, creatively and compelling to maintain or grow market share.*

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