



# MARK III AT 40

40 STORIES IN 40 DAYS

## Day 6: Mark Canfield Profile



Mark Canfield, a Project Manager and veteran Mark III employee, has been with the company since 1984. In his 32 years of employment, he's seen it all. Having started as an underground laborer, he's held multiple positions within the company including estimator, plumber, superintendent and even Division Manager. We sat down with him and asked him a few questions about his experience at Mark III:

- 1. Most memorable project:** Kik Bleach Plant (mid 1990s) because it was interesting and different. I had to travel to Louisiana to visit another bleach plant and understand the complexities.
- 2. What has kept you at Mark III over the last 32 years:** I've been here over half of my life. I enjoy the challenge of trying new positions and being a good resource to the client. Knowing about every different trade makes us valuable and saves them money."
- 3. What advice would you give to a new Mark III employee:** "You have the opportunity to do just about anything you want here. The only person holding you back at Mark III, is yourself."
- 4. Favorite whiskey:** "Crown. Although, I never met a whiskey I didn't like."



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### Day 7: Libby's Cannery (1982)



Notably one of Mark III's most challenging jobs, but perhaps also one of the most rewarding, Libby's Cannery offered a whole new set of challenges to the Mark III team. This \$3 million project was the transformation of a former tomato processing plant into the largest data processing plant West of the Mississippi at the time. Owned by the State of California's Department of Health and Welfare, this project would end up needing our electrical, plumbing, fire protection and underground teams and Mark III called the location on Alhambra Street home for the next year.

On the electrical side, the client wanted to replace the current power source and generators with a new concept that had emerged from the East Coast. This required two static transfer switches, essentially pulling power in from two different sources, without the need of a battery operated generator.

This project was extremely technical. From the electrical switches, Mark III's first installation of a Halon Fire Protection System, to the 40+ computers (which were as large as a desk back then) that needed to be installed, the scope was extremely diverse and coordination was critical. Needless to say, this project required a lot of manpower. Even office employees were out on-site helping pull wire! From the beginning, this project started out challenging. Mark III was one of three companies bidding and we hired a man named John Galliani specifically for this Design/Build project to help us estimate the bid. Mark O'Brien was nervous but John was confident and we ended up being awarded the project.

Mark recalls this as being one of his favorite projects because, despite the challenges, it was a success from start to finish; including the bid, management and competent team members on staff. This project could have been far out of Mark III's league in the early years of being a new company but as Mark recalls, "ignorance is bliss," and essentially, you can do anything you put your mind to.



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### Day 8: Cindy Frost Profile

After moving from Little Rock, Arkansas to Sacramento, California for her husband’s job, Cindy Frost found herself looking for a place to work. In 1984, Cindy took a chance on Mark III Construction where she was assigned to process payroll. Almost 32 years later, Cindy has pretty much seen it all. Everything from the company adjusting to a down-trodden economy, to expanding on the upswing. She has taken on new roles and tasks such as running the Service division, Payroll, Safety and whatever else anyone has thrown her way. When asked how she felt about the variety she said, “if Mark, Tim, Dan or Mike ask me to do something, I’ll never say no. They trust me to get the job done and I won’t disappoint.”

#### 1) What keeps you at Mark III?

“I have seen so many changes in my 32 years but the people are what keep me here. I love the variety in my job and that there is never a dull moment. It is easy to work hard when there are hard working people setting an example all around me.”

#### 2) What is your biggest success?

“Personally, my children are my greatest successes. How do I pick one accomplishment from 32 years at Mark III? I have learned from every challenge in my life and work. I’m very proud that we have always upheld our safety record and have never been cited for labor law issues.”

#### 3) What advice would you give to a new Mark III employee?

“Mark III is the Power of One. The strength of our team is each employee. The strength of each employee is our team. Be tenacious!”

#### 4) What is something most people wouldn’t know about you?

Not many employees know this today, but 30 years ago Cindy was seriously injured on the job. The archived folders were located in the auto shop (in the back room, where the tools are now). Mark O’Brien asked Cindy to pull a file for him so she went down to the room, and quickly realized how messy it was. Not a great day to wear a dress and heels; she had to maneuver through the mess to get the right folder. As she pulled the drawer open, a giant marble slab fell right on her foot and smashed her toes completely flat. Dave Adams a mechanic at the time, came to her rescue. She needed emergency re-constructive surgery and the Orthopedic Surgeon on call was the 49er’s sports doctor. (Cindy’s favorite team!) When asked about the incident Cindy said “this is the reason I am so tenacious about safety.”



(1996) Cindy and Tim accept safety award from the State Compensation Insurance Fund (SCIF) program, recognizing Mark III as being the safest company on record within it’s division.



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### Day 9: El Paso Office Project Profile (1988)

In the 80's, Buzz Oates was very successful. One of his ventures was building roller rinks all over town. Eventually, Noble Blue, a partner of Buzz Oates, contacted Buzz because he wanted a rink built in El Paso, Texas. So, in 1988, Buzz asked Mark III if they would be interested in building the tilt-up. Gerry O'Brien, the third O'Brien brother, went down to El Paso to make sure the project went successfully. Gerry was a thoughtful businessman and recognized the opportunity for growth. His way of thinking was along the lines of, "If we're building a tilt-up for a roller rink, we might as well build another tilt-up in the vacant lot across the street." This notion evolved into constructing over 2.5 million square feet worth of buildings throughout the area, including the project highlight, the Ford Motors Distribution Plant in El Paso.

Mark O'Brien would fly Tim and Gerry (and anyone else who wanted to go) back and forth from Sacramento to El Paso. Although Mark III Construction sold their El Paso Office in 2001, they continued to build in McAllen, Texas, getting 235,000 SF out of the ground in 2006. The last two Texas buildings Mark III built and owned were recently sold at the end of March 2016.

Mark III has plans to re-establish themselves in Texas by the end of 2016. When Mark and Tim talk about Austin, they know we are taking all the right steps to be successful. Gerry O'Brien was the one who spearheaded Texas originally and saw the profitability in expansion. If he were here today, he would be thrilled to see that we are venturing back into Texas. They joked that Gerry would have said, "Follow my lead, not Mark and Tim's. Let's go to Austin and let's do it right!"





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### Day 10: Purchasing a Plumbing Company (1982)



A few years after Mark III started, Mark and Tim purchased a small plumbing company and it became the first trade to add to the already existing Electrical division. The company, O'Connor Plumbing, was owned by Bob O'Connor who had attempted to start his own business and keep it running, but found it much more difficult than he anticipated.

Unsure of who should run the new division, Mark and Tim elected Ed Mette, who was a Sac State student and handling the Mark III accounting books at the time. Fifteen years later he was still running the division and it opened the door to future opportunities for the company to provide multi-trade services. This included projects and the means to open an Underground division.

Some of the first projects (in the early 1980s) that the Plumbing division took on were seemingly small jobs (in comparison to today's work) but at the time, they made for some great learning experiences for the new division:

- **JCPenney's building downtown** - Mark III was hired to install a sewage ejector pump and it wasn't until they started drilling did they discover they had 10ft of concrete flooring to work through.
- **Rico's Pizza off Sunrise Blvd in Sacramento** - this Tenant Improvement was awarded during a big plumber's strike so the owner called Mark III to finish the job. We didn't have anyone to lead this project so Mark and Tim offered up Ed Matis (an electrician) to work the job. While he was pretty well-versed in other trades, his experience was primarily in electrical so this was a big risk for Mark III. Once the owners walked in and saw the work he had done they were nervous at his unconventional approach. They made Mark III guarantee a lifetime warranty but to this day, we have not received one call regarding issues with this project!

When we interviewed Mark and Tim about purchasing a plumbing company and using it to leverage future work as a multi-trade company, Mark said "you don't know what you don't know. And the time I didn't know a lot." It was a risk but it was one worth taking. It led to a lot of on-the-job training and allowed us to enter the underground/site work industry and grow the company to what it is today.