

Jimmie Tucker

Self + Tucker Architects

BY ANNA COX | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LARRY KUZNIEWSKI

WHETHER HE'S COMING IN FROM A MEETING OFF-SITE WITH blueprints in hand or creating an aesthetic mock-up for a client in his downtown office, Jimmie Tucker, a founding principal of Self + Tucker Architects, always has Memphis on his mind. From his early days as a carrier for the *Press-Scimitar*, through which he was able to earn a scholarship to The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey and eventually attend Princeton for undergrad, to his recognizable projects like the FedExForum, STAX Museum and Academy, and Heritage Landing, Tucker is a Memphian who's passionate about the revitalization of the Bluff City, one building at a time.

1. *With this Christmas gift from his staff, Tucker has been known to listen to music while working on inspiration and drawings for clients. "This is such a musical town," Tucker says.*
2. *A gift from his wife to "add some color" to the office, this painting has hung in Tucker's office for more than a decade, reminding him of his wife and of his love of art. Though his interest in architecture was sparked during a required drafting class in 7th grade, Tucker soon found he wanted to make it a career. "I always liked to draw and do art," Tucker says. "[That class] was my first experience at making scale drawings and kind of captured my imagination. Then I related that to architecture. The artistic aspects, the way you can use art for a specific purpose, and now combine art and technology appealed to me."*
3. *Tucker says that, aesthetically, THE AMERICAN CITY: WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T helps to show clients what works and why. With projects that look at how to leverage Memphis as a city that's known around the world, this book comes in handy to compare its progress and architecture with other cities. "So many tourists come here to go to Graceland, and to Beale Street, and to the National Civil Rights Museum, but we're trying to create more of an understanding of the history of Memphis. So it can be an attraction, something to expand our economy, and perhaps help us locally understand our city."*
4. *"When I was in New York I used to do a lot of work associated with school construction. When I came back to Memphis it just so happened that Memphis was undertaking a major school renovation, and I was able to connect with my old partner [Charles Fleming of Parsons-Fleming] and he happened to have a job." While Tucker and his current partner, Juan Self, had already started Self + Tucker, this project was a way to gain immediate exposure and work, and it set the ball rolling for future success.*
5. *What started off as a gift for his young daughter, Kira, now 15, while traveling on work trips turned into a full-blown collection of "probably 20 or more" snow globes. The full collection is Kira's, but a few make their home on Tucker's desk, next to many framed photos of Kira through the years.*
6. *Tucker's company has owned the Universal Life building for about six years and is in the process of renovating it. The past few years haven't been ideal economically, but Tucker is confident the building, now registered as a historic building, will soon emerge better than ever. This vintage postcard featuring A. Maceo Walker was found during one of the many walk-throughs of the building.*
7. *Reflecting Tucker's passion about the revitalization of the city, this painting serves as a reminder of its rich history and culture and the growth and development possibilities of the future. Tucker has dedicated his life and career to this mission, and the future is bright.*

