

Chicago Architect

AIA Chicago // 2023 Dubin Family Young Architect Award



**Breah Page, AIA,
2023 Dubin Family
Young Architect
Award Recipient // 26**

aiachicago.org

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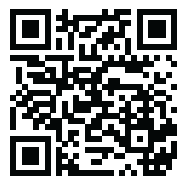
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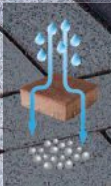
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Chicago Architect, the primary outreach tool of AIA Chicago, is published four times a year as an authoritative resource for architects, the larger design community, and the public about architecture and related issues of interest to Chicago architects. 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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Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to a new year of *Chicago Architect* magazine. It's an incredible honor to serve as president of AIA Chicago; the ninth woman to hold this position in the organization's 154-year history. My sincere thanks to Drew Deering, AIA, for his leadership in 2022.

Our 2023 AIA Chicago chapter Board of Directors, the AIA Chicago Foundation Board of Trustees, and the staff enthusiastically kicked off the new year with a planning retreat. As the chapter begins the final year of our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan — the first one in 25 years — we gathered to map out the year ahead and check in on the big goals. We're excited by the meaningful progress we've made over the past two years of the plan. We also recognize that the work of creating a more inclusive profession, being a leading voice on designing for a changing climate, and advocating for our members to the public does not end.

With an eye toward those goals and wider representation on important issues in this architectural community, we are creating a new editorial committee for *Chicago Architect* magazine and AIA Chicago's other communication channels. This committee will propose and advise on content and topics that matter most to you. We'd like *your* voice at the table and are assembling a group of 10-12 people — both members and nonmembers in various communities and circles. Details can be found on page 12 in the Chapter Report, and we hope you'll consider applying.

In this issue we celebrate Breah Page, AIA, the 2023 Dubin Family Young Architect Award recipient. The award, administered through the AIA Chicago Foundation with a prize given through the generosity of his family, is named in honor of 1971 AIA Chicago president, the late M. David Dubin, FAIA. Breah's commitment to community-centered development, adaptive reuse, and historic preservation projects, and her mentorship of teens interested in architecture, make her an exceptional honoree.

Last fall, the Board of Directors named Ralph Johnson, FAIA, as the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award winner. In 1983, Ralph — along with Nicholas Weingarten, AIA — was the very first recipient of the chapter's Young Architect Award.

In celebration of both Breah and Ralph, I hope you will join us on Thursday, April 20, at Perkins&Will for a special conversation we're calling "Bookends" as part of our new Third Thursdays series of programming in 2023. We're bringing Breah and Ralph together for a lively evening of conversation — inspired by NPR's Story Corps series — about their career pathways.

Those themes of mentorship, education, professional experience for the next generation, and strategies to diversify the architectural profession continue throughout this issue.

Managing editor Dillon Goodson's article explores two new local initiatives developed by AIA Chicago member firms. Kahler Slater's partnership with schools of architecture upends the traditional studio by embedding cohorts of students within the firm. The new Gensler Apprenticeship Program (GAP) provides an alternative path to licensure and architectural education through a program geared toward high school graduates or those with their GED. It's a radical new model based on a very traditional method of practice and learning.

Finally, writer Annie Howard recaps a thought-provoking program from late 2022 where we brought together authors and architectural critics Blair Kamin and Lee Bey, along with Laurie Petersen, editor of the *AIA Guide to Chicago*. Exploring the themes of public space in Kamin and Bey's new book, *Who is the City For?*, their conversation invites self-reflection for us in the profession of architecture and explores our role in designing a more equitable and sustainable Chicago.

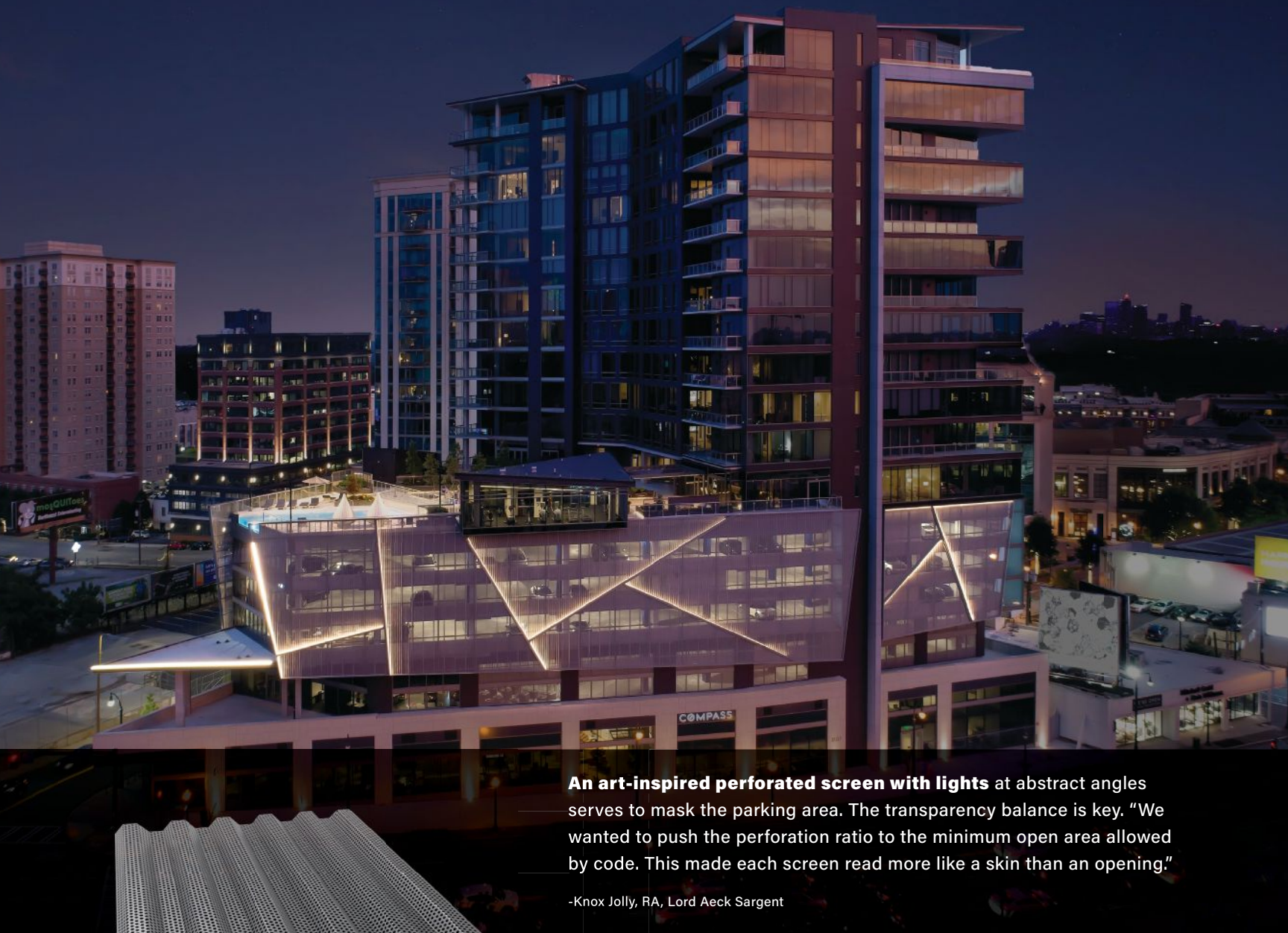
I look forward to crossing paths with you in 2023.

Mindy Viamontes, AIA
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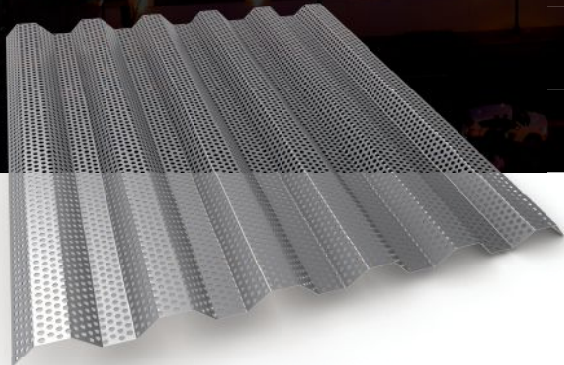
Artful Perforation



An art-inspired perforated screen with lights at abstract angles serves to mask the parking area. The transparency balance is key. "We wanted to push the perforation ratio to the minimum open area allowed by code. This made each screen read more like a skin than an opening."

-Knox Jolly, RA, Lord Aeck Sargent

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ON THE COVER
Breah Page, AIA, 2023 Dubin Family Young Architect Award Recipient.
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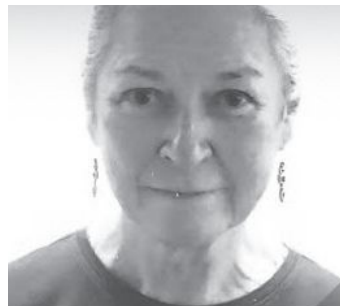
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AIA Chicago Foundation updates

The AIA Chicago Foundation, the independent not-for-profit organization that supports scholarships, grants, awards, and initiatives to strengthen Chicago's architectural community, gratefully received a *Society for American Architecture Historians (SAH) American Architecture and Landscape Field Trip* grant for its 2023 Architecture in Schools (AIS) program. The goal of the grant program is to share the wonders of architecture and landscapes with students whose educational interests in the arts and humanities have been underserved due to racial, social, or economic inequity. This semester, the Foundation's AIS program will take place in Chavez Multicultural Academic Academy and George M. Pullman Elementary.



Lakisha Ann Woods, Emily Grandstaff-Rice, FAIA, Kimberly Dowdell, AIA, NOMA

AIA Chicago Member Kimberly Dowdell, AIA, NOMA, Elected as AIA's 100th President

It's a new year, and that means new leadership at AIA. This year, we are excited to celebrate the historic, all-female leadership team at AIA national, comprising CEO/EVP Lakisha Ann Woods, AIA President Emily Grandstaff-Rice, FAIA, and First Vice President Kimberly Dowdell, AIA, NOMA, an AIA Chicago member and the first female Black president of the Institute.

"I am excited about working with AIA's leadership to raise the public profile of the architect and help AIA members prosper," said Dowdell. "Our role as leaders is to secure the future, and I am interested in leveraging my position with AIA to bolster the recruitment and retention of the very best design talent."

This female leadership is even more profound with our own chapter having a historic, all-female leadership team as well, comprising Executive Director Jen Masengarb, Assoc. AIA, AIA Chicago

President Mindy Viamontes, AIA, and AIA Chicago President-Elect Lynda Dossey, AIA.

AIA Chicago's Involvement at the National Level

AIA Chicago is extremely proud to have a number of members serving in Board leadership positions at the national level, further amplifying the voices of our city and our chapter.

Kimberly Dowdell, AIA, NOMA, 2023 First Vice President, AIA Board of Directors

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Call for Participants in Editorial Committee

With an eye toward our goals and wider representation on important issues in this architectural community, we are creating a new editorial committee for *Chicago Architect* magazine and AIA Chicago's other communication channels. Spearheaded by our editorial staff, comprising Jen Masengarb, Assoc. AIA, Executive Director and editor-in-chief; Dillon Goodson, Affil. AIA Chicago, managing editor; and David Cordaro, Assoc. AIA, Communications Manager and editor, this committee will propose and advise on content and topics that matter most to our members.

We'd like a multitude of voices at the table and are assembling a group of 10-12 people — both members and nonmembers — in various communities and circles.

➔ [Please head to \[AIAChicago.org/EditorialCommittee/Apply\]\(https://www.aiachicago.org/EditorialCommittee/Apply\) for more information and to apply.](https://www.aiachicago.org/EditorialCommittee/Apply)

AIA Chicago Members Ratify Bylaw Change to Allow for More Student Involvement on the Board of Directors

To allow for more engagement with our three local schools of architecture — Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Illinois at Chicago, and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago — the ratified bylaw change effective January 1, 2023, now allows for up to one student director to be nominated from each of the three NAAB-accredited schools of architecture to serve a one-year term, elected by their AIAS chapter membership. The three directors will select one from their number to be the voting representative of the student directors, accounting for one total vote on the Board of Directors.

➔ To read the full bylaws, head to [AIAChicago.org/Bylaws](https://aiachicago.org/Bylaws).



Announcement of AIA Chicago's New Role with Wing Program at UIC, IIT, and SAIC

Founded in late 2019 by Carl Sergio, AIA, at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago with student Derrick McCormick, Assoc. AIA, Wing is a mentorship program that pairs AIA Chicago's Bridge mentees with students at the three Chicago-based schools of architecture. AIA Chicago is now proud to welcome this program into the suite of mentorship and leadership courses offered.

Now in its fourth year, the Wing mentorship pairs 25 students with 25 alumni of the program for a semester-long program that provides students with *guidance* on their studies and career direction; *development* reviews for their studio projects, portfolios, and résumés; *exposure* to what architects really do, in the office and in the field; and *relationships* to aid the transition from academia to the working world.

If you have any questions about Wing, please email membervoices@aiachicago.org.



Kelly Moynihan, AIA; Riya Desai, Assoc. AIA; Sarah Godbee, Affil. AIA Chicago



Ernest Bellamy, Assoc. AIA; Ellita Williams

Holiday Party: Building Together

This past December, AIA Chicago and the AIA Chicago Foundation were thrilled to partner with our friends at Arquitectos, Arquitina, the Chicago Architecture Center, and the Illinois Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (I-NOMA) to celebrate our shared accomplishments from 2022 at our first-ever combined Holiday Party. The event was a night to remember with more than 400 individuals from the architecture community in attendance.

➔ [To view the full photo gallery from the event, head to AIAChicago.org/HolidayParty2022.](https://AIAChicago.org/HolidayParty2022)



AIA Chicago Executive Director, Jen Masengarb, Assoc. AIA, with Chicago Architecture Center President and CEO Eleanor Gorski, AIA



AIA Chicago Foundation Student Award Winners and Scholarship Recipients



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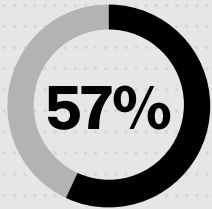
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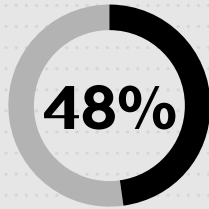
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identify as **female**
(up from 48 percent in 2022)



are **firm owners or executives** (up from 43 percent in 2022) within their offices

FIRM SIZE



Small Firm: 1-9 people (up from 3 people in 2022)



Medium Firm: 10-49 people (down from 6 people in 2022)



Large Firm: 49+ people (up from 9 people in 2022)



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Support Reforms to Energy Savings Contracts (ESCO)

by Stacey Pflingsten, Executive Vice President, AIA Illinois


A priority piece of legislation that AIA Illinois will be leading the charge on this session is to reform Energy Savings Contracts (ESCO). An ESCO, more commonly known as a performance contract, is typically an agreement between a low-income/low-asset public school district and a business to improve the energy efficiency of and reduce maintenance costs for school buildings. The ESCO vendor develops, installs, and arranges for financing the projects. ESCOs are paid from the energy savings and assume the risk if the savings are not achieved.

The existing ESCO law has been abused to bypass the normal public school competitive bidding process by districts that aren't low-income/low-asset and don't need financing. It has also been used for projects that are not actually energy savings.

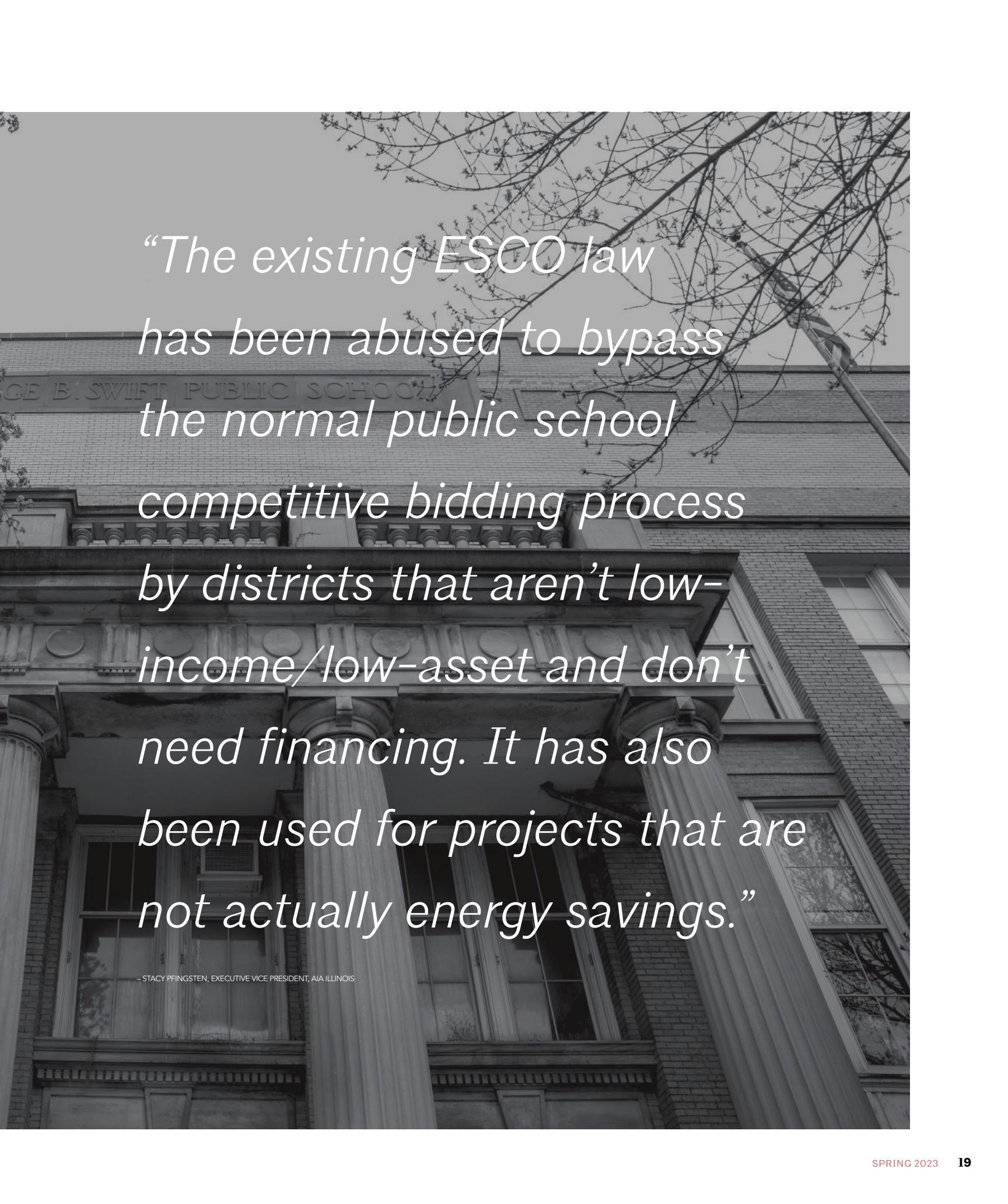
Architects, along with our partners in engineering, construction, landscape architects, and labor, support the ability of school districts to use this delivery method in a responsible manner, but changes have been made to the original legislation that have led to unfortunate abuses. Its original intent allowed lower-income school districts to take advantage of alternative financing over an eight-year contract to do strictly energy-saving renovations, such as HVAC, roofing, and windows.

In closing, I would like to stress one major take-away: This is an energy-related financing legislation that districts are being sold on, to do projects not related to energy, and forgo the financing.

We ask AIA Chicago members to support our efforts to correct the inconsistencies in the bill language. Guaranteed Energy Savings Contracts should not be used for projects that don't offer energy savings, nor should they be used to bypass the competitive bidding process.

We urge AIA Chicago members to please contact their legislators on this important issue. 



A black and white photograph of a classical building facade, likely a school, featuring large columns and a pediment. An American flag is visible on the right side. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, italicized font.

“The existing ESCO law has been abused to bypass the normal public school competitive bidding process by districts that aren’t low-income/low-asset and don’t need financing. It has also been used for projects that are not actually energy savings.”

— STACY PFINGSTEN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, AIA ILLINOIS



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Basim Shamsuddin, AIA, has joined **John Ronan Architects** as a senior associate.



Trina Sandschafer, AIA, LEED AP, has been promoted to executive vice president at **Kahler Slater**.



Andre Brumfield, Assoc. AIA, Cities & Urban Design leader, design director, and principal at **Gensler**, was named at-large representative to the AIA Strategic Council for the 2023-2025 term.



RENDERING BY LEGAT ARCHITECTS AND KALEIDOSKOPE

Construction has started on Net Zero Energy Agriculture Complex at Heartland Community College in Normal, Illinois, designed by **Legat Architects**. The 29,500-square-foot building, on track to achieve net-zero energy certification, reflects the college's focus on regenerative agriculture.



Frank Lloyd Wright Trust unveiled the **John Ronan Architects**-designed Museum and Learning Center for the historic Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio in Oak Park, Illinois. The Studio Pavilion is an L-shaped building clad in oxidized zinc, clear glass, and sandblasted glass with entry walkways of slate.

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Scott Crowe, AIA, and **Benjamin Kueck, AIA**, have been named partners at the firm **Shafer Crowe Kueck Architecture + Design, LLC**. Crowe is the principal of construction and technical services, and Kueck is the principal of operations.



HOK and **Muller & Muller, Ltd.**, along with the Chicago Department of Aviation, celebrated the opening of more than 300,000 square feet of new space in Terminal 5 at Chicago O'Hare International Airport.



Goettsch Partners has been selected to design and develop a mixed-use transit-oriented complex in the city of Hsinchu, Taiwan. The design features two landmark towers of 40 and 26 stories, flanking a sinuous, multilevel retail and entertainment complex that is directly connected to the city's high-speed rail station.



Megan Zack, AIA, LEED AP, WELL AP, joins **Wight & Company** as chief sustainability officer.



Michael Townsend, AIA, LEED AP, has been promoted to principal at **Gensler** Chicago. Michael is an award-winning design director and leader of the Mixed Use & Retail Centers Practice for the firm's North Central region.



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Valerio Dewalt Train has promoted **Robert Webber, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Matthew Gamache, AIA, LEED AP, and Tom Daly, AIA, LEED AP**, to principal, and **Lauren Shelton, AIA, LEED AP**, to senior associate.



Cook Architectural Design Studio is honored to be the recipient of the 2022 Excellence in Masonry award for a single-family residence. The jury appreciated the attention to detailed exterior forms as well as the unique utilization of stone on the home's interior spaces.



Goettsch Partners has completed 320 South Canal, billed as Chicago's healthiest office tower. The 51-story tower totals 1,740,000 gross square feet and includes a conference center, fitness center, restaurant, to-go market, branch bank, and a cocktail lounge in an adjacent structure, as well as parking for 324 cars/electric vehicles and 114 bicycles. The 2.2-acre site also features The Green at 320, one of the largest privately owned public parks in Chicago.

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PHOTO BY AJ BROWN IMAGING



Additions and renovations designed by **Legat Architects** transformed a high school in Galesburg, Illinois, into the Galesburg Junior Senior High School. The work touches nearly every part of the 300,000-square-foot facility.



SCB, a national architecture, interior design, and planning firm, has promoted **Joseph Dietz, AIA, LEED AP BD+C**, to associate principals in the firm's Chicago office, and **Ben Harrison, AIA, LEED AP BD+C**, to associate principal in the firm's Boston office.



Architects **Jennifer Park, AIA**, and **Brad Fowler, AIA**, announced the launch of **ParkFowler Plus**, a multidisciplinary design studio. Based in Chicago with projects around the world, the studio partners with ambitious, design-driven clients on projects that meaningfully contribute to the social and built fabric of communities.



Magnusson Klemencic Associates (MKA) is pleased to announce **David E. Eckmann, SE, PE, FAIA**, has been named president. Since joining MKA in 2005, Dave has represented MKA on more than 160 projects — 100 of which he served in a leadership role. In addition to his new role as president, Dave is the managing principal of the firm's Chicago office and serves on MKA's Board of Directors.



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Gensler Chicago and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill received 2023 AIA Interior Architecture Awards for Willis Tower Repositioning (Gensler Chicago, left) and 800 Fulton Market (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, right).

PHOTO BY CONNOR STEINKAMP PHOTOGRAPHY



Construction has finished on the UI Health Welcome Atrium in Chicago designed by Legat Architects. A 2-story lobby welcomes visitors and enhances the interior ambiance of University of Illinois Hospital. The facility features a second-floor contemplation space with an area for quiet reflection and prayer.



Gensler's Chicago office celebrated 25 years.

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BKL Architecture has promoted several AIA Chicago members within their firm:

(Top row, left to right) **Michael Rose, AIA**, promoted to director; **Eunkyu Choi, AIA, LEED AP BD+C**, promoted to associate director; **Ramona Valeanu, AIA**, promoted to associate director; **Runmin Yu, AIA, LEED AP BD+C**, promoted to associate director; **Shane Soucek, AIA**, promoted to associate director; (Bottom row, left to right) **Veronika Bakalova, AIA**, promoted to associate director; **Ann Erskine, AIA, NCARB**, promoted to associate; **Antonia Ramos Muñiz, AIA, NCARB**, promoted to associate; **Mike Chang, Assoc. AIA**, promoted to associate; **Karolina Jeuk, AIA**, promoted to associate.

PHOTO BY AJ BROWN IMAGING



College of Lake County opened its Advanced Technology Center in Gurnee, Illinois. The retrofit, designed by **Legat Architects**, transforms a former big box building into a training hub for Lake County's manufacturing workforce.



LBBA is delighted to announce that **Terran Wilson, AIA**, has been promoted to principal. Terran joined LBBA 12 years ago, bringing with her a collaborative spirit and a creative passion for the work. She has been at the forefront of the firm's commitments to sustainability, volunteerism, and diversity, while also designing and managing beautiful and meaningful architectural work.



Breah Page, AIA,
2023 Dubin Family
Young Architect
Award Recipient.

PHOTO BY STEPHANIE
JENSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

In Service to Community

Breah Page, AIA, 2023 Dubin Family Young Architect Award Recipient

by Taylor Moore

Growing up, many children dream of becoming actors, athletes, and even astronauts. But Breah Page, AIA, had a different calling.

While rustling through old art projects at her parents' house in Waynesville, North Carolina, she found an assignment in which she, at the age of 5, declared she wants to be an architect. "I didn't even remember I had done that," she said. But it spoke to her innate creativity — she was always enlisting her father in competitions over who could build the tallest LEGO buildings, making home movies, and choreographing ballet dances. "I've just always enjoyed creating."

Page, now a senior project architect at LBBA, is the 2023 recipient of the Dubin Family Young Architect Award, administered by the AIA Chicago Foundation. With more than 10 years of experience across Chicago firms, she is an emerging leader known for her work in community-centered development, adaptive reuse, and historic preservation projects,

and for her mentorship of teenagers interested in architecture. Her current and past clients include Wrigley Field, North Park University, The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse, and Mercy Housing.

“We have the responsibility to do good with our ideas.”

— BREAH PAGE, AIA

During one summer as an architecture student at the University of Oklahoma, she studied abroad in Europe. She vividly remembers standing in the rain in Paris as her professor impressed the life-changing importance of architecture on his students.

“Grand ideas for everyday people, that is what the modern movement is all about, and don't let anyone ever tell you otherwise. Is it OK to do architecture just

for the money when millions of people have died in war fighting for someone else's ideas?”

Page calls this her “with great power comes great responsibility” moment. “We have the responsibility to do good with our ideas,” she said.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in architecture in 2010, Page moved to Chicago and interned at Goettsch Partners and Lohan Anderson. She moved onto VOA Associates (acquired by Stantec Architecture in 2016), where she worked on the restoration and expansion of Wrigley Field — a five-year project that was “as much about preserving the legacy as preserving the building,” she said.

The project modernized the ballpark with updated seats, concessions, and locker rooms but also drew upon fans' nostalgia, with an updated field design and terracotta and metalwork featuring historic designs. The renovation also included the addition of a plaza, a multistory office building, and a hotel.



Breah Page, AIA, moved onto VOA Associates (acquired by Stantec Architecture in 2016), where she worked on the restoration and expansion of Wrigley Field.

“The best part, when it [the restoration and expansion of Wrigley Field] was completed, was seeing how people interacted with the space differently,” Page said. “The addition of the plaza outside created a fun engagement with fans on gameday, allowing them to go inside and outside. On non-game days, it’s become a

cool hub of the community. They host movies in the park there, they do a Christkindlmarket in the winter, and put up an ice skating rink. It’s become a little environment even outside of being a ballpark.”

Page said she was grateful for the mentorship of her former supervisor, William Ketcham,

AIA, principal at Stantec Architecture, who oversaw her work on Wrigley Field. “From day one, he gave me a seat at the table, when by all means I had no right to be there; with clients, consultants, colleagues, who had more years of experience than I had even been alive. Over time he allowed me the time and faith

to struggle through tasks above my pay grade, and the patience to explain to me the importance of details and concepts.”

Ketcham, on his part, said he’s impressed by her passion, quiet determination and ability to ask questions when she doesn’t know the answer. “She’s a consummate professional, [with] great empathy



PHOTO BY MARK BALLOGG / STANTEC

“The best part, when it [the restoration and expansion of Wrigley Field] was completed, was seeing how people interacted with the space differently.”

— BREAH PAGE, AIA

for the users,” he said. “When you talk to her, there’s no ego there. [She asks], what can I do to advance the mission of architecture as a service to the community?”

At LBBA, where she’s worked since 2020, Page is currently working on the Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse, the first federally funded affordable

housing development for blind and visually impaired people. It’s a 76-unit building in the Illinois Medical District situated next to the headquarters of The Chicago Lighthouse, the largest employer of people with visual disabilities in Illinois. Designing for blind people involves all sorts of considerations — for example, varying



The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse RENDERING BY LBBA.

the texture and colors of different surfaces, and defining the kitchen's edge with different flooring — and Page said she's eager to apply the lessons learned in this project to future projects.

Outside of her day job, Page dedicates her time to training Chicago's next generation of architects. In 2011, she began mentoring high school students at ACE Mentor Chicago, an after-school program that introduces teens, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, to the architecture, construction, and engineering (ACE) professions.

"We're doing a lot of talking in the industry about diversity and inclusion ... but we can't make it happen overnight — it has to start from somewhere," she said. "I think programs like ACE Mentor are putting in the work of making a more diverse industry that is more



Groundbreaking for The Foglia Residences at The Chicago Lighthouse.

“I think programs like ACE Mentor are putting in the work of making a more diverse industry that is more reflective of our neighborhoods. It’s working toward breaking down those systematic barriers that hindered inclusion in the first place.”

— BREAH PAGE, AIA



Breah Page, AIA, with students and mentors from Chicago’s ACE Mentor Program

reflective of our neighborhoods. It’s working toward breaking down those systematic barriers that hindered inclusion in the first place.”

The ACE Mentor Program in Chicago runs from November to April every year, drawing about 300 students — mostly women, people of color, or those from low-income families — from area high schools. The students are placed in teams, given instruction on the three different fields, and asked to design a building, taking into consideration the users, the environment, and the desired design elements, materials, and costs.

“We let them go crazy with what they want. At the end of the day, this is their project,” Page said. “I like to describe us mentors as being the gutter guards to your bowling lane. You’re going to get there; we’re just going to make sure you don’t go off the deep end.”

She sees mentorship as a true exchange of knowledge and experience. “Students teach me what Snapchat is and I teach them about architecture,” she joked. “They keep me going.”

Page is now president of the organization’s associate Board, and many of her mentees have gone on to work in the industry — sometimes alongside her.

Nimah Mohiuddin met Page in 2015 when she was a junior in high school. Mohiuddin remembers commuting into the city from the suburbs as a nervous teenager and immediately feeling welcomed by Page, who was her mentor for the program. “She wanted us to explore what architecture could be for ourselves,” Mohiuddin said.

In 2022, Mohiuddin graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology with a bachelor’s degree in architecture and urban studies. On top of her full-time work as an architectural designer for Lamar Johnson Collaborative, she is serving with Page on a committee to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Chicago Women in Architecture and is mentoring middle school students through Project Pipeline, a program of the Illinois Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (I-NOMA).

“As a minority, I want to see other minorities and women grow in architecture,” Mohiuddin said. “Seeing how Breah mentored me made me want to take a similar role.”

When Page sees young people exercising their creativity, she sees their vision for the city — and she is excited for what it holds. “Ideas have real-world impact if you put motion behind them.” **CA**

FUTURE FORWARD

How Today's Firms Are Preparing Tomorrow's Architects

by Dillon Goodson, Affil. AIA Chicago



Participants in the Gensler Apprenticeship Program (GAP) from left to right: David Williams, Miguel Rodriguez, Jeanette Perez Sanchez, Kelly Westwood, and Jackson Lyall at Gensler Chicago. PHOTO BY GILLIAN FRY/GENSLER



In 1971, R. Buckminster Fuller, FAIA, was in search of a collaborating architect. Tasked with designing a subterranean theater for St. Peter's College, the renowned futurist approached a young Norman Foster, Hon. FAIA, deciding on the spot that he was up for the job. For the next decade until Fuller's death, the two architects formed a mentorship for the ages, brought together by a profound belief in an architect's responsibility to forge a brighter path. "We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims," Fuller famously reflected.

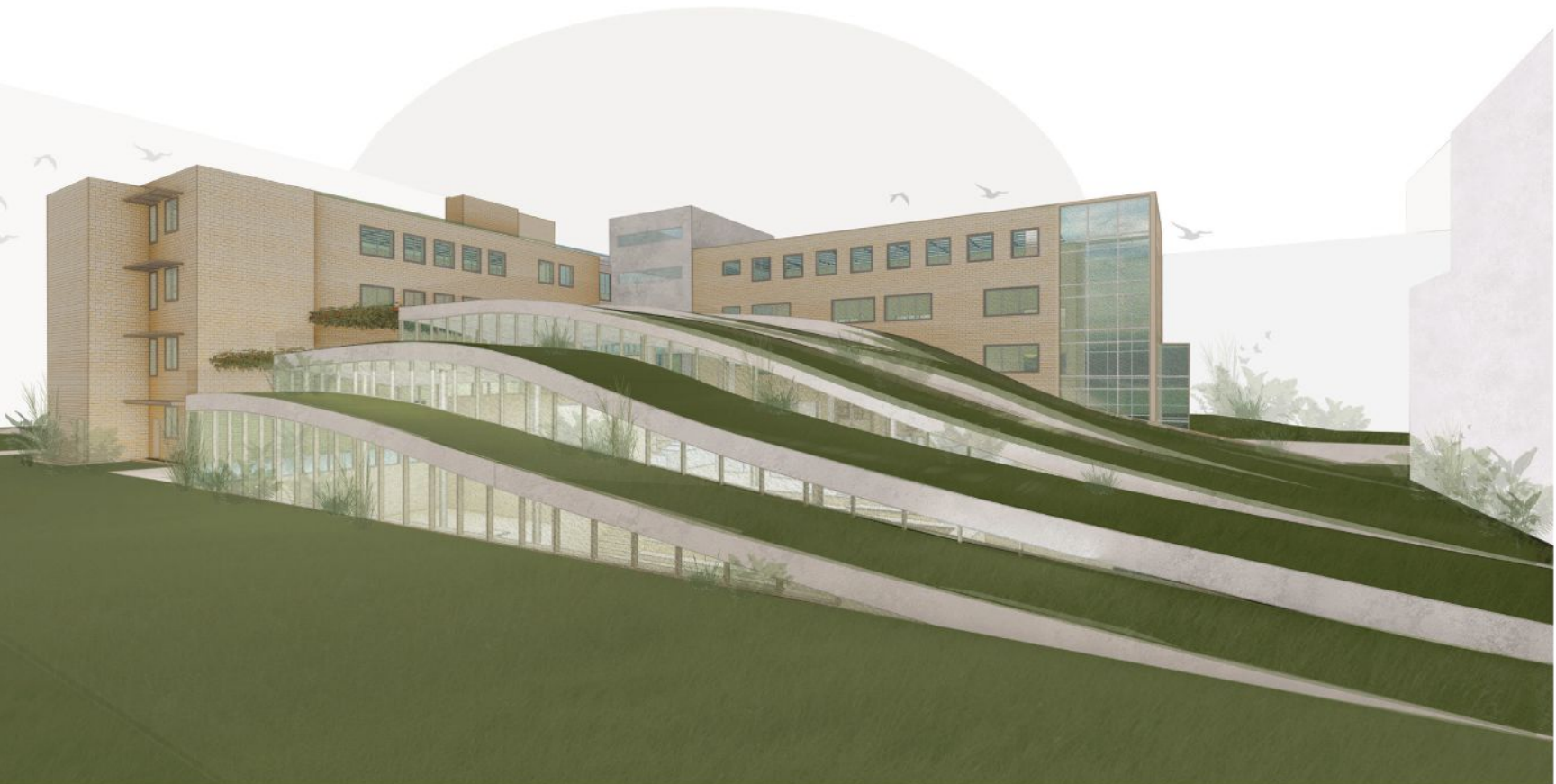
Today, a new generation of Chicago architects is merging pedagogy with practice. However, unlike the industry's forefathers — who often leveraged deeply entrenched networks to pick their predecessors — today's firms are opening their doors to a diversifying pool of learners from every corner of the profession. Along the way, they are exercising the kind of creativity typically reserved for paying clients, taking a hands-on approach to orchestrating architecture's next chapter.

At Kahler Slater, existing relationships between the firm's staff and administrators at the universities of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Wisconsin-Milwaukee paved the way for more meaningful collaboration. This led to the creation of the Kahler Slater Studio, a multiyear studio immersing graduate students from

Participants in the Kahler Slater Studio.







Cultivation, Cuisine, and Culture forges a more intimate connection between people and place as part of the Kahler Slater Studio's reimagining of Singer Pavilion.

RENDERING BY SOHAM DONGRE, THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN; SHAVONTE GRANT, THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE; MAIA KOEHNLEIN, THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE; AND ANNA LUESSMAN, THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, OF THE KAHLER SLATER STUDIO.

both schools in a collaborative studio environment that mimics how the firm approaches its own client work. Launched last fall as part of a three-year commitment by the firm, the studio invites students to participate in the design of real projects that are unfolding in both Chicago and Milwaukee.

Trina Sandschafer, AIA, LEED AP, is the director of the Kahler Slater Studio. "Because it's a real-world project, it's very meaningful to the students. They have the opportunity to see their work and their ideas come forward in a project," said Sandschafer. "That's extremely rewarding for anyone, especially a student."

In 2022 — the studio's inaugural year — students from

the first cohort focused on Bronzeville Lakefront, the 100-plus acre redevelopment of the former Michael Reese Hospital, which borders Lake Michigan in Chicago's Bronzeville community. Working alongside one another and with the guidance of four professors, the 16-member studio developed conceptual designs for the adaptive reuse of Singer Pavilion, the last remaining structure on the sprawling site. Originally built to house the Reese Psychiatric-Psychosomatic Institute, the building's midcentury design was heavily influenced by Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius, who oversaw a collective of campus planners, which included the firm of Loeb Schlossman and Bennett.

Their original design earned the building recognition by the AIA in 1951.

Unlike in a traditional academic setting, where even the most inspired designs are typically relegated to well-polished portfolios, members of the Kahler Slater Studio have a chance to make an impact beyond the classroom. Early on, students met with representatives from GRIT Chicago — the development team behind Bronzeville Lakefront — kicking off a process of design exploration inspired by a typical architect-developer relationship. This enabled the students to generate ideas that could eventually inform the future outcome of the Singer Pavilion redevelopment, according to Regina Stilp,

THE HEART

Atrium + Marketplace



Art Factory combines elements of education, production, and exhibition as part of the Kahler Slater Studio's reimagining of Singer Pavilion.

CREATION

Workshop



RENDERINGS BY AUGIE BEHRENS, THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE; MARA CHARPENTIER, THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE; YASHASWINI KARAGIAH, THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN; AND RICHIA MARU, THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, OF THE KAHLER SLATER STUDIO.



Territory Advanced Design Studio testing a prototype of the Peace Circle they designed for the INVEST SOUTH/WEST Chicago Avenue Corridor project in Austin with teaching professional Brian K. Ellison of BKE Designs. PHOTO BY BRIAN K. ELLISON.

founding principal of Farpoint Development, the lead developer from the GRIT Chicago team.

Stilp said she was personally drawn to the ways that students incorporated space for community members to congregate inside and outside, along with the creative approach they took to addressing a significant grade change across the building. One proposal recommended converting an interior space into a jazz club, a nod to the rich history of live music in Bronzeville. Another embraced the history of the building as a mental health facility, incorporating wellness as an overarching theme of its design approach.

“It’s just exposure that really changes lives,” said Stilp, referring to the impact on students

who have lent their voices to the high-profile project. “The education, and the internships, and the apprenticeships are a key function to what we want to use this site for.”

Developers like Farpoint, along with firms like Kahler Slater, are driven as much by the opportunity to contribute to the future of the field as they are by simple economics. Five years ago, AIA chief economist Kermit Baker, Hon. AIA, projected that the architecture profession would need to find 25,000 workers over the next decade to meet increased demand in the construction industry and to replace those who left the workforce. The pandemic likely exacerbated this need, with the number of newly licensed architects dipping by as

much as 40 percent in 2020 compared to the prior three years.

Efforts to diversify the industry have been a guiding force, too. According to the AIA’s 2021 membership demographics report, fewer than a third of all AIA members are women. An even smaller share of members is part of an underrepresented racial or ethnic group, and, according to NCARB data, Black or African American women continue to make up less than 1 percent of all architects in the United States. Achieving greater representation in the profession has clear benefits beyond the field of architecture. Research by Harvard Business School has shown that companies that hire so-called “hidden workers” — those who are typically left out

of traditional hiring processes that prioritize credentials over skills — are 36 percent less likely to face talent shortages. Hidden workers also typically outperform their peers across key metrics like attitude and work ethic, productivity, and innovation.

Kelly Westwood, AIA, NCARB, NOMA, a project architect at Gensler, acknowledged that the profession must do more to “reclaim lost potential” by recruiting a more diverse workforce — including applicants for whom a lack of higher education has been a barrier to entry. “Underrepresentation is a perpetuating cycle. It threatens feelings of belonging, which can then deter others from even considering a career in design in the first place.”

Putting words into action, Westwood and a small team at Gensler pitched the idea of an apprenticeship program geared toward high school graduates or those with their GED credentials who are looking for an alternative path into the design industry that doesn't require an advanced degree. The firm's leadership embraced the idea, and last fall they began piloting the Gensler Apprenticeship Program — or, GAP. The program opens up the firm's Chicago office to a two-year immersion in the principles of architecture as well as hands-on experience using design software to translate ideas into outcomes on behalf of Gensler's clients. At the conclusion of the contract, apprentices will have the tools needed to apply for a full-time position within the firm or to use the network they've built throughout the apprenticeship to uncover other career opportunities in the industry.

Architects are equally focused on reaching the next generation of learners in an effort to build skills among even younger audiences. One of the


longest-running examples of this push is Chicago's ACE Mentor Program, which offers free after-school training to encourage high school students to pursue careers in the architecture, construction, and engineering industries. Formed out of a collaboration between 17 New York City firms in the 1990s, the program expanded to Chicago nearly 25 years ago, where it has impacted an estimated 2,500 students through more than 800 scholarships. Three of Gensler's four GAP apprentices previously participated in this program, which averages 94 percent minority representation.

It's hardly the only program focused on engaging youth in the industry of architecture. Founded in 2015, youth-led urban design studio Territory NFP opened shop in Austin in 2020, where they are working with community members and design firms on public commissions. Other examples include AIA Chicago Foundation's Architects in Schools program, the Chicago Architecture Center's Girls Build! and Teen Fellows programs,

“Because it’s a real-world project, it’s very meaningful to the students. They have the opportunity to see their work and their ideas come forward in a project. That’s extremely rewarding for anyone, especially a student.”

— TRINA SANDSCHAFFER, AIA, LEED AP, KAHLER SLATER STUDIO DIRECTOR

the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) Project Pipeline, and Mobile Makers, which focus on building skills and interest in the profession among youth from elementary through high school.

Programs like these build on the profession's long legacy of mentorship. “The idea of apprenticeship isn't new,” said Westwood. “Some of the great heroes of architecture never earned degrees. They learned the profession through practice. It makes you wonder, who's the next Tadao Ando out there?” 



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Who Is the City For?

In Conversation with Blair Kamin, Lee Bey, and Laurie Petersen

by Annie Howard

Chicago is no stranger to stunning architecture. The richness of the city's built environment has inspired excellent architectural criticism throughout its history, further solidifying Chicago's reputation as a hub for those who wish to dream up, build, and contemplate their urban surroundings.

For the past several decades, one of those key voices has been Blair Kamin, who served as architecture critic at the *Chicago Tribune* from 1992 to 2021. Kamin's work has always caused a stir within the world of architecture and politics, asking challenging questions that have advanced what was possible at the intersection of both worlds. His work on a six-part series about the city's lakefront earned him the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for criticism. Written at a moment in which the city was transforming former railway space into Millennium Park, his reported, opinionated pieces challenged elected officials to do better for the city.

Now, with the release of *Who Is the City For?*, Kamin's third collection of essays originally published in the *Tribune*, Kamin's work is brought to the present during a moment in which architecture, like many other fields, has ample room to question itself and its future. Presented with

photographs from fellow architecture critic Lee Bey, the book is an invitation to think carefully about the significance of public space and the ways in which our city shows its priorities by investing in some areas far more than others. Those themes were on display at a December 2022 talk on the book moderated by AIA Chicago's Executive Director Jen Masengarb, Assoc. AIA, which also included Laurie Petersen, editor of the *AIA Guide to Chicago*. At the event, Kamin made the case that "the quality

of public space affects the quality of life for all of us," emphasizing the disparities that jump out in just a few-mile journey.

"When you drive west on Chicago through the Austin neighborhood, it's barren of trees, the light posts are rusting, and the public realm is communicating that this is a neighborhood that the city doesn't really care about," Kamin said. "Then you cross over into Oak Park; there are trees, herringbone brick sidewalks, restored buildings, and it's a completely different environment."

"Park and street space in Chicago, depending on where you live, has always been contested. This idea of Chicago as the city in the garden, these beautiful green spaces that belong to all of us, I think is very much at risk these days."

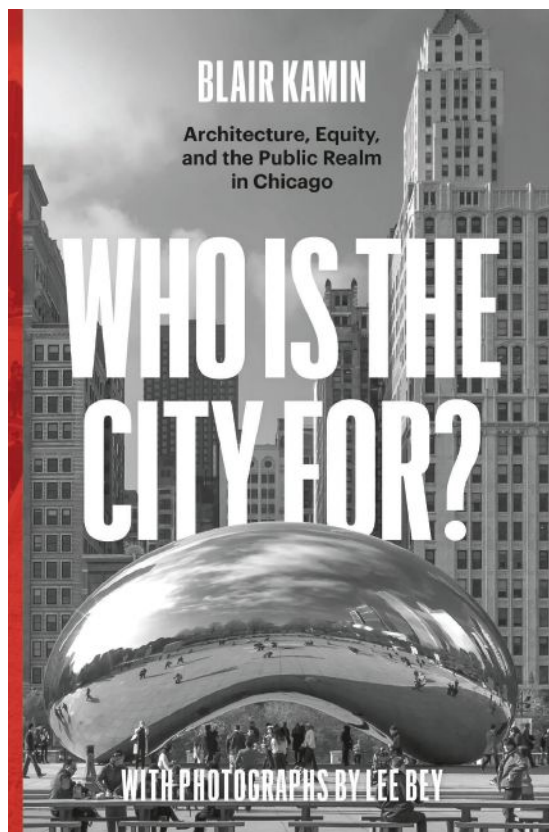
—LEE BEY, PHOTOGRAPHER, WHO IS THE CITY FOR?

Those are the stakes of what we're talking about here."

Public space is at a crossroads both politically and architecturally. Who has access to public space has always been a challenging question, and with expanded curfews targeting Black and brown teenagers, the disparities in access are only growing more acute. Existing public spaces also risk privatization: The high-profile sale of the Thompson Center to Google is only the most obvious example in Chicago, but far from the only one.

"You have large developments that are being built, and there is public space set aside, or space that looks like public space, but it's easily policeable," Lee Bey said during the discussion. "Park and street space in Chicago, depending on where you live, has always been contested. This idea of Chicago as the city in the garden, these beautiful green spaces that belong to all of us, I think is very much at risk these days."

One element of public space that the panelists agreed upon is the ways in which it communicates itself as accessible to as broad an audience as possible. Conversation focused on the city's recent changes to the Chicago Riverwalk ordinance, which require private companies to install public-access walkways along the water. Despite that, such spaces often feel inaccessible when jutting up against private development projects. Even small changes, from improved accessibility for people in wheelchairs, to increased seating and food options, can significantly



improve the public's perception of a space and its openness.

"You can have an ordinance that says you must build a riverwalk along your private subdivision, but there's still ways that architecture and urban design can communicate to people you're not really welcome," Kamin said. "Just because we have public spaces doesn't mean that the public is welcome there."

Even if cities everywhere face challenging questions about the fate of public spaces, the newly released fourth edition of the *AIA Guide to Chicago* shows that the city's architectural appeal remains strong. Coming in at

more than 500 pages, and full of maps and photographs from across town, the book encourages readers to leave their neighborhoods and visit somewhere new and exciting. During the conversation, Masengarb acknowledged that "the city is always changing," demanding that architects and their critics keep pace with somewhere that never settles down.

It's a hopeful challenge to face: As Cynthia Weese, FAIA, wrote in the preface to the new book, "But we can be sure that Chicago and Chicagoans will continue to design. We will continue to change existing situations into preferred ones." **CA**

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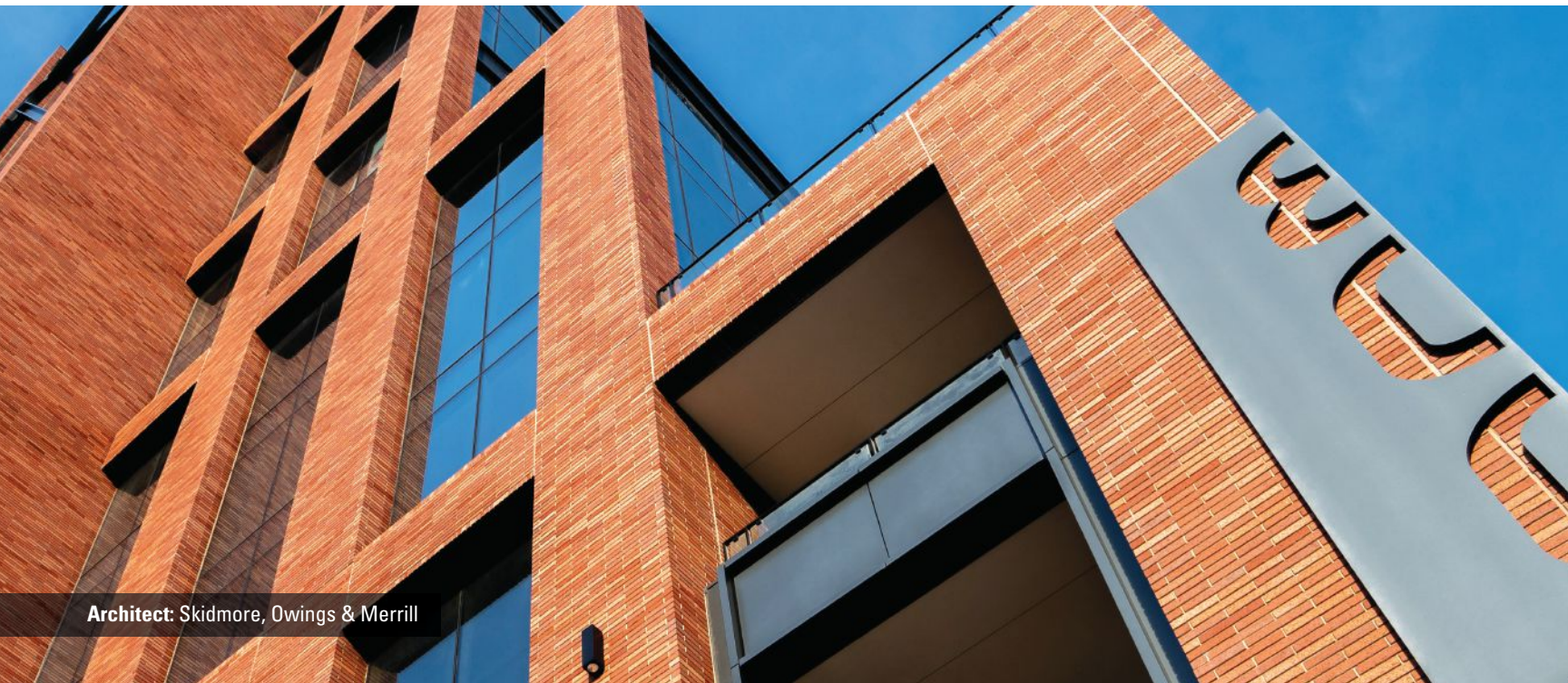
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