

# C O L U M N S



INTERIORS  
Portfolio

# Rock Solid

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is proud of its 75 year history and of their  
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GENERAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING SUCCESS

# Anatomy of a Frog

*Karen Loysen, AIA, President*



*Evidence of insufficient concern for the quality of our built environment is everywhere.*

## Curiously, you can proceed through

12, 16, or even 20 years of education and learn more about the anatomy of a frog than about the anatomy of the city in which you live. It is rare for a history class to explore the interplay between historical events and the places where they occurred, or of a culture to its town form, or of the implication of technological advancements to the form of cities. The study of architecture is too often presented as a static and formal slide show of rarefied monuments, most often shown removed from their contexts, and most often in art class, rather than in history or social science classes. Our lives are set into architectural stages and yet these are the things we learn the least about in our education.


Perhaps one of the most far-reaching ways in which architects can further the cause of quality urban design and architecture is through supporting architecture education within school curricula, and in other venues where non-architects can learn about architecture. After all, the quality of the man-made environment is not just about the talents and skills of architects, but about the awareness of policymakers, funding agencies, developers, engineers, and business or home owners to the quality of the built world and the ability of that quality to make a difference in their lives and businesses. It is extremely important to our profession that we encourage knowledge and attentiveness to urban design and architecture.

It is key to create an awareness of the anatomy of a city, to demystify it; to encourage awareness of the economic, cultural, and formal rationale of the form of the city. It is also important to demystify architectural design. To the extent that these remain inaccessible, they will also remain low priority.

Evidence of insufficient concern for the quality of our built environment is everywhere. In order to combat this, the idea that a quality built environment matters needs to be nurtured and promoted in all possible

places. It is clearly possible to create above-average infrastructure and building projects when both architect and architecture consumer value this quality.

The AIA, Architrave (the Pittsburgh Foundation for Architecture) and Carnegie-Mellon University nurture a number of educational initiatives, in support of the long range goal of a more architecturally literate population. The Heinz Architectural Center is also a strong resource for educating a very wide and diverse audience about architecture. All of our members should be encouraged to support these or other organizations which promote architectural education or awareness of architectural issues.

If interested, contributions can be made to Architrave which funds programs for increased awareness of architecture, or to its "Our Town" program which is free to at-risk inner city children. It is also possible to sponsor a child for Carnegie-Mellon's Architecture for Children program. The tuition for one 10-week semester is \$130 for children in grades 3 through 8; for high school students the tuition is \$170. For further information on how to make contributions to these or other programs, please call the AIA office. It would be wonderful to let people know as much about a building as they know about a frog. 

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### On the cover:

*Detail from Golba & Associates' Ketchum Communications office in Philadelphia.*