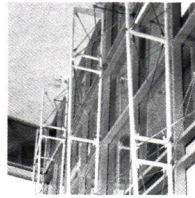
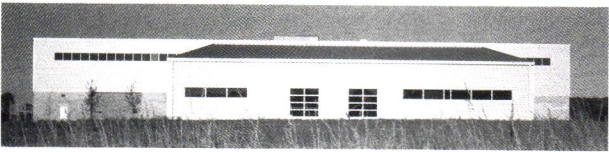
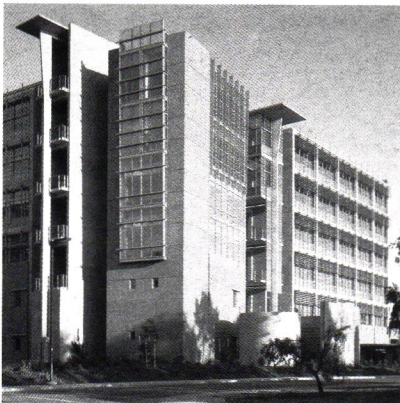
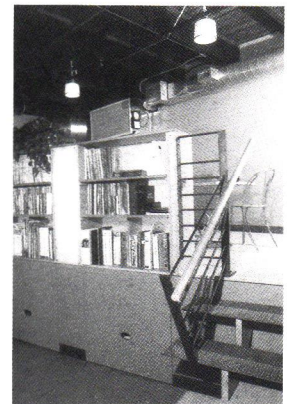


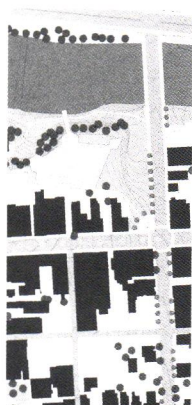
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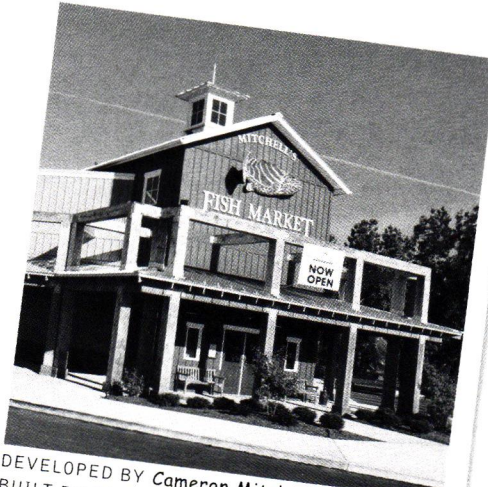
DESIGN **AWARDS**



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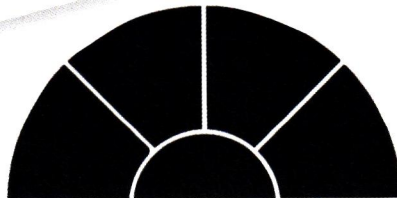
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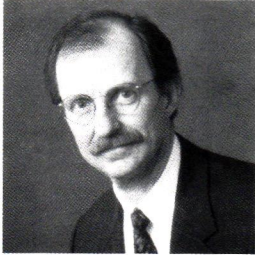
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Design Quality and Public Policy

By Rich DeYoung, AIA



“When we participate and affect the environment in which we practice, our opportunity to provide quality design services improves and we all win.”

Hopefully, you joined in at least some,

if not all, of the activities offered as part of AIA Pittsburgh's *Design Pittsburgh*, our month-long celebration of architecture in October. This year, for the first time, our firm opened its doors for the firm tour on Architects' Saturday. What a great opportunity to present what we do as a profession to a group of eager and inquisitive high school students just beginning to consider what architecture could offer them as a career. If you haven't participated before, I highly recommend that you consider participating in the future.

Two new twists on old events breathed a bit of new life into Design Pittsburgh this year. First, the format of the Gold Medal presentation was changed to more properly reflect the prestige of the award by presenting it in a special reception preceding the Design Gala, cosponsored by AIA Pittsburgh's Foundation for Architecture. Recognizing contributions to the quality of the built environment is squarely on target with the mission for the Foundation and the event provided an important source of funding for its activities. By her own admission, our honoree, Carol Brown, couldn't have been more thrilled to have been honored for her contributions by the architectural community.

The second change was in the format of the Design Awards ceremony. This year the board decided to first present the awards, followed by a reception celebrating architecture and the winners. From observations and comments, it appears to have been a success.

So what does this discussion about celebrating architecture and recognizing our best have to do with public policy? Let me start by saying that for most of my career, I have been a pretty typical architect when it comes to politics, in a word: apolitical. Not such a bad perspective you might say; after all, who has time for politics and how will that improve the profession's contribution to society? A few years ago, when AIA PA started the process of forming a political action committee (AIA PA PAC), I gradually became more enlightened regarding the importance of participation in the political process as a profession.

In a recent discussion with a state senator, not the one you are thinking of, another one, the relationship between

public policy and design quality became even clearer to me. I was pointing out to the senator the grossly inadequate fee schedule under which Pennsylvania's Department of General Services compensates architects. Not knowing the details of the schedule, he guessed that we were paid something like 10% or 12% of the construction cost for our services. Wouldn't that be great! He was somewhat shocked to find out that DGS usually pays from 4.5 to 6% depending on the size of the project.

The citizens of Pennsylvania deserve the benefits accrued from exceptionally well-designed public buildings. To achieve this, architects need to be adequately compensated to provide the level of service and attention to detail and the quality of design demanded by public projects.

The AIA PA PAC is very new and still quite small, but we have begun to make an impact. When I mentioned my involvement on the board, the senator was aware of the PAC's efforts and appreciative of the fact that we are participating in the political process. We are making small steps forward. The success of the PAC depends on your continued regular annual contributions.

Our efforts in Harrisburg can improve our ability to practice and provide our best for our clients. When we participate and affect the environment in which we practice, our opportunity to provide quality design services improves and we all win: architects, clients, and society at large. Take a minute to think about that as you consider your support for the PAC. Even a few dollars from every practicing architect in the state will make a big difference in the level of effectiveness we can have in Harrisburg.

As I write this final report to you as President of AIA Pittsburgh, I pause to reflect on what a great opportunity it has been to serve the profession in Pittsburgh. We have a lot going for us. This city is emerging as a significant national design center, with many firms, large and small, now practicing nationally and even internationally. Architecture is a "growth industry" in Pittsburgh, creating jobs as a net exporter of services. We should be proud of our contribution to the city on all levels: economic, social, political and artistic. Let's keep up the great work!

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On the cover: Winners from Design Awards 2003.

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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Orchids, Onions and Good Design By Anne J. Swager, Hon., AIA

Controversy always seems to surround

the jury choice for Design Awards. I have heard complaints ranging from "the jury has too much of a sleek, modern bent" to "who are they anyway?" but the biggest undercurrent of discontent swirls around the People's Choice Award.

We got the idea for the "People's Choice Award" from AIA Dallas which runs an "Orchid and Onion contest" every year. In their version, the public is asked to vote for their favorite and least favorite project of the year. Most startling of all is that most often the same project wins both the Orchid and the Onion. This could lead you to the conclusion that the public just doesn't understand design but I think there is more to their vote than that. I won't disagree that when most people are asked to define "good design" they cannot. Worse yet, most of us "lay people" cannot translate your drawing on paper, your computer rendering or even your model into a reasonable facsimile of how the final project will appear. The fact that you can sets you apart from the rest of us but it doesn't mean that the public doesn't care about the places you design.

We have spent considerable time in the past few issues of Columns exploring a variety of ways in which architecture affects the mind. In September, our editor Tracy Certo looked at how design impacts healing in a hospital setting. An additional article talked about the ground breaking and revolutionary research being done at AIA by John Eberhard, FAIA on neuroscience. Last month, Tracy explored the issue of increased worker productivity due to the design of their office environment. As a profession architecture is working towards putting a quantifiable value on design for the client and society at large. It is an attempt to put numbers on an idea that you bought into a long time ago. Design makes a difference and good design is worth the effort.

When I look back on the recent winners of the People's Choice Award, it is an affirmation of how space can positively affect people. Let's take PNC Park, last year's winner

as the first example. It is touted as the best urban ballpark experience in the country. As a baseball fan, I would have to agree although I have to confess to very limited experience in other venues. My enthusiasm for PNC Park is all about the view of the city, the closeness to the field, the comfort of the seats and the relative ease of finding where you are going. It is a place I like to go and links directly to my favorite memories of sunny days, cold beer and being with my children even though the Pirates are lousy. The new Alcoa headquarters is a positive statement about where we are headed as a city. It is all about reclaiming the riverfront and providing a public access. It is a beacon of light on a cold dark night which perhaps lacks the glory of a roaring steel mill but exemplary nonetheless of an industry still thriving in Pittsburgh.

This year's winner, the Southside Works building located at the corner of East Carson Street and Hot Metal Street, once again speaks to what Pittsburgh hopes to become. At the risk of dating myself, I do remember driving down East Carson Street past the old J&L Mill as it belched fire in its heyday. What I remember most is how foreboding that place was as it towered over the roadway and dwarfed we mere humans. The plans for Southside Works are monumental in their own right. The area is large and if all of the new development is achieved it will encompass many uses including a large hotel. What the development does well is extend the street grid of the traditional Southside neighborhood and offer a variety of housing, work spaces and play spaces that at this point do not exist. The public voted for only one piece of the new development but I bet they were also voting for their community and the difference that a new development can bring.

I think we miss the point if we obsess about why the public's choices very seldom coincide with the jury's picks. The jury's picks are based solely on what they consider to be good design and are unencumbered by memory or context. The public picks are more about dreams and ideas of what places can become or the memories they invoke.



As a profession architecture is working towards putting a quantifiable value on design for the client and society at large. Design makes a difference and good design is worth the effort.

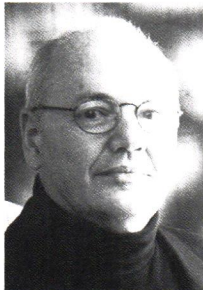


MEET THE JURORS DESIGN AWARDS 2003

Warren Schwartz, FAIA, is principal of award-winning Schwartz/Silver Architects located in Boston. Mr. Schwartz received his Bachelor of Architecture at Cornell University and his Master of Architecture in Urban Design at Harvard University. In 1972, he met Robert Silver while working at Charles Hilgenhurst Associates. From there, they founded Schwartz/Silver Architects in 1980. Many of Schwartz/Silver Architects' projects have won awards, including several AIA National Honor Awards for the Tanglewood House, an AIA/ALA Library Award for the MIT Rotch Library of Architecture and Planning, and an AIA National Honor Award for the Newburyport Firehouse Civic Center. Most recently, the firm won another AIA National Honor Award for the Hyde Park Branch of the Boston Public Library.



Jorge Silvetti, Assoc. AIA was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he received his diploma in architecture from the University of Buenos Aires. He continued studies at the University of California, Berkeley, receiving his Master of Architecture degree and pursuing post-graduate work in the area of architectural theory and criticism. Mr. Silvetti's architectural practice, Machado and Silvetti Associates, was formed with Rodolfo Machado in 1974. Incorporated in 1985, it is now a forty-person office.



Maryann Thompson, AIA, received a BA in Architecture, *magna cum Laude*, from Princeton University; and a Master of Architecture, with distinction, and the AIA Certificate of Merit, from Harvard University Graduate School of Design. She also received a Master in Landscape Architecture from Harvard Graduate School of Design. In 1987 she founded Thompson & Rose Architects. In 2000 she founded Maryann Thompson Architects.



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