

A watercolor architectural drawing of a building facade. The drawing features a prominent grid window on the left side, supported by columns. The style is loose and artistic, with soft washes of grey and black ink. The title 'COLUMNS' is overlaid at the top in a large, serif font.

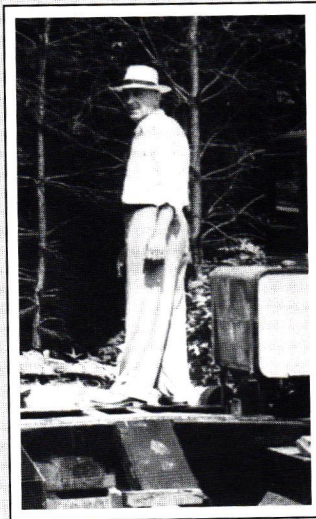
# COLUMNS

## Women in Architecture



# A seventy-five year commitment to craftsmanship

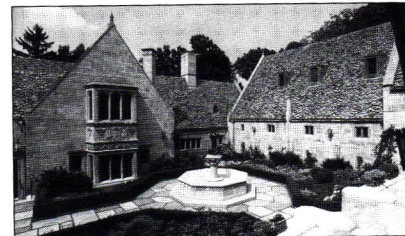
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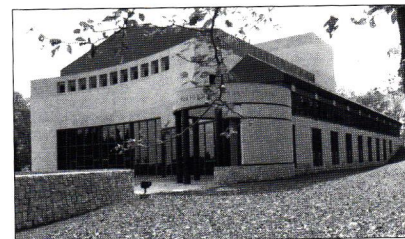
*John Deklewa, Sr., founder of the firm that bears his name, could be found checking the job progress. This same attention to detail has become a tradition on all John Deklewa & Sons, Inc. projects.*

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# The March of Time

by Karen Loysen, AIA President

## This month's covers story examines current

gender issues in the profession. In addition to looking at recent concerns, it is also important to see the longer term context of gender changes within architecture and be reassured that positive change is occurring, however glacial the pace.

In 1994, it does not seem particularly exceptional for women to be architects. Although percentage-wise we may not see very many women in our offices, the important point is that it is quite acceptable, normal even, for women to be there. This is a perceptible change from 20 or 30 years ago when it would have been highly unusual to see a woman architect.

Among the current rising stars on the national scene are a significant number of women—Zaha Hadid, Billie Tsien, Merrill Elam, Victoria Meyers, Diana Agarest, Elizabeth Diller, Christine Killory, Associate AIA, Andreas Leers, FAIA, and Jane Weinzapfel, AIA, to name a few. Denise Scott Brown is among the established stars, as is Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, AIA, and Susan Maxman, FAIA, until recently national president of the AIA. The recognition these architects are receiving is not for their being women, but for being talented, creative architects.

In our local arena, it would have been hard to find a woman-owned architectural firm in Pittsburgh 20 years ago. Today, there are five or six. Not a huge change, but a change nevertheless.

It will probably be quite awhile before gender bias in the profession is gone. It will disappear when today's graduating classes, with enrollments nearing 50 percent women to 50 percent men, are in the prime of their careers, are the owners of and policy makers in their firms, are the trend-makers of the profession. Then, a blended gender mix in our offices will seem as natural as the seasons changing. One can easily imagine gender-related issues becoming obsolete.

But how long is quite awhile? These students are now 21 years old and they are not likely to be in prime positions until they are 40 or maybe 50—another 20 to 30 years from now.

Staggering isn't it, how slowly we change? Nevertheless, the hour hand is moving. Change is happening. 🏠



*The recognition these (women) architects are receiving is not for their being women, but for being talented, creative architects.*

## IN THIS ISSUE

**On the cover:** Shaped steel caryatids by Roxanne Sherbeck, AIA, help support a lath house at the Ritter Park Rose Garden in Huntington, WV.

*Designing Women* ..... 6  
The 138,000 women architects in the U.S. are slowly but steadily breaking into the architecture scene.

*Fallingwater Revisited* ..... 10  
A twilight visit evokes memories of a time gone by for an area architect.

Viewpoint ..... 3  
Homefront ..... 4  
News ..... 5  
Breaking Ground ..... 12  
Calendar ..... 13  
Dossier ..... 15  
February Chapter Meeting ..... 19

The Pittsburgh Chapter AIA serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and the Pennsylvania Society of Architects. The objective of the Chapter is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields.

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## Room at the Top?

by Michelle Fanzo, Editor

### Twenty years ago four percent of all registered architects

were female and AIA National had only 250 women members. Now the 138,000 women in the profession equal 15.3 percent of the nation's architects, 5,534 women belong to the AIA, and architecture schools report 30 to 40 percent of their students are female.



*...Men feel they would be at a disadvantage to wake up one morning, Orlando-like, and find themselves of the female persuasion.*

Though women are moving into positions of prominence in the profession, architecture continues to have one of the largest gender gaps of any professional field. Are women still facing an old-boys network, being hindered by discrimination, seen as outsiders and relegated to interior departments more than desired? Or are women progressing successfully along a continuum, effecting change more every year and emerging into their own?

"While pervasive sexual harassment may be a thing of the past," says former senior editor of *Architectural Forum*, Ellen Perry Berkeley, in her recent book *Architecture: A Place for Women*, "many women could still write a resume in terms of incidents major and minor." While no man or woman interviewed for this month's cover story on women in architecture denies the existence of sexual harassment or discrimination in the workplace, many feel local incidents are minor. Interestingly, among the individuals who spoke out the strongest about discrimination and glass ceilings were as many men as women. Yet, when men and women were asked if they thought their jobs would be easier or harder if they were a different gender, the answers were divided from the women (leaning towards easier or the same), while men across the board feel they would be at a disadvantage to wake up one morning, Orlando-like, and find themselves of the female persuasion. While our feature article is not meant to conclusively reflect the general attitudes of our di-

verse membership, it does represent a cross-section of individuals and some of the current perceptions and opinions about women in architecture.

One of the most discussed topics was the need and effectiveness of a Women in Architecture Committee in Pittsburgh—reflecting a national debate about women's groups in general. While AIA National's (recently combined) Minorities and Women in Architecture Committee operates as a task force reacting to the needs of minority and women architects, many area architects feel a committee such as AIA Pittsburgh had until this year was unnecessary. A number of male and female architects suggest such a committee does more harm than good. Is this, as some architects propose, a backlash against women, an examples of how sophisticated discrimination has become? Such believers point to the small percentage of women in the field, unequal pay, the absence of even one tenured female architecture professor at CMU, and the dearth of female project managers and firm partners as proof that women still need to advocate for their roles in the profession. Others feel that while inequities still exist, they are dwindling and will virtually disappear within the next decade. Some contended a WIA committee puts distance between men and women rather than bridging that gap. Still others say until women start hiring women and supporting each other more, bias in the workplace will remain entrenched.

Though the numbers in the architecture schools are promising, it is evident that women are still a definite minority in architecture, as well as in urban planning positions. Of AIA Pittsburgh's current 480 members only 44 are women, 14 of which are intern or associate architects, supporting the theory that women only recently started pursuing architecture in large numbers. What change this will have on our surroundings is yet to be seen, though it seems reasonable to suggest the man-made environment will have a different ring to it. ■