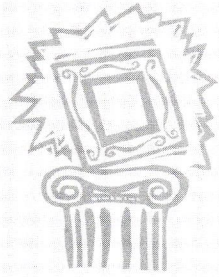
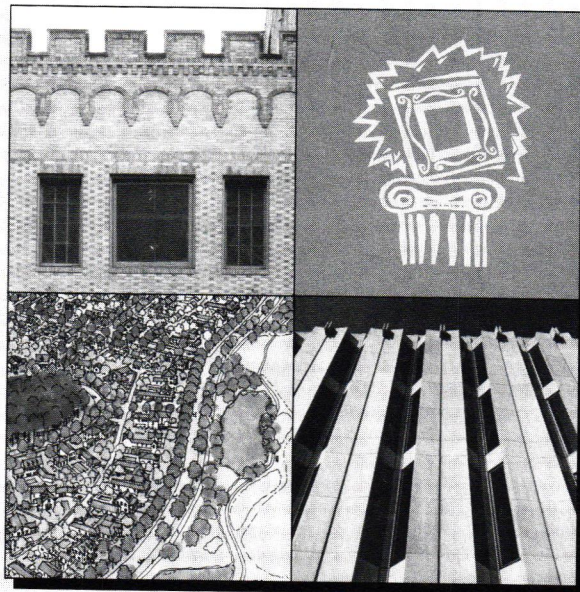


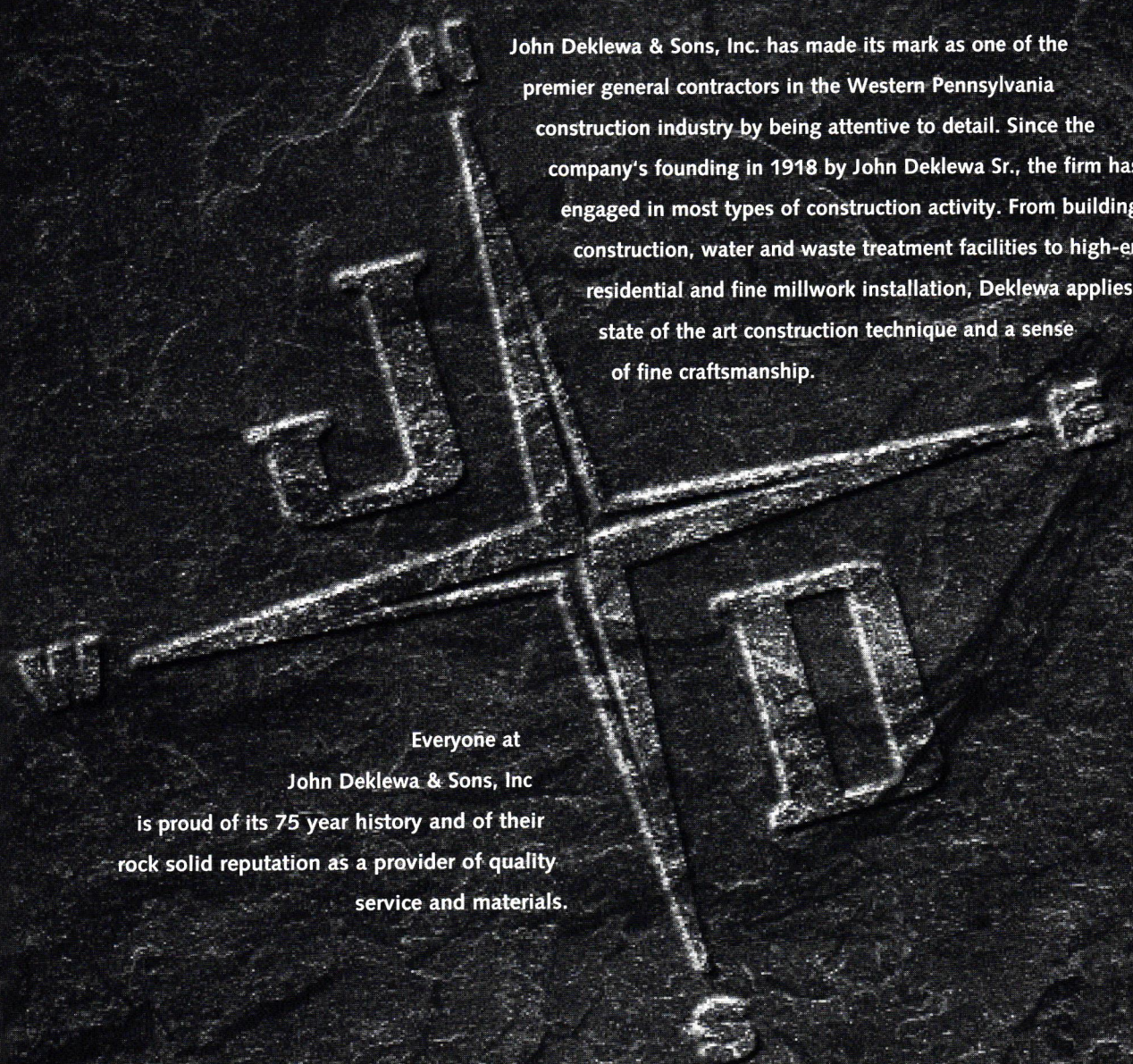
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1996 *Design Awards*



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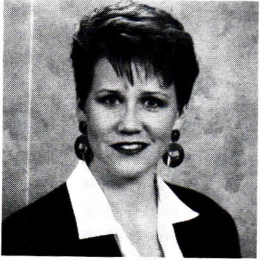
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GENERAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING SUCCESS

Architects: Leaders for Change

by Maureen Guttman, AIA President



Architects, by training and by nature, possess an excellent combination of skills in problem-solving, negotiation, communication, and leadership that, I believe, can and should be applied to the role of public servant.

As you read this issue, you have already

had an opportunity to review the outstanding projects submitted and honored for this year's Design Awards Program. Every project submitted represents its author's pride in resolving a unique architectural challenge. Those projects awarded by the jury represent the very best in creative resolution of the myriad components, constraints, and characters that a design problem involves.

It seems relevant to me that our Design Awards issue this year comes about at election time. At this time of year especially, our attention is sought by all manner of people who believe they possess the right mix of experience and ability to best serve and protect the public interests. Architects, by training and by nature, possess an excellent combination of skills in problem-solving, negotiation, communication, and leadership that, I believe, can and should be applied to the role of public servant.

A couple of years ago, the chapter Board of Directors met as we do every year to discuss the long range plans for AIA Pittsburgh. In a really noteworthy planning session, we developed a vision for the organization and some major strategies needed to achieve our goals. As we randomly offered ideas on how we are to become a highly visible and respected resource to the community, one Board member jokingly suggested that another Board member should run for Mayor. Fortunately for Pittsburgh, that particular Board member doesn't live in the city and isn't eligible for the office.

The point of the proposition, though, was not lost on us. If it is an objective of the AIA to increase public perception of the value of architects, then it is incumbent on us as individuals to find ways to showcase our resourcefulness in as many venues as possible. At this year's AIA National Convention in Minneapolis, Ronald A. Altoon, FAIA (Institute President for 1998) spoke of the need for architects

to serve in the public realm. "Architects should embrace a philosophy of bridge building to cultural institutions, schools, collateral professions, communities, and governmental entities to be positioned appropriately as collaborators and leaders of change."

Architects possess the creative ability to look at an issue from many perspectives and offer innovative solutions with respect to a client's needs and budget. We are considered to be consensus-builders and team leaders. These talents are exercised and refined as we move through our careers creating buildings and places. Too few of us, however, consider how great an asset these very skills can be in the management of our communities and cities.

This year there are two AIA architects running for the U.S. Senate. In North Carolina, Harvey Gantt, FAIA is attempting to unseat Jesse Helms, and according to the most recent polls, Dick Swett, AIA is the favorite to win his race in New Hampshire. If both of these gentlemen should succeed, AIA architects would constitute 1/50th of the U.S. Senate!

I don't want to push anyone to run for Congress before he or she is ready. But give some thought to whether those distinguishing proficiencies that set you apart as an architect could be shared with your community. School boards, planning commissions, code review boards, and town councils can benefit from the architect's ability to first shape a vision, and then to give it form and character. Winning design honors is not in the cards for all of us. But as we step up to the responsibilities of civic leadership, the community will reap the benefits of our problem-solving expertise, as we win the greater reward of public recognition and respect.

Make no small plans: today the Mayor's office; tomorrow, the world!

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On the cover: Some of this year's top winners