

Gullo Lives American Dream

How Developer Found His Niche

By ANNE LUNDE

Five years after arriving in America from Italy at age 18, Giovanni Gullo was starting to build his own American

dream in the Elk Grove Industrial Park.

Forty-six years later, his Gullo International Development Corporation (GIDC) has produced close to 25

million sq. ft. in the O'Hare Airport industrial market, and manages about two million sq. ft. of those properties itself.

His family came to visit an uncle in the United States and decided to stay. He worked as a bus boy while learning English, and then studied to be an auto mechanic. After marrying, at age 21, he set his sights on doing painting and decorating work.

His first business specialized in painting large, industrial buildings. Alan Hamilton from Trammel Crow developers gave him opportunities to bid on the Trammel Crow construction painting contracts.

J. Gullo Builders launched its own construction projects in 1968 with two 5,000 sq. ft. buildings at Oakton and



Giovanni Gullo, left, shown at the groundbreaking for the Fuji America building, has provided designs for a number of Asian and European clients locating in the O'Hare area market.

Giovanni Gullo in 2014.

Lively in the Elk Grove Industrial Park.

Daughter Mariann Gullo says her father has always been tenacious, very passionate, and with a curiosity about how he could participate.

"He started learning what needed to be done," she explains. Much of his expertise was self-taught, but he was determined to make his mark with style.

In his case, he saw that Centex was buying up great parcels of farmland and starting to build factories for the industrial park west of the airport.

Gullo, having his own visions, decided to focus on developing sites as corporate headquarters instead.

As O'Hare grew to international status, there were advantages for corporations to be close to the airport, to facilitate business meetings, and to ship products. In addition to Elk Grove Village, Gullo focused on western communities such as Wood Dale and Bensenville.

His free-standing corporate buildings were not simple brick buildings. He dreamed with arches, with large walls of glass windows, and, more recently, with pre-cast and colors.

Although not an architect himself, he would already have a vision of how the next project should appear when he sat down with the building team.

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Gullo

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"You can always recognize a Gullo building," Mariann Gullo said.

The company specializes in developing and managing commercial and industrial properties, and it has continued to invest in vacant properties, knowing that there will be a time when the economy rebounds and the demand for new buildings will resume.

It specializes in smaller buildings, usually in the range of 20,000 to 50,000 sq. ft. While image and location are factors in every building project, customers' needs change over time. New designs require upgraded ceilings and higher dock ratios.

With larger delivery trucks servicing locations, the company allows more space for parking the trucks, maneuvering in and around the campus and security.

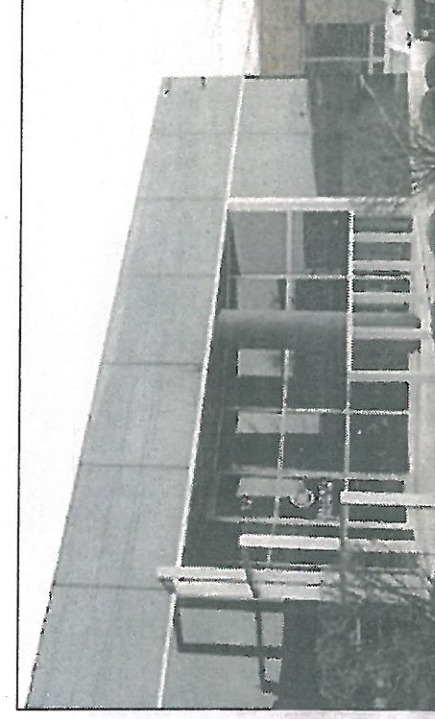
As GIDC grew, his four children joined the business to bring in extra expertise. John trained as a project manager for the construction work. Mario special-

ized in accounting, Virginia attracted and marketable place to locate.

Another project close to the Gullos' hearts is Elk Grove Village's Italian Sister City in Termini Imerese in Sicily, the Italian island where Giovanni grew up.

Established in 2000, the program has hospital, political and student exchanges.

"He never forgot where he came from," Mariann explained. "It unites his love of his two worlds."



This image shows a building designed by Gullo International for MSC, an industrial supplies company, which uses it for its office products showroom and distribution. **BELOW:** This Gullo project at 1260 Landmeier, Elk Grove Village, features large, colorful panels of glass windows.



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