

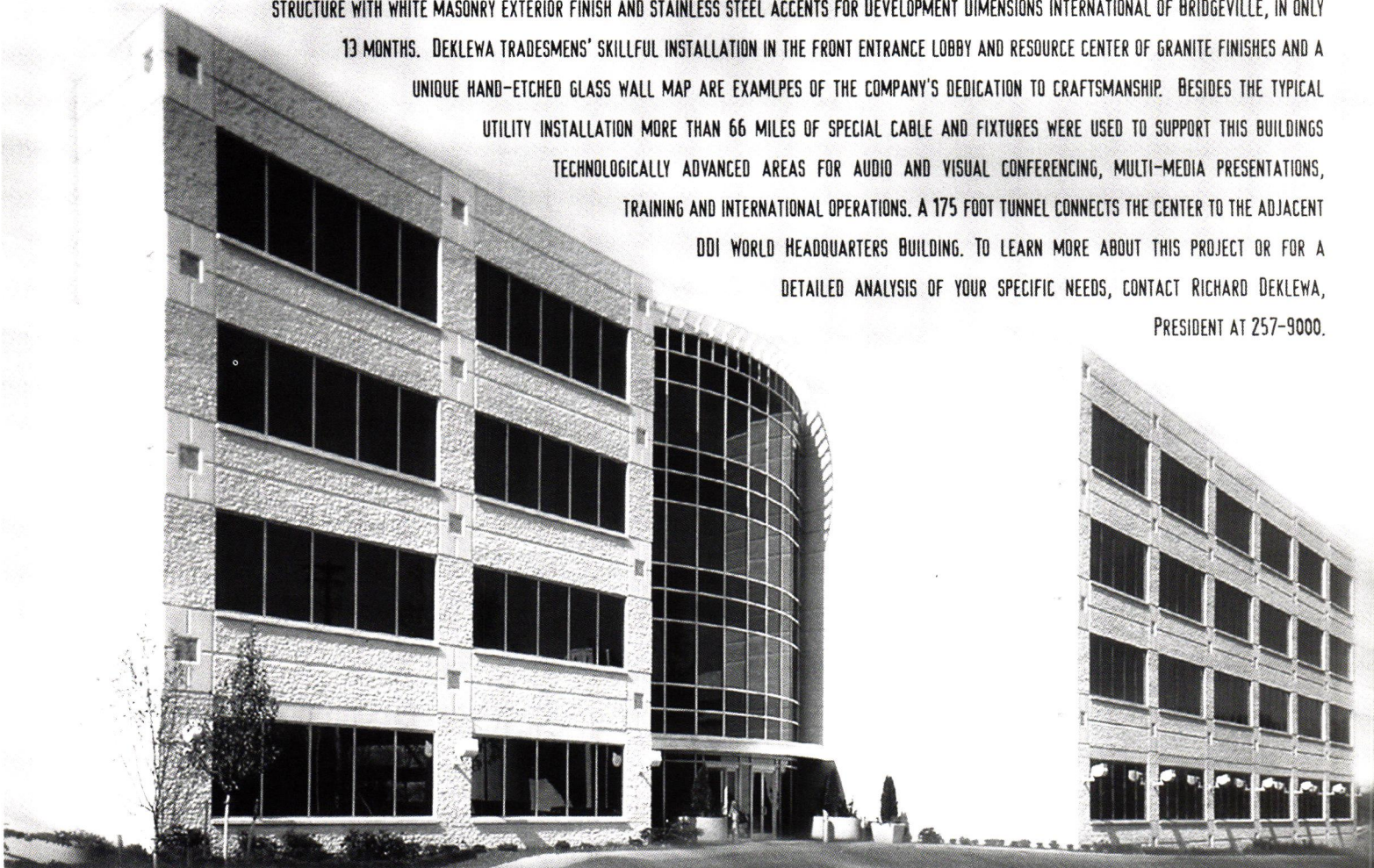
C O L U M N S





DEKLEWA DEVELOPS A NEW DIMENSION

THE RECENT COMPLETION BY JOHN DEKLEWA & SONS, INC. OF THE NEW CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TECHNOLOGY SIGNALS ANOTHER MILESTONE IN THE CONSTRUCTION FIRM'S LONG HISTORY OF PROJECTS FOR HIGH PROFILE CLIENTS. DEKLEWA CONTRACTORS ERECTED THIS "STATE OF THE ART" FOUR STORY STEEL FRAME STRUCTURE WITH WHITE MASONRY EXTERIOR FINISH AND STAINLESS STEEL ACCENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS INTERNATIONAL OF BRIDGEVILLE, IN ONLY 13 MONTHS. DEKLEWA TRADESMEN'S SKILLFUL INSTALLATION IN THE FRONT ENTRANCE LOBBY AND RESOURCE CENTER OF GRANITE FINISHES AND A UNIQUE HAND-ETCHED GLASS WALL MAP ARE EXAMPLES OF THE COMPANY'S DEDICATION TO CRAFTSMANSHIP. BESIDES THE TYPICAL UTILITY INSTALLATION MORE THAN 66 MILES OF SPECIAL CABLE AND FIXTURES WERE USED TO SUPPORT THIS BUILDING'S TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED AREAS FOR AUDIO AND VISUAL CONFERENCING, MULTI-MEDIA PRESENTATIONS, TRAINING AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS. A 175 FOOT TUNNEL CONNECTS THE CENTER TO THE ADJACENT DDI WORLD HEADQUARTERS BUILDING. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT OR FOR A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF YOUR SPECIFIC NEEDS, CONTACT RICHARD DEKLEWA, PRESIDENT AT 257-9000.



Project Architect: Johnson/Schmidt & Associates

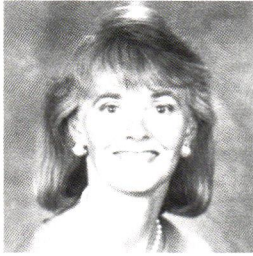
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GENERAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING SUCCESS

Action!

by Cheryl R. Towers



"Once you can accept the universe as matter expanding into nothing that is something, wearing stripes with plaid comes easy." — ALBERT EINSTEIN

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AIA Pittsburgh has a certain reputation as a

"fun" Chapter. Committee meetings are usually places to be bored, fall asleep, kill creativity or some combination of the above. Not at AIA Pittsburgh.

I can attest personally to two of them: COTE and the Communications Committee. Having waxed eloquent in the past on COTE antics, I'll turn my attention to Communications. This group is currently comprised of Chairman David Vater, AIA and members Bob Bailey, AIA, Alan Fishman, AIA, and Donald Zeilman, AIA. When you add staff to the mix (e.g. Anne Swager, Joan Kubancek and me), you get a happy crew. We eat, we talk, we throw around ideas, and recently, we watched movies. Lots and lots of movies.

All of this was inspired by my running across an article in *Columns* that pre-dated my involvement and that discussed movies and architecture. It didn't mention movies that featured *Pittsburgh* architecture, I was surrounded by movie addicts, and thus, a topic was born. Some assignments were obvious, if not enthusiastically embraced by the recipient (Alan won the right to review *The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh* - a little nomenclature humor). I was punished for avoiding really scary movies (*Silence of the Lambs*) by having to watch some really bad ones (*Striking Distance*). Joan took *Flashdance* to save Bob Bailey who had committed to do a book review for the same issue.

And so it went. We had fun, and we hope you do, too. In the process, perhaps some of you can help solve a few mysteries. There are several movies in our comprehensive list indicated by a star. While Pittsburgh is a topic and/or the setting for these films, we don't know if any scenes were actually shot here (the 1942 John Wayne film, *Pittsburgh*, is a good example). The true mystery, though, is one not on the list. Several sources report that *The Perils of Pauline* was filmed here, but no one can confirm it.

The original was filmed in 1914 (no print exists today), and other versions appeared later, including a 1940's edition starring Betty Hutton.

On another topic, salary issues are often on our minds, spurred this month by the release of a new AIA survey. While the region acquits itself well when compared to national statistics, salaries are a stark reminder of the difference between the valuation of architectural services and other licensed professions. While first year intern architects average \$28,400 in the Pittsburgh metro area, at least two Pittsburgh law firms are compensating new law school recruits with \$90,000 starting salaries. As one of our respondents commented, "You've got to be willing to pay for talent." And as a lawyer friend of mine explained, "We're not that dumb. We know that they aren't worth \$90,000 today. We're just capturing the best and the brightest while they're available, and that's the price of eggs. Believe me, it would cost us a lot more to try to woo them from another firm later." Don't even ask the value of lowly scribes!

There are endless quotes attributed to the famous, many of them of dubious origin although fitting the personality. Did Mark Twain really say that "the coldest winter I ever spent was summer in San Francisco?" We know for a fact that Kurt Vonnegut never gave the graduation speech in which he is said to have given the grads this advice: "Wear sunscreen!" With that in mind, I have no idea whether or not the following was really uttered by Albert Einstein. I like it anyway, so here it is: "Once you can accept the universe as matter expanding into nothing that is something, wearing stripes with plaid comes easy."

Enjoy your Thanksgiving break, and go easy on the pumpkin pie.

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh 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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New buildings must be done with sensitivity and a clear understanding of what is unique about Pittsburgh. The preservation of our architecturally significant buildings and facades would also help to maintain the city's special spirit.

Market Place at Fifth and Forbes: Open the Dialogue, Insist on Quality

by Edward A. Shriver Jr., AIA

Cities are amazing things. They are the physical manifestation of the community, growing and changing with it. Our history is written in the buildings that define our city.

What we choose to build or not build says volumes about who we are, and what is important to us. Perhaps equally important, cities never reflect a single vision. They are a composite of our collective views.

The Market Place at Fifth and Forbes is an important element in this tapestry of Pittsburgh. Its goal, to strengthen and rebuild the retail core of our city and the region, is both vital and overdue. In order to ensure that this project reflects those things that are most important to us, two fundamental obligations should be met in this project:

- Full and open public process to solicit the hopes, fears, ideas and expectations of the people of the area who will live with the results.
- Top quality architectural and urban design.

The process to date has been shrouded in secrecy and limited to a relative handful of people. It is critically important that this now open up, in a meaningful and participatory way. The people of this city have a right, by virtue of their tax dollars at work, to insist on being part of the design process, not just the approval process. They are the client, the users who will decide if this project will succeed. Design

workshops run by City Planning department could provide a structured venue for public input. Failure to include such input will surely result in a less than successful project. The only thing worse than doing nothing would be to do this project badly.

The second element we should look for is top quality architectural and urban design. This type of project has not been done, in the manner proposed, anywhere else in this country. Done well, it can become a milestone and benchmark by which other cities will judge their own urban redevelopment efforts. Done poorly, it could impede the long term growth and prosperity of our region.

The architectural design is particularly important. Centrally planned large-scale development can often have a homogeneous look that is very different from the rich depth of character achieved through incremental development and construction. New buildings must be done with sensitivity and a clear understanding of what is unique about Pitts-

burgh. The preservation of our architecturally significant buildings and facades would also help to maintain the city's special spirit. It is paramount to retain the urban feeling that rich and diverse architecture creates. A diverse mix of businesses, developers, and architects would help to maintain and extend the urban character we should demand.

Good urban design would start with street-focused retail, avoiding the inwardly focused model of the suburban shopping mall. This objective has already been recognized. But simply opening the stores to the street is not enough. A fine local example is East Carson Street, where small-scale diverse development forms the heart of Pittsburgh's South Side. Walnut Street in Shadyside has similar qualities, and also features a varied mix of local businesses and national retail stores.

A second important urban design goal is for the effects of a successful design to radiate from the area. The area selected is the traditional retail area of the city. The Market Place must build on that decision, and not be conceived or implemented as a separate piece; it can only succeed if it acknowledges, enhances, and encourages appropriate development in the surrounding vicinity, and responds to existing places like Market Square and the Cultural District.

Finally, it is important that the mix of retailer not displace local merchants only with national chains who can afford to pay higher rents. We must preserve the ability of small, local businesses to remain in the Downtown business corridor, so that we do not lose those singular businesses that differentiate Pittsburgh from any other revitalized city in North America.

This project represents a landmark opportunity to promote growth and improve the quality of life in our city and the region. It deserves our attention and support. That does not mean that it should be accepted without question, or without our input and criticism.

With a truly open dialogue about the project and an insistence on top quality architecture and strong urban design, this project can be both a financial success and an asset that represents our shared vision of what Pittsburgh should be.

(A version of this column appeared as an Op-Ed piece in the Sunday, October 10, 1999 edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.)

