

# Michael Patrick Partners: Last Men Standing, 43 Years and 500 Awards Later

*San Francisco design studio looks back on surviving earthquakes, financial meltdowns, global pandemics and recessions.*

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA, February 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Michael Patrick Partners](#), a nationally recognized design studio, announced today that its two founding partners, Duane Michael Maidens and Daniel Patrick O'Brien, are retiring before year's end. Their award-winning studio is best known for designing the [E\\*TRADE](#) identity and developing SEGA's Sonic the Hedgehog character. Operations will continue under the direction of the remaining managing partners.



In 1980, Communication Arts featured the Palo Alto, CA creative community.

In a few months, Maidens and O'Brien will celebrate 43 years of their partnership. Within the San

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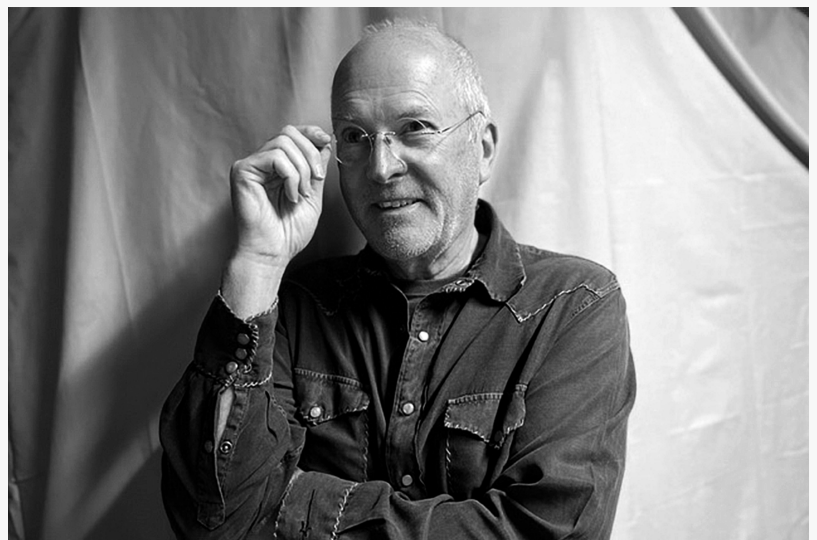
*Duane Michael Maidens, Co-founder and Chairman*

Francisco Bay Area's creative community, they affectionately refer to themselves as “The Last Men Standing.” The moniker is rooted in a 1980 article penned by Communication Arts. Regarded as the most influential international trade journal of visual communications, Communication Arts published a story that featured the creative chops of the local advertising, design, illustration and photography tribes of Palo Alto, California, being fueled by the early high-technology startups of Silicon Valley.

Within the story was a photograph of the 40 or so independent creatives at their favorite watering hole, a bar called 42nd Street. Included in the group photo were two ambitious young entrepreneurs who had established their design studio — Michael Patrick Partners — that same year.

It's remarkable to learn of a company that's been operating continuously for four decades, under the direction of its original founders, after navigating and surviving major earthquakes, financial meltdowns, global pandemics and multiple recessions. Equally as remarkable is their stewardship of assignments to create, align and refresh myriad brands — outcomes that have contributed to building significant brand value for the studio's M&A clients.

The two partners came together in the mid-'70s when Maidens was a divisional advertising manager at Intel, where he honed his expertise interacting with Intel's agency of record, Regis McKenna (later TBWA\Chiat\Day). At the same time, O'Brien began a freelance design career following a tenure at a Bay Area advertising agency. While at Intel, Maidens and other managers within the marketing communications department routinely hired O'Brien as a freelancer to design key assignments.



Duane Michael Maidens, co-founder, Michael Patrick Partners.



Daniel Patrick O'Brien, co-founder, Michael Patrick Partners.

Then, in 1980, encouraged by peers within the Palo Alto creative community, the two realized they could probably be more successful as a design team than in a client/agency relationship. And Michael Patrick Partners was formed.

Shortly after the studio opened, its [client list](#) included Apple, Intel, Motorola and Oracle and then grew into relationships with organizations such as Allergan, Bank of America, Cisco, Beringer Vineyards, E\*TRADE, Genentech, Gonzaga University, Granite Construction, Herman Miller, Logitech, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Omni Hotels, Pete's Brewing Company, Ross Stores, SEGA, Stanford University, The North Face and Visa.

As art directors, creative directors, designers and writers, Maidens and O'Brien have received more than 500 creative-industry awards from organizations such as the American Advertising

Federation, the Art Directors Club of Los Angeles, the Art Directors Club of New York, Black Book's AR100, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, Graphic Design USA, Graphis, Mohawk Paper Company, PRINT, the Rosey Awards, the San Francisco Advertising Association, the Sappi Annual Report Show, The One Club for Creativity, the Society of Typographic Arts and the University College & Designers Association — it's a very long list.

In 1999, 2009 and 2019, Communication Arts honored Michael Patrick Partners by selecting the logo that the studio designed for E\*TRADE as one of the most iconic brand identity designs of recent decades.

Maidens recalls: "From day one, we believed every client and every assignment deserved an extraordinary creative outcome. We still live by that mantra 43 years later."

Maidens continued: "Not many businesses can claim a 40-year run. Compromise is essential. We've always managed to put egos aside and shift the focus to what's best for the clients. Having a dedicated staff also helps."

O'Brien added: "It's pretty amazing to have sat across the desk from many of the world's most influential business leaders. The people who led the early Silicon Valley charge. In real-time, we saw clients grow to incredible heights. And we had a front-row seat."

Along with E\*TRADE and SEGA, other studio highlights that the partner team is credited with include designing the first annual reports for Beringer Vineyards, Oracle and The North Face. Stewarding Santa Clara University's \$1 billion fundraising initiative. Refining the identity of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. And of course, the partner's favorite accomplishment is seeing their work appear on the covers and pages of Communication Arts.

As to what the partners will do in retirement, Maidens will live full-time on his Montana ranch, stalk brown trout, spend more time with his wife and her horses, and finish a memoir. O'Brien says he plans to travel, visit the grandkids more often, lower his golf handicap and take overdue motorcycle trips. Both will remain on the company's board of directors and be consulting resources.

Asked if they have regrets, Maidens replied: "Yeah, I never should have sold that baby-blue '66 Volvo — it was a sweet ride."

Michael Patrick Partners has received 500+ awards from the nation's most sought-after creative organizations and possesses a body of work that spans banking to beer, education to energy, hard seltzer to health care and technology to transportation — startups to the Fortune 1000 and the Fortune 500.

The 42nd Street bar photo is courtesy of Mark Gottlieb.

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