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MARCH // APRIL // 2018



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**PUBLICATION DIRECTOR**  
Zurich Esposito  
zesposito@aiachicago.org

**EDITORS**  
Anjolie Rao  
arao@aiachicago.org

Deanna Strange  
deanna@innovativepublishing.com

**DESIGNER**  
Catherine Meany

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
Innovative Publishing  
advertise@innovativepublishing.com  
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## EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In 1968, Whitney M. Young Jr., head of the Urban League, gave the keynote address at the AIA Convention. In that speech, he challenged the AIA to address issues of social responsibility and diversity within the profession. That speech was given 50 years ago. Much has changed in the world since that speech, and we must ask ourselves “How has the AIA and architectural profession advanced in respect to social responsibility and diversity in 50 years?” In this issue of the magazine, we will feature many of our members who are pushing the bar forward in equity and social responsibility.

This year, you will see a coordinated effort at AIA Chicago to address equity, diversity and inclusion. We are thrilled to announce the formation of the AIA Chicago Equity Roundtable, chaired by our board member Patricia Saldaña Natke, FAIA. The roundtable’s initial mission will be to solicit input from chapter members and advise the board and chapter on issues and activities pertaining to equity, diversity and inclusion at AIA Chicago. The roundtable will listen, engage

in discourse but, most importantly, will initiate positive change. Please stay tuned for updates as we will be seeking your input and participation on programs and outreach.

Chicago is renowned for its architecture, and it will soon become home to the highly anticipated Barack Obama Presidential Center. We’ll learn about the talented Chicago architects and architect-trained artists who are designing the exhibition spaces. We’ll also hear from four women architects who have blazed the trail to firm leadership.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed creating it. Please keep your eye out and participate in a couple of surveys that will assist us in benchmarking where we stand on issues of equity. The AIA Equity by Design 2018 survey was issued in mid-February, and the Architecture Education Network survey will follow later in the spring.

Catherine Baker, AIA



*Chicago Architect*, the primary outreach tool of AIA Chicago, is published six times a year as an authoritative resource for architects, the larger design community and the public about architecture and related issues of interest to Chicago architects. The magazine communicates industry trends, the value of high-quality design and the role of AIA Chicago and its members in the world of architecture.

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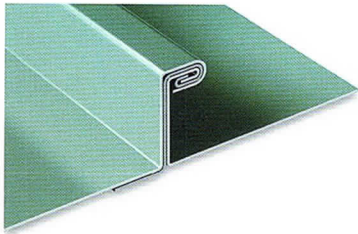
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FOUR ARCHITECTS DISCUSS THEIR  
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PHOTO CREDIT: KAI L. BROWN



PHOTO CREDIT: DARRIS LEE HARRIS

### ON THE COVER

#### **Diversity by Design**

Oswaldo Ortega, AIA, leads students in an exercise at the Project Pipeline summer camp.

Photo credit: Kai L. Brown



OUR PREVIOUS ISSUE  
is available to view digitally  
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# TEACHING EMPATHY

BY EDWARD KEEGAN, AIA

A version of this article originally appeared in the January online edition of Architect magazine.

Perhaps you've seen University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) professor Kathryn Anthony and her class on one of their field trips to Chicago — or you haven't. The visit is an important component of the course, but she explained, "We visit women architects, architects of color — anybody who's not a white, male architect."

Her most recent book represents the interests that have driven her pedagogy for more than three decades — *Defined by Design: The Surprising Power of Hidden Gender, Age and Body Bias in Everyday Products and Places*. She's taught the yearly seminar on gender, race and ethnicity since 1991. While the initial classes were almost exclusively women, "There was maybe one brave male architecture student," Anthony recalled. She told him, "If you're feeling strange, that's good. You'll be empathetic." Last fall's edition had 15 students, including four men, which is now the average.

Topics evolve, as she weaves world and political events into the course's content. Students studied the spatial interactions and spatial behaviors of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential debates, and they researched previous encounters dating back to JFK and Nixon in 1960. Two students from a



ARCHITECTURE/GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES SEMINAR ON GENDER AND RACE IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE WITH ILLINOIS SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE ALUMNA JEANNE GANG, FAIA

Munich school looked at the design of contemporary refugee camps in Germany, and their translation of materials from German opened the topic to an English-speaking audience. Another German student recently took the class on her year abroad in the United States. "I came here because of this class," she told Anthony. "I can't believe it, but this isn't offered elsewhere."

**"WE VISIT WOMEN ARCHITECTS, ARCHITECTS OF COLOR — ANYBODY WHO'S NOT A WHITE, MALE ARCHITECT."**

— KATHRYN ANTHONY, UIUC PROFESSOR

Research can be driven by students examining personal spatial experiences. Last semester, a woman who had attended an HBCU in Tennessee told Anthony of the spatial difficulties she had

navigating as a tuba player in the school's band. This led to a survey on social media that allowed her to gather information from 90 students in just two days. And the class has been an incubator for future



ARCHITECTURE/GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES SEMINAR AT ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO WITH ILLINOIS SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE ALUMNA DINA GRIFFIN, FAIA



ARCHITECTURE/GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES SEMINAR POSING FOR "THE BIG SQUAT" ON NOVEMBER 19 WORLD TOILET DAY



ARCHITECTURE/GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES SEMINAR CHICAGO FIELD TRIP



research. Meltem Gürel wrote about gender in architectural history texts, eventually expanding that paper with Anthony for publication in the *Journal of Architectural Education*. Following graduation, Gürel became the founding chair of the Department of Architecture at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey (where six of the 10 full-time faculty are women).

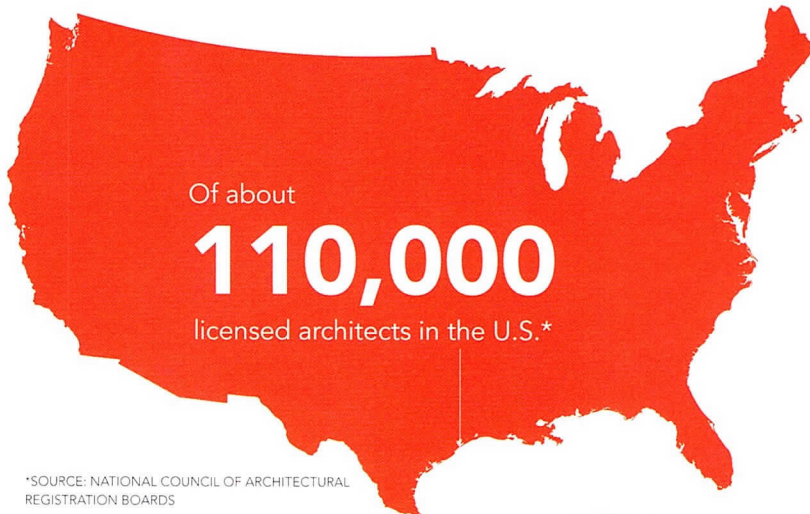
The class has clearly been successful, and Anthony noted that it's become more diverse in the last five years. "There's a timeliness to these issues," she said. And she continues to

mentor the students long after they leave the comfortable confines of Urbana-Champaign through the networks she has created. Anthony uses

Facebook groups for her recent classes to keep building community with past students, but she notes that she still keeps in touch with her own classmates,

who she met long before social media. "It's important to keep good friends," she said — which seems like good advice for everybody. **CA**

# AIA CHICAGO EQUITY ROUNDTABLE



\*SOURCE: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURAL REGISTRATION BOARDS



of surveyed **women of color** think people of color are very underrepresented\*



of surveyed **white women** think people of color are very underrepresented\*

\*SOURCE: "DIVERSITY IN THE PROFESSION OF ARCHITECTURE" NATIONAL AIA, 2016

Fifty years ago, notable civil rights activist and head of the National Urban League Whitney Young Jr. called upon the AIA and its membership to take a stand against segregation, both inside and outside of the profession. He observed the lack of diversity in the AIA audience, and importantly, he called out the profession for its ongoing complicity in creating “vertical slums” that characterized public housing. He indicted architects for their participation (willful or not) in the planning of segregated cities.

His speech was startling but maintained a tone of optimism. “It took a great deal of skill and creativity and imagination to build the kind of situation we have,” he said, “and it is going to take skill and imagination and creativity to change it. We are going to have to have people as committed to doing the right thing, to inclusiveness, as we have in the past to exclusiveness.”

Fifty years later, the field is addressing diversity from within as a means to address Young’s assertion of architects’ “thunderous silence” toward the tragic results of poor city building. National AIA convened an Equity in Architecture Commission in 2015 to address growing concerns about disproportionate representation of minority groups (including women) in the field. The results of their study

were released in January 2017, and offered several recommendations to the profession on how to better cultivate and retain diversity. Today, AIA Chicago is launching its own group — the Equity Roundtable — to address these recommendations in our local market.

Catherine Baker, AIA, AIA Chicago board president, has been driving the Equity Roundtable to fruition. “The

AIA National recommendations are good, and it is a starting point,” she said. “But what we need to do now is address these recommendations on a local level.”

The group has been assembled by Baker and AIA Board Director Patricia Saldaña Natke, FAIA, who will chair the roundtable and will be working toward understanding how the AIA’s recommendations can be

applied in Chicago's market, and where there may be gaps. "In comparison to national averages, Chicago's chapter is quite diverse," Baker said. "But we need to create tools, incentives and goals to help firms look inward to see where they are lacking and what they can do to remedy it." The group will meet quarterly to create tangible opportunities for firm self-assessment and guides to best practices.

Young's indictment of architecture is still quite relevant, as he discusses the link between a majority-white profession and a willful ignorance of issues, affliction, and policy decisions that primarily affect people of color. For example, in August 2017, the United States gained its 400th African-American, female, licensed architect. As of today, black women represent just 0.3 percent of about 110,000 licensed architects in the United States. The 2010 U.S. census reports that Chicago's population is 32 percent African-American — a major gap in representation.

While the profession's racial, ethnic and gender makeup does not match that of the general public, it becomes increasingly difficult to serve these populations and educate them on the process of creating buildings in these neighborhoods. "Buildings don't just get built, they get financed," Baker said. "If we are able to reach kids as early as kindergarten, teach them about design throughout their educa-

**"WE'RE IN THE LISTENING PHASE RIGHT NOW. BUT IT IS THE FIRST STEP. CURRENTLY, OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PROFESSION ARE STATIC WITHOUT DIVERSITY. WE NEED TO POOL THE TALENTS OF EVERYONE TO MOVE THE PROFESSION FORWARD."**

— CATHERINE BAKER, AIA. AIA CHICAGO BOARD PRESIDENT

tion and inspire them to enter the practice, they will be more likely to educate their communities on the complexities of building in their neighborhood and provide them with a vocabulary to be critical of buildings and those processes."

The Equity Roundtable will address education at the K-12 level with the hopes of creating a new, more diverse generation of architects. They will also listen closely to minority architects practicing today to address how to better provide support throughout their careers. They may also look into outside professions for innovations and anecdotes. "We're in the listening phase right now," Baker said, "but it is the first step. Currently, our built environment and profession are static without diversity. We need to pool the talents of everyone to move the profession forward." CA



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EXHIBITION DESIGN TEAM LED BY RALPH APPELBAUM ASSOCIATES. (L TO R) RALPH APPELBAUM, AMANDA WILLIAMS, HANS NEUBERT, LARNIES BOWEN, ANDRES L. HERNANDEZ, SHERINE KAZIM, NORMAN TEAGUE, RENATA GRAW, JEN PARK, EVELYN REILLY, CARLOS RODRIGUEZ, MONICA CHADHA, CARLIN WRAGG, AKI CARPENTER, LUKA KITO, MELANIE IDE. NOT PICTURED: MARY BETH BYRNES, RACHEL GERSHMAN.



expertise to the table: Chadha, an architect who works with a hybrid practice at the intersection of design, social justice and economic development; Park, a skilled project manager and architect; Graw, an award-winning graphic designer; Teague, a designer, fabricator and educator who focuses on urban complexities; Williams, an artist focusing on color and architectural material reuse; and Hernandez, an arts educator whose work has discussed public spaces, social justice, the civil rights movement and more.

The team is responsible for engaging with community crucial to informing the design process, one of which took place over Martin Luther King Day in January 2018. The participatory, interactive meeting served as an opportunity to meet the team, hear about the planning for the museum from Dr. Louise Bernard (director, Museum of the Obama Presidential Center) and invite the public to share thoughts and ideas.

According to the team, ongoing meetings and “incubators” through the design process will also help foster new paradigms for community planning and provide opportunities for skills-training sessions. “Emphasizing public interactions allows us to be open about the process, to

There has been a plethora of news and noise surrounding the incoming Barack Obama Presidential Center’s development. While much of the controversy surrounding the campus location and exterior design continues to engage Chicagoans, a small but diverse team of interdisciplinary architects, designers, content developers, educators, artists and more are working hard to produce the OPC’s future exhibitions.

Led by Ralph Appelbaum and Associates — the firm that also led exhibition design at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture — the team includes a crew of Chicago-

based practitioners who are managing a boots-on-the-ground, community-oriented design process that gives a voice to Chicago’s diverse and impassioned communities.

The local team includes Monica Chadha, AIA; Jennifer Park, AIA; Renata Graw; Norman Teague; Amanda Williams; and Andres L. Hernandez, Assoc. AIA. Each individual brings his or her own set of skills and

deliver not just an exhibit design but a design process," Teague said. The final result will be what he calls "an interpretive experience."

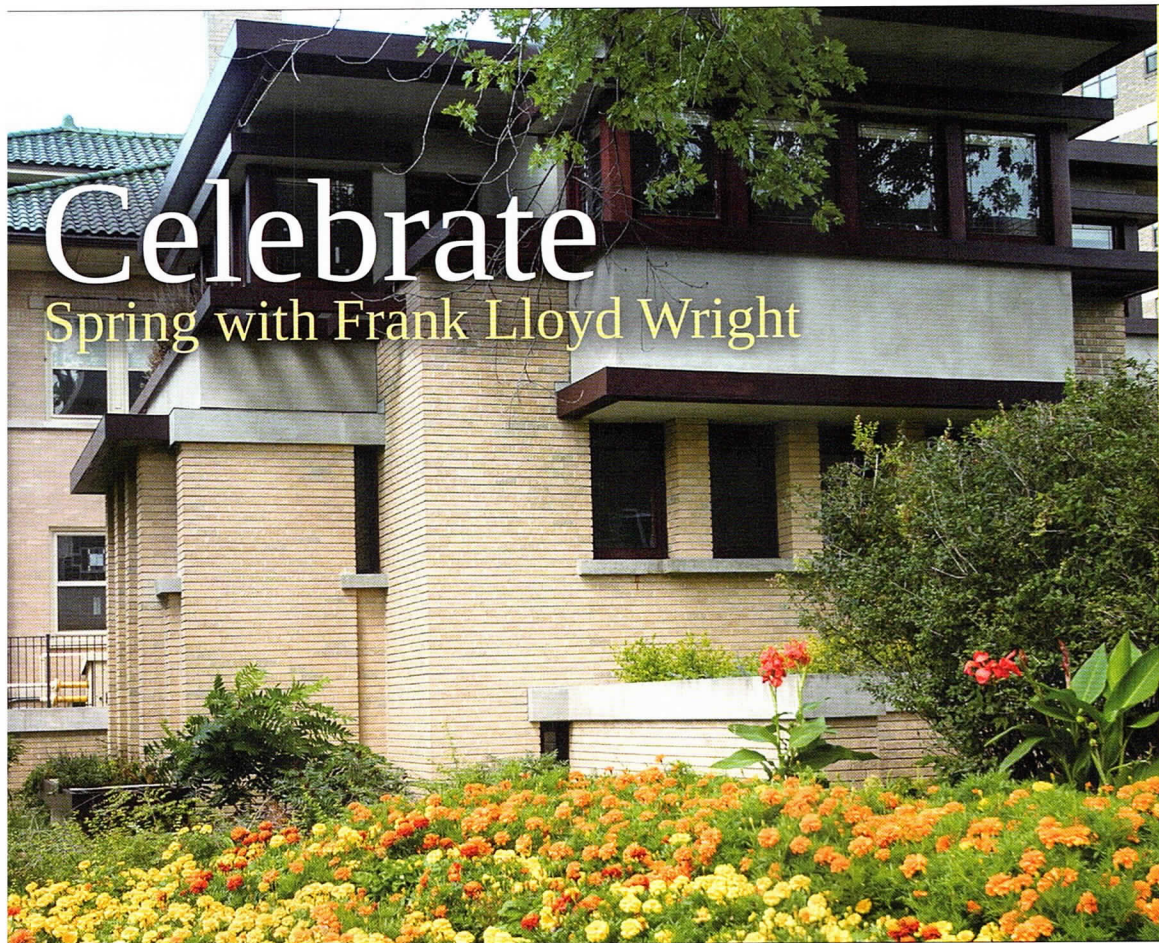
Although the design process will yield a robust and comprehensive exhibition of documents, artifacts and ephemera

from the 44th presidency, by involving the public in these discourses, the team has bigger goals than just a display. According to Aki Carpenter, design director at Appelbaum, one of the main goals of the exhibits is to inspire people to action: "It's about connecting

history to action and providing tools for empowerment," she said.

The team's diversity, both of practice and in representation, is not overlooked by the public. "We want the public to see themselves in this team," Chadha said. Park noted that,

during the MLK Day event, one participant commented on how "amazing and atypical" it was to see a team led by women and people of color. "It truly is a project like no other!" exclaimed Chadha; a fitting sentiment for a team that is truly one-of-a-kind. **CA**



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In addition to administering annual awards and scholarship programs for emerging professionals such as the Martin Roche Travel Scholarship and the Dubin Family Young Architect Award, the AIA Chicago Foundation administers the Architects in Schools Program, developed by AIA Chicago's Community Interface Committee. The foundation also completed the influential Tiny Homes Design Competition to develop another alternative housing firm to serve homeless young Chicagoans, and supported the production of publications, including the *AIA Guide to Chicago*, and *John Vinci: Life and Landmarks*, by Robert Sharoff with photographs by William Zbaren. In 2019, the AIA Chicago Foundation will introduce a diversity scholarship program for students attending local schools of architecture.

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## NEOCON 2018 KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CAROL ROSS BARNEY, FAIA

NeoCon is just around the corner: June 11-13, 2018, at the Merchandise Mart. Carol Ross Barney will present the Day 3 Keynote Address, sponsored by AIA Chicago.

**Future Cities – Creating Livable Environments, Carol Ross Barney, Founder and Design Principal, Ross Barney Architects**

**Wednesday, June 13 | 9:30 a.m.**

**NeoCon Theater, 19th Floor, The Mart**





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**May 17, 2018 | 5:30-8:30 p.m.**

**Architectural Artifacts, 4325 N. Ravenswood Avenue**

**FREE and open to the public**

Spend the evening with more than 800 architects, designers and architecture enthusiasts while perusing an exhibit of 2018 Small Project Awards submissions. Award winners will be recognized in a short program. Voting for the Pella Crafted Luxury People's Choice Award goes live April 17 — vote for your favorite project at [aiachicago.org](http://aiachicago.org).

## A NEW ADDITION TO AIA CHICAGO MADE

Please welcome a set of lamps designed by Young Hee Han, AIA, and Mark Bruzan, AIA, of Han Bruzan Studio. Displayed lamps include:

**Mysteron:** The Mysteron table lamp is a mad scientist's project conjuring a mysterious aura. Its profile suggests a hidden purpose: Energy of the massive light of captured stars.

**Cyl-Flora:** The Cyl-Flora table lamp employs a composition of metal screen fabric applied with real flower blossoms. In this fixture, figures of yellow, forsythia blossoms are revealed through both direct glimpses and as projections onto translucent panels which provide the composition with a theatrical expression.

**Wrap:** This Wrap table lamp's organic geometry is accentuated by special, two-toned pigment. The shade's gentle form is set in stark counterpoint to the industrial aesthetic of the steel stem and cast-concrete base.

Objects are on view in AIA Chicago's reception and cafe, 35 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 250, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday through March.



## AIA '18: THE AIA CONFERENCE ON ARCHITECTURE

The national Conference on Architecture takes place in New York City on June 20-23, 2018. AIA Chicago will be placing a Call for Delegates shortly. If you are interested in being a delegate, you will be required to attend one of two short training sessions taking place one month prior to the conference. Stay tuned for more information. To get registered for AIA '18, visit [www.conferenceonarchitecture.com](http://www.conferenceonarchitecture.com). **CA**



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info@aiachicago.org

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM ROSSITER



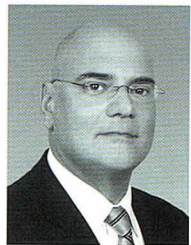
HOK designed the new Michigan Consumers Credit Union headquarters in Kalamazoo, Michigan; the new facility opened in early 2018. The design emphasizes natural influences and values amenities and personal wellness.



**Carolina Lopez, AIA, LEED AP**, has been promoted to vice president of SmithGroupJJR's Chicago office.



**Patrick Peterson, PLA, CDT, SITES AP, LEED Green Associate**, has joined site design group, Ltd. (site) as the director of construction administration. **Jenna Jones, ASLA, LEED Green Associate**, has been promoted to director of marketing and communications at site.



**Alex Pappas, AIA**, has joined Carl Walker, a division of WGI as the senior business development manager in their Chicago office.

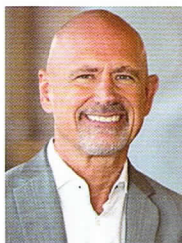
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Goettsch Partners' 150 North Riverside won Project of the Year and Best Project in the Office/Retail/Mixed-Use category for the 2017 Best Projects Awards by *ENR Midwest*. Their Zurich North American Headquarters won Best Project in the Green Projects Category.



Legat Architects designed renovations to transform classrooms and offices into a new Student Center at Oakton Community College's Des Plaines, Illinois, campus.



**George Halik, AIA**, formerly a principal and owner at Booth Hansen, has joined The Lamar Johnson Collaborative as a principal.



**Linda Kanoski, AIA, LEED AP**, has joined OKW Architects as managing director of interior architecture and will be leading the firm's expansion of its interiors practice. Managing Associate **Mark Kluemper, AIA**, has been promoted to managing director.



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[info@aiachicago.org](mailto:info@aiachicago.org)



**JJ Tang, FAIA**, led the HDR design team that developed a highly secure, technically sophisticated headquarters for the U.S. government in Africa. The story of how the design team approached security, functionality, sustainability and constructability in the extremes of the African desert was featured in the recent issue of *The Military Engineer* magazine.



Hirsch Associates LLC will become Hirsch-MPG LLC, with **Andrew Myren, AIA**; **Richard Parks, AIA**; and **David Genc, AIA**, joining **Howard Hirsch, AIA**, founder, as partners of the new firm.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHEN ZHONGHAI



**Goettsch Partners'** Rosewood Sanya hotel opened in 2017. The project is the final component of a new hospitality complex on Hainan Island in Sanya, China.



**Perkins+Will** has designed the new headquarters of Skender Construction, one of the largest corporate interiors contractors in the country, located in a repurposed parking garage in Fulton Market.

ALL IMAGES ARE COURTESY OF THE FIRM, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. LEED AP STATUS IS INDICATED ONLY IF REPORTED BY THE FIRM.

PHOTO CREDIT: TOM HARRIS, TOM HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY



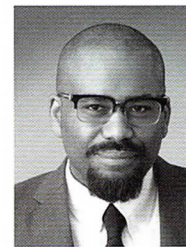
**Kuklinski+Rappe Architects'** 2017 Small Project Award winner, Courtyard Home was included in the recently published, *The American House: 100 Contemporary Homes*. The book includes several other AIA Chicago firms: Searl Lamaster Howe's Harbert Cottage and Asbury Residence; Cohen & Hacker's Contextual House; and Thomas Roszak Architectures' 7RR Eco-Home.



**Ware Malcomb's** Chicago office has been named Design Firm of the Year at the 2017 Awards for Excellence held by the NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association's Chicago Chapter.



**Legat Architects** has acquired Columbus, Ohio-based Legat Kingscott. The Columbus location will become Legat Architects' fifth Midwestern studio. Pictured is the Kent State University Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center (New Philadelphia, Ohio), designed by the Columbus studio.



**Moses Scott, Assoc. AIA**, has joined Goettsch Partners as the director of digital practice, based in the Chicago office.



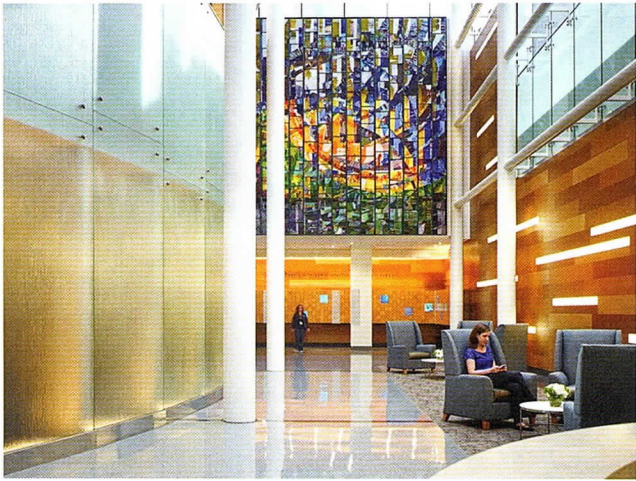
**Mark Schwamel, AIA**, is now principal of design at Unispace's Chicago office.



**Lindsey Peckinpaugh, AIA**, is joining Perkins+Will as principal and leader of its local sports, recreation and entertainment practice.



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Stantec Architecture's work with Mary Bird Perkins – Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Center earned *Healthcare Design* magazine's Readers' Choice Award in the cancer care category.



Ron Weber, AIA, is now associate at Pappageorge Haymes Partners, promoted recently from senior project architect.



Lamar Johnson, FAIA, and Lisa Johnson have formed The Lamar Johnson Collaborative (LJC). The new Chicago-based architecture, interior design and planning practice is focused on serving commercial and institutional clients and designing projects. Led by principals from Gensler, Booth Hansen and Gary Lee Partners, the LJC team's portfolio includes mixed-use, entertainment, residential, retail, health care and commercial office projects.



WARE MALCOMB

Ware Malcomb has completed the new Purohit Navigation corporate headquarters located at the Willis Tower. The firm provided interior architecture and design services for the project.

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# WE ARE OPENING OUR DOORS

Join us at our Open House and discover which doors we can open for you.

THURSDAY  
**APRIL  
19TH**  
3-7:30PM

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**Please Join Us For This Open House Event | Thursday, April 19th | 3-7:30PM**

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#2

- Semi-covered park
- green space
- Platform connecting 2, 3, and 6
- garden, picnic tables

- community center
- mentoring space
- dance studio
- indoor pool
- food court
- retail

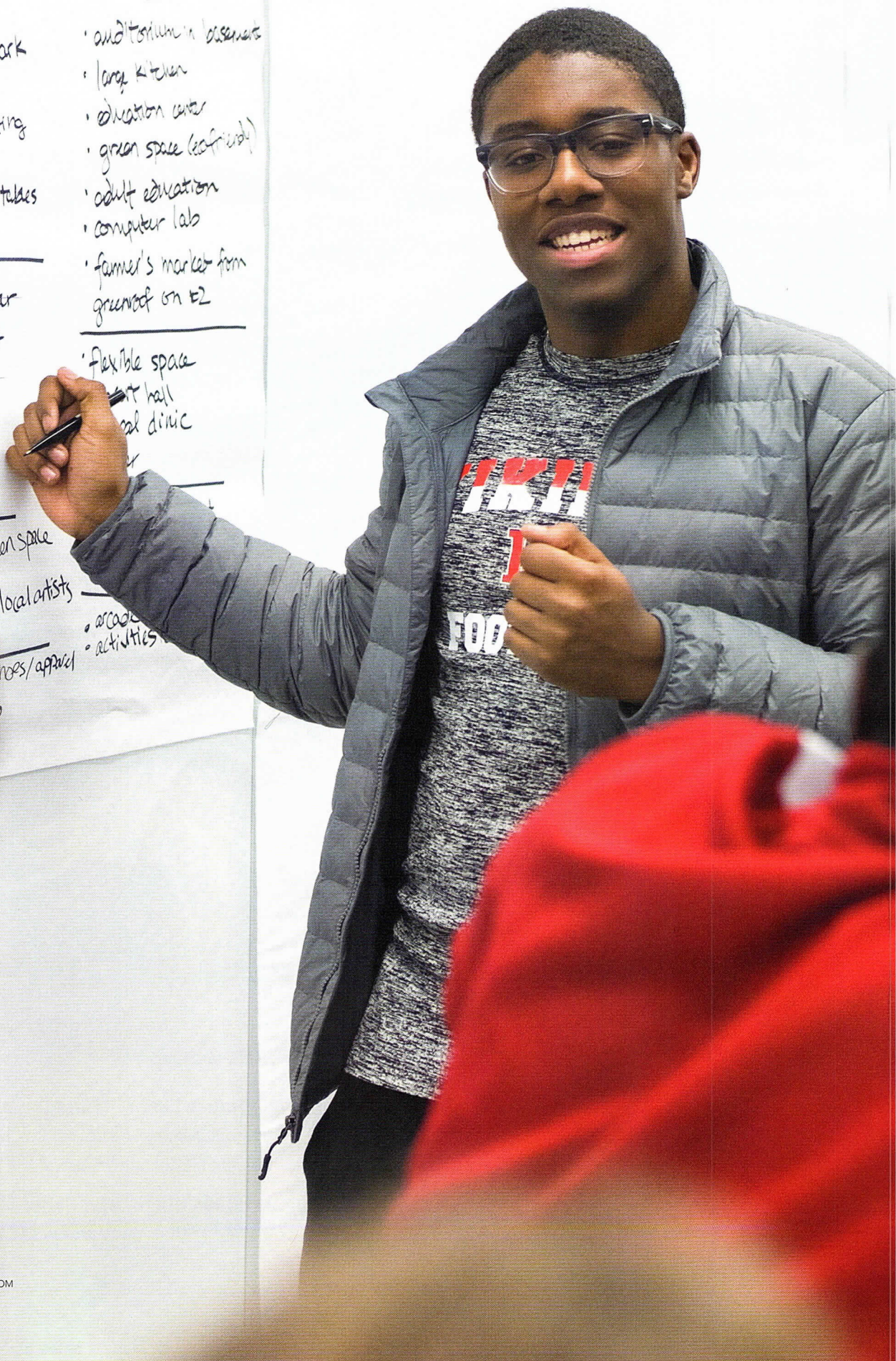
• amphitheater + green space  
 • art, local artists  
 • shoes/apparel  
 #3

#3

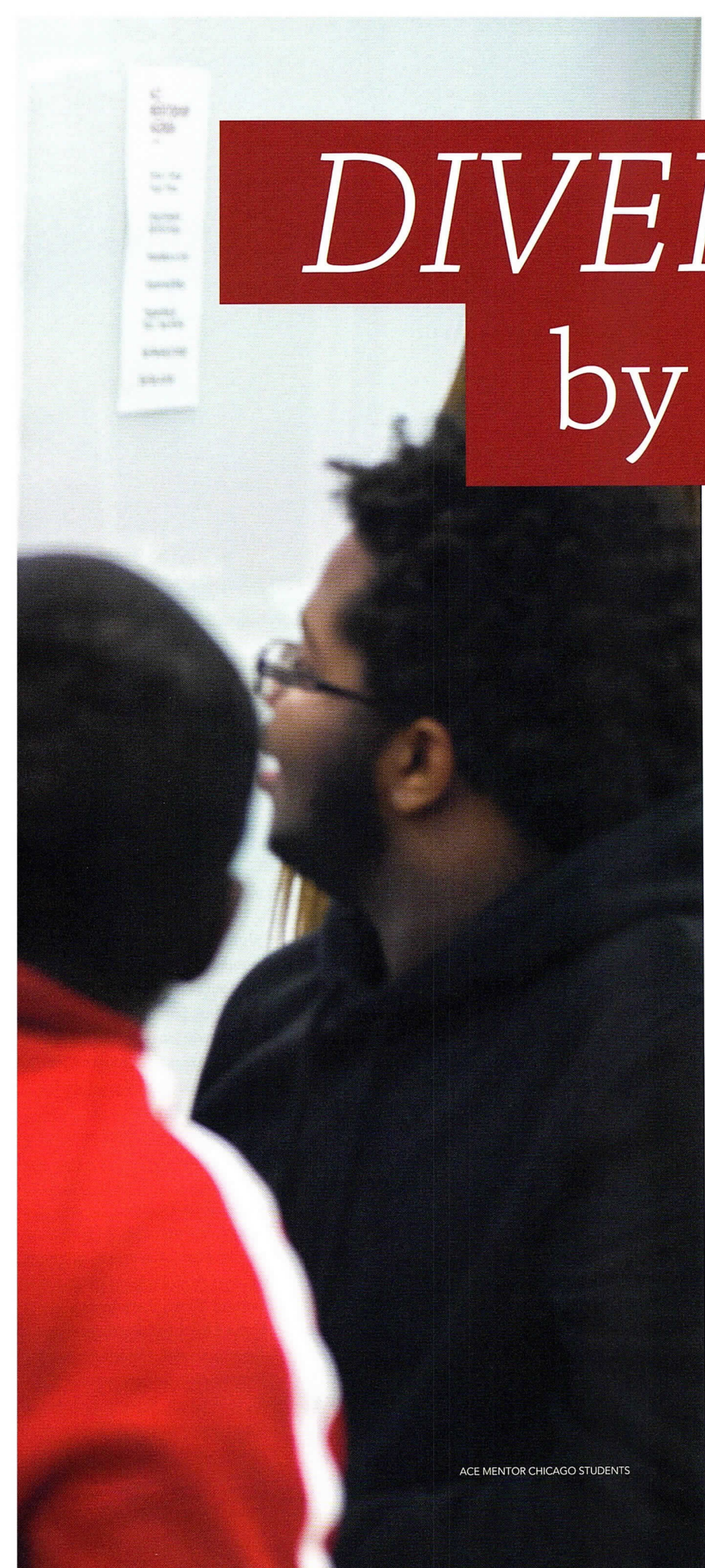
- auditorium in basement
- large kitchen
- education center
- green space (leafy)
- adult education
- computer lab
- farmer's market from green roof on #2

• flexible space  
 • event hall  
 • food court

- arcade
- activities







# DIVERSITY by Design

BY ADESHINA EMMANUEL


**T**he architecture, construction and civil engineering industries have a major diversity problem. Indeed, National Council of Architectural Registration Boards statistics illustrate what most black and brown architects — especially women — find at their firms: few professionals who look like them. Consider that our country has nearly 110,000 licensed architects, and nine out of 10 are white. Eight out of 10 are men. Minorities are about one-third of workers in the construction industry, but only hold 14 percent of management positions, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. About 81 percent of civil engineers are white, and 87 percent are male, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

But in Chicago, professionals are channeling energy toward young people of color with hopes of evening the playing field. The idea is to open doors by exposing youngsters to ACE fields, teaching them basic and technical skills to succeed, helping them navigate their college journey, and supplying them with the network connections to land internships and jobs.

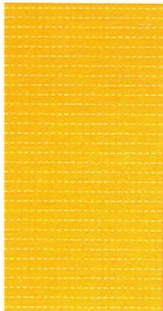

### **Project Pipeline**

Oswaldo Ortega, AIA, a 35-year-old project architect at Gensler who identifies as Afro-Latino, serves as president of the Illinois chapter of the National Organization for Minority Architects (I-NOMA). The New York native got interested in architecture and design from helping his father, a Dominican-American carpenter, do work around the house. But from college to his work at architecture firms, he saw few black and brown faces on the same track. Ortega said I-NOMA “tries to provide a continuous mentorship program from the age of 10 all the way to when he or she takes the [architecture license] exams, so there’s a tie back to a support system


ACE MENTOR CHICAGO STUDENTS



# DEFINED BY



# EXCELLENCE



## FOUR ARCHITECTS DISCUSS THEIR PATHS TO LEADERSHIP



The road to the top is a long one. These four firm leaders reflect on their earliest days in architecture; their dedicated mentors and greatest achievements; their passions and uphill climbs. Their projects have won awards for design excellence, brought communities together and driven global sustainability conversations forward — theirs are stories of ingenuity, collaboration and fortitude.

*Interviews have been edited for length and clarity.*

# DINA GRIFFIN

FAIA, NOMA, IIDA  
PRESIDENT, INTERACTIVE DESIGN  
ARCHITECTS (IDEA)



## **How has mentorship helped shape your career?**

The one person who stands out is Professor Art Kaha at the University of Illinois School of Architecture. Early on, I struggled with drawing and communicating ideas on paper. I had technical abilities, but freehand drawing came hardest to me. My peers, on the other hand, were sketching beautiful, professional-looking ink on paper images.

I approached Professor Kaha and told him that I didn't feel I was at the level of my peers. He told me to give it a year. During that year, we focused together on my weakness, while I continued to enhance my strengths. At the end, I felt strong enough in my artistic abilities to stay in the program. Without Professor Kaha, I would not be an architect.

## **What have been some of your most formative projects?**

We did a small project called Saint Leo Apartments for disabled veterans. Every project goes through value engineering, and one of the first things to be reduced in quality are the finishes. I fought tooth and nail to keep those finishes because I wanted the residents to call this place home. I didn't want their

building to feel like an institution. The residents were so appreciative for treating them (as they called it) "like [they] lived on the Gold Coast." It was that moment that resonated for me; no client, no matter status or title, is any different (or better) than any other client or user.

## **How have you experienced career pinch points?**

Having been raised in the same city where I built my career, I have amassed a great network of support. So I haven't experienced too many of them. But I am sensitive to it, especially for women of color. I'm not sure why our numbers are so low, with only 400-plus black female architects in the nation. The numbers are improving, but that's why I speak at schools, elementary and high schools, to introduce the profession early. When speaking at the university level or at professional engagements, I often tell the story of Professor Kaha. After each event, at least one person has come up to me and said, "that was the reason I left the profession: I didn't speak up; I wish I had done the same."

**I KNEW, IF I STAYED ON THAT PATH, IT WOULD NOT LEAD ME TO WHERE I NEEDED TO BE (IN THE PROFESSION). I NEEDED TO BE THE ONE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.**

## **At your talks, what do you tell young people who are architecture-curious?**

You can't let your career just happen. Advocating for yourself ensures that you're in control of your career path to and through architecture.

## **Can you give an example of this advice in practice?**

Early in my career, I was very good at computers before they were prolific in the profession. One of the major designers in the city wanted to see a "flyby" of a project we were working on. We were in my tiny cubicle — myself, his assistant and the designer. He would ask the assistant, instead of addressing me directly, to show him different views. At that moment, I realized that he did not "see me"; I did not exist to him. Shortly after, I went to my boss and I said I wanted to go out on the construction site to see how buildings are built. If I stayed

in the office, I'd be pigeon-holed as the computer person. That was a trajectory-changing moment. I knew, if I stayed on that path, it would not lead me to where I needed to be (in the profession). I needed to be the one to make it happen.

## **How did you prepare to present the Obama Presidential Center with Barack Obama?**

Every time someone mentions that, my heart starts racing. I found out the night before that I would be center stage with the president, along with Mike Strautmanis from the Foundation! Up until that moment, we had been unable to say anything about the project. So, to be able to look out at my community, see people I know, so many people who went to my high school, it was so great to finally share the project and express how excited I am as a native South Sider to be involved.

# JULIE MICHIELS

AIA, NCARB, LEED AP  
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL, PERKINS+WILL



## ***When did you begin considering architecture as a path to pursue?***

I've always been a creative thinker in both the artistic sense and the problem-solving sense, backed by a good dose of Midwestern practicality. Also, my dad was an electrician, and so somehow the building industry has always been part of my upbringing. It led me into thinking about the building industry. So, when it was time to decide what to pursue for a career, architecture seemed to be a good fit.

## ***Who else influenced your decisions to enter the field?***

My high school drafting teacher was pivotal. He always made an effort to challenge me. He wasn't pushing me but pulling me along with special challenges. I would do those assignments, and he would always up the ante for me. It is a really great way to mentor because most people are going to step up. Roger Stieglitz was his name. I don't think he knows how influential he was to me.

## ***You call yourself a creative problem-solver — how do you maintain that creative energy through tough challenges?***

I always have my eyes and ears open. I'm always connecting the dots between things that might not

be obvious. I am also a contributing editor to *MAS Context*, so the diversity of the contributors to the journal has opened my eyes to new ways of thinking.

If I have a truly sticky design problem, I will sit there and do a series of rapid-fire sketches. Usually something has legs when you get to it.

## ***Did you have to learn to trust yourself to do that type of exercise?***

I struggled with that early in my career. I would sketch, and the sketch wasn't "finished," so I didn't want anyone to see it. I maybe didn't realize how iterative design really is. Also it's pen on paper; nobody's building it yet. I learned to admit that your first idea is not always right but it might be a seed. Until you just go for it, it's never going to come out.

## ***As a woman working in architecture, have you ever experienced moments of professional doubt?***

There were a couple key moments around salary: both times I was applying for a position, as was a male candidate with fewer years of experience than I. Both times, they were offered equal or higher salaries than me. And that stung. I'm an optimistic person. I don't like to go into any situation thinking that it's going to be anything

MICHIELS IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE GREATLY ANTICIPATED CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY AND CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY/NORTHTOWN BRANCH PROJECT THAT COMBINES AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITH A PUBLIC LIBRARY. THE CHILDREN'S AREA (PICTURED) INCLUDES MULTI-FUNCTIONAL FURNISHINGS AND COLORFUL GLASS WINDOWS.



IMAGE CREDIT: PERKINS+WILL

less than fair, and that was a reality check. And only once was I in a position to bring it to somebody's attention. It was recognized and corrected.

I don't define myself as a woman architect. I'm an architect and a whole host of other things that define who I am. I try not to define myself as any single one of those. But I can't neglect the power and presence that those things have.

## ***You've earned a major promotion recently at a relatively young age! What type of environment has helped you thrive and grow?***

On a firm-wide basis, the company invests a lot in its people. There

are programs and trainings that provide the framework for growth: Several years ago, I was awarded an Innovation Incubator grant to study wireless power. I was also accepted into a yearlong program called the Leadership Institute. It's a big commitment and investment on the firm's part that has given me professional tools to grow.

Our office is very thoughtful about people and creating an environment of trust that allows for people to take risks and feel open to share ideas and have candid conversations. There are good outcomes — personal and business-wise — from creating that environment.

# SHARON SAMUELS

AIA, NOMA, LEED AP  
PRINCIPAL AND FOUNDER,  
SOLQUEST DESIGN UNLIMITED, LLC

## **How did architecture first enter your sphere of interest?**

My mom took me to Oak Park to see the houses of Frank Lloyd Wright, and that was the beginning. In high school, I was more interested in fine art, but my parents were dead set on me becoming an engineer. They enrolled me in a pre-engineering program for high school girls at the Illinois Institute of Technology to get me interested in the ideas, but no sale!

## **Tell us about the Boxville project. How did collaboration play a role in its success?**

One of the missions of Urban Juncture, the developer of Boxville, is to improve the quality of experience for the growing bicycle community in Bronzeville. They were already organizing bicycle tours and the idea of providing bike maintenance came about to have a space that could be established and maintained with minimal cost and labor: by using shipping containers. Fast forward four years and several entrepreneurs approached Urban Juncture and posed the question: What else could shipping containers be utilized for?

Boxville is definitely a project that is being built on collaboration. The team consists of various stakeholders that bring specific skills and knowl-

edge to the group, including community members, business owners, contractors, architects and designers. We are connected by a common thread of wanting to improve the economic and social conditions of the neighborhoods we live in and serve.

## **How can architects help play a role in developing communities?**

Architects can play a vital role in developing communities by finding something they are passionate about, whether that is entrepreneurship, education or social issues, and applying their skills and knowledge to help make the situation better. There are various ways architects can contribute beyond just building stock. For example, we designed a space for the Connect South Shore Arts Festival. We were challenged with taking a vacant corner commercial space and turning it into a vibrant artist market and performance venue. Once it was complete, the result was even better than expected — we ignited the conversation around the revitalization of a commercial corridor.

## **Could you talk about your career “pinch points” and how you navigated them?**

I have had quite a few career pinch points. In my sophomore year of



BOXVILLE UTILIZES USED SHIPPING CONTAINERS TO ENLIVEN A BRONZEVILLE STREET CORNER.



PHOTO CREDIT: SOREN SPICKNALL

architecture school, I almost didn't continue, but thanks to a few angels in my corner who advised me not to give up, I stayed and finished. More of those pivotal moments have happened throughout my career, such as being laid off at the height of the 2008 recession and struggling to pass that one test in the ARE that somehow kept tricking me up. I have navigated them all by staying focused on my goal of becoming an architect and having the grit and passion to keep moving.

## **What advice would you give to young people looking to pursue a career in architecture or design — particularly, to young women or people of color — groups that are underrepresented in the field?**

Realize this one hard truth: The world owes you nothing. You only owe yourself to do the best you can with what you have every single day. With that and perseverance, the world will be forced to take you seriously and not look away.

# XUAN FU

AIA  
MANAGING PARTNER, SKIDMORE,  
OWINGS & MERRILL LLP

**Can you walk me through your career and how you got to the position you are in today? Could you discuss how mentorship may have had an impact on your career?**

My architectural career began in 1986, when I started working for the Beijing Institute of Architecture Design & Research on the Beijing Asian Games Village project.

In 1989, during the Chinese Economic Reform, I was eager to see the outside world. I left China and went to grad school at Ball State University. In 1990, I got a summer internship at SOM.

I graduated in the 1991 recession, when few architecture firms were hiring. By good fortune, I was hired by Youngman & Company, a six-person firm. There I learned the architect's different responsibilities in each phase of design.

In 1992, I worked in interior design at VOA and learned to see interior spaces from the occupants' point of view and to form design concepts from inside out.

In 1994, I was hired by SOM to work on Shanghai's landmark Jin Mao Tower, and began my 25-year career, growing from technical architect, to new business development, to project manager, to partner. I worked on a variety of projects in the United States, Asia, Russia and the United

Kingdom, always learning. I had to overcome working with different time zones, studying a second language, and taking care of my two kids. Chinese say "Tian Dao Chou Qin" — hard work will always be rewarded.

I have been fortunate to receive unwavering guidance from the most knowledgeable mentors in design and management. Jeff McCarthy, FAIA, my primary mentor, taught me how to aggressively strive instead of waiting passively, how to continuously improve and refine during the process of exploration, and most importantly, to deliver what has been promised while seeking win-win situations for all involved. I learned to break the box from Phil Enquist, FAIA, and to see with no boundaries, and that to transform anything takes guts and talent.

The rapid development of the entire world, especially China, played a crucial role in my success. There is a Chinese proverb: "Tian Shi, Di Li, Ren He" — the right time, the right place and the right people.

**I'd like to hear more about your passion for sustainability. What are the challenges you face communicating the needs for sustainability on specific projects?**

SOM has a long tradition of pursuing high performance design to



A RENDERING OF KUNMING WUJIABA AND ITS PLANNED ENVIRONMENTAL PARK

IMAGE COURTESY OF SOM



achieve energy savings, water conservation and landscape integration on every project. Our view of sustainability is not project specific, but how that project folds into a larger mission of providing opportunity for future generations. All people should have the opportunity to live in clean, compact cities with healthful and flexible spaces to work and play.

Our recent project Kunming Wujiaba is an example. Rather than converting all the available space of a former airport for development, as the client requested, we proposed designing half the area as an environmental park, to provide lasting benefit to the people of a city with little open space. This large Central Park for Kunming was also designed for natural stormwater management in this rapidly growing, flood-prone city.

Innovative technologies require time and people willing to struggle

together to achieve common goals. Frequently clients have great pressure to deliver a building. Through careful collaboration and mutual compromise, a more sustainable end product can be realized than what they thought at the outset.

**What advice would you give young people looking to pursue a career in architecture or design?**

Work your career with passion, and work hard! Be modest so you can learn from others, and later on, help others seeking knowledge. Don't wait for opportunity, plan your life and focus on the most important thing you believe in. Be open to think outside of the box; team up with others, and you can always learn from the person next to you, regardless of their title. Knowledge and courage can remain part of you, so believe in yourself and never give up. **CA**



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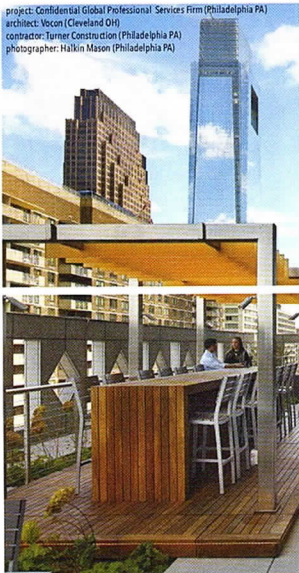
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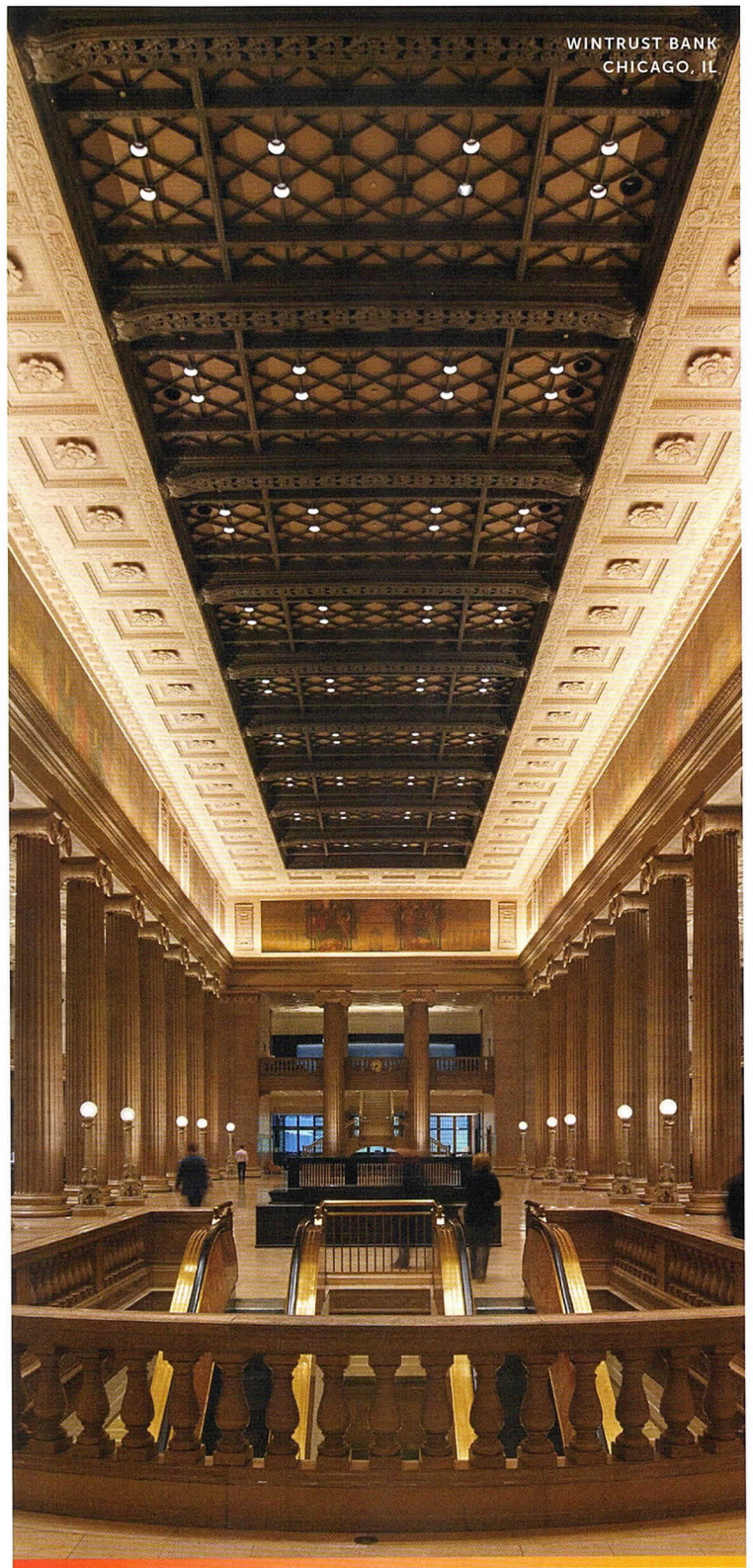
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# SOLAR ENERGY IN ILLINOIS

## IT'S ABOUT TO BOOM. GET READY

Consumer demand for solar energy has gone up as fast as the price has gone down — at a record-breaking pace. In Illinois, costs have dropped 55 percent in the past five years, yet some still wonder — is solar a good choice in the overcast Midwest?

Although cloud cover reduces solar energy production in the Midwest, cost-effectiveness is determined by financial incentives — NOT cloudiness. In Illinois, the solar market is strong and on the verge of booming in Illinois. Here are some facts to know about solar in Illinois:

1. Illinois has a strong net-metering policy! Normally, utility meters just measure the amount of energy you take from the grid. Illinois' net-metering policy allows solar energy system owners to get credit for the electricity they put back into the grid. That is, investor-owned utilities buy your excess electricity at the same rate they charge you — reducing your electric bill.
2. Electricity companies are mandated to buy a certain amount of power from renewable sources. Therefore, utility companies must obtain renewable energy certificates (RECs), which prove they have either produced renewable electricity themselves or paid someone who is producing renewable electricity for the right to "count" that electricity toward their mandated goals.
3. The Solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC) allows residential and commercial solar energy system owners to recoup a good part of the system cost by reducing their federal tax bill by 30 percent.
4. Business owners can further reduce their tax bill by taking accelerated depreciation on their qualifying solar energy equipment for one year, helping recover the cost of solar sooner.
5. Thanks to the recently passed Future Energy Jobs Act, significant utility company incentives are coming (mid-2018) and are expected



Owners of solar PV systems sell their RECs to utility companies and earn hundreds or thousands of dollars each year (depending on their system size).

to reduce the overall cost of installing solar.

### **Solar lowers costs, increases property value, benefits clients/community**

Research shows homebuyers are willing to pay more for homes with solar energy systems. Additionally, your community benefits from cleaner air, lower grid usage, increased clean-energy jobs and energy independence.

### **Existing buildings are good candidates for solar, but new construction is best**

Incorporating solar PV into new construction lowers the upfront costs and allows for the inclusion of solar-friendly factors, such as appropriately sized service panels. PV panels can be designed into canopies, façade

panels, art installations and more. When considered during the design phase, standard-sized PV panels can be utilized rather than custom-made panels, greatly lowering costs.

Even if clients don't opt for solar now, designing "solar-ready" buildings makes future solar installation easier and cheaper.

### **Learn More March 22 and Earn 6.5 AIA LU/HSW**

A new accredited course for designers, co-hosted by AIA Chicago, debuts in Chicago, March 22. It introduces design considerations for incorporating solar PV into buildings, how to speak with clients about the benefits, available financial incentives and more. Register: <http://bcapcodes.org/beyond-code-portal/sunshot/register/>. **CA**



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**Chicago office:**  
135 South LaSalle Street  
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