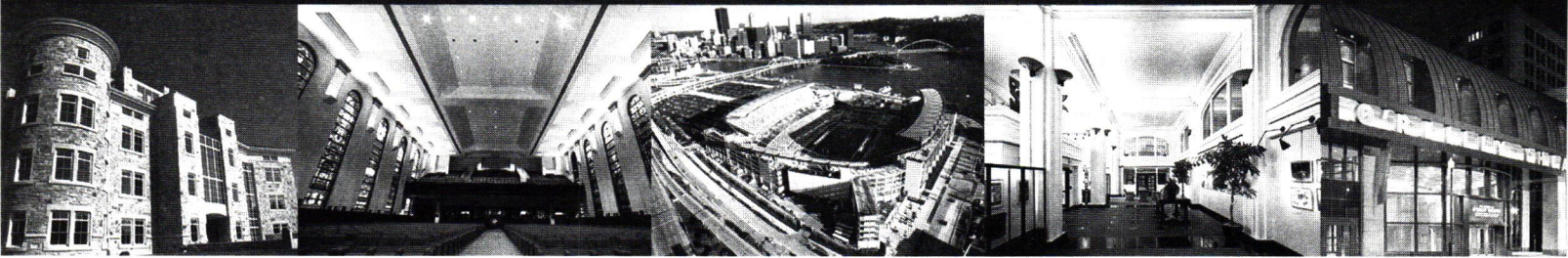


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Design Awards 2006

VOLUME 20, NO. 9 AIA PITTSBURGH, A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS DECEMBER 2006



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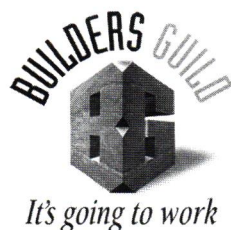
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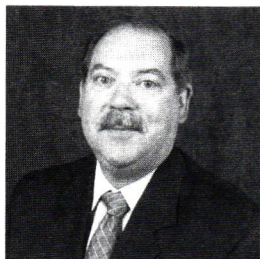


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Design Matters By Tom Briney, AIA



The value of getting this message across is hard to measure—but it's good to let the world know what we do!

Yes. Good design does matter.

This year the events of Design Pittsburgh have underscored how true this is for our region and our professional community. Beginning with the Gallery Crawl exhibition on September 29th, we kicked off Design Pittsburgh (a little early) with a public display of the 96 submissions for this year's awards competition. If you attended, you were one of **over 600 guests** to view and discuss the work of AIA Pittsburgh firms. (The vast majority of the attendees were not architects.) As I viewed the boards and mingled, what impressed me most were the conversations I overheard from non-professionals. Almost without exception, our "guests" talked of the quality of the design and presentations, the range of project types and the care and professionalism evident in the submissions. Some people expressed gratification that AIA Pittsburgh architects were spawning "these kinds of positive impacts in our communities." Clearly, a number of the attendees got to appreciate (for the first time) what we have been broadcasting for years: Our design is recognized for its quality and our work represents the best aspirations to make a difference in improving quality of life and our environment. The value of getting this message across is hard to measure—but it's good to let the world know what we do!

Two weeks later at the Design Gala, we hosted **over 420 people** to formally begin Design Pittsburgh's annual Design Awards competition. Our sponsors, membership and clients shared a highly enjoyable evening of fellowship and discussion about the design submissions. Here the discussions were more about the consistent quality of the work and how we continually value the collaboration with clients and the other professionals that make good projects happen. We all should be gratified in how Design Pittsburgh continues to grow in participation and recognition. It's also noteworthy that a number of our younger and emerging professionals attended the exhibit—what a great

opportunity for them to see what AIA firms are doing locally and beyond.

At the Design Awards Ceremony, Andrew Herdeg, AIA from AIA San Antonio, the jury chair, emphasized a number of times the jury's positive comments about the thoughtful and well-crafted submissions they reviewed. In my discussions with him, this will be a message that I'm sure he will repeat next year at the convention in San Antonio. And, of course, we extend our congratulations to the award winners—peer recognition is probably the highest compliment, and this year it is well deserved.

Beyond the more immediate events of Design Pittsburgh, AIA Pittsburgh has allied itself over the past few years with the Allegheny County Medical Society (and recently with the Allegheny County Bar Association) to create forums to discuss topics of concern to our professions and region (for example: obesity and diversity). While our collaboration might seem odd at first glance, we each share a common concern for the future of the Western Pennsylvania region and how we can each influence public policy in creating healthier, more vibrant and sustainable communities. As part of Design Pittsburgh month, we co-hosted a radio spot with the Allegheny County Medical Society on KQV radio—and the message was how good design can create opportunities for healthy living.

As you all know it takes considerable effort for us to get the recognition we deserve. Consider, too, the numbers I have quoted and the potential reach of AIA Pittsburgh's message. At your urging, the Chapter Board has worked diligently (and will continue) to create the right opportunities for this to occur. Let's enjoy this success and commit together to build on it for the future.

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On the cover: The Stuckeman Family Building for the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, at The Pennsylvania State University. By Overland Partners / WTW Architects. Photo by Esto Photographics, Inc.