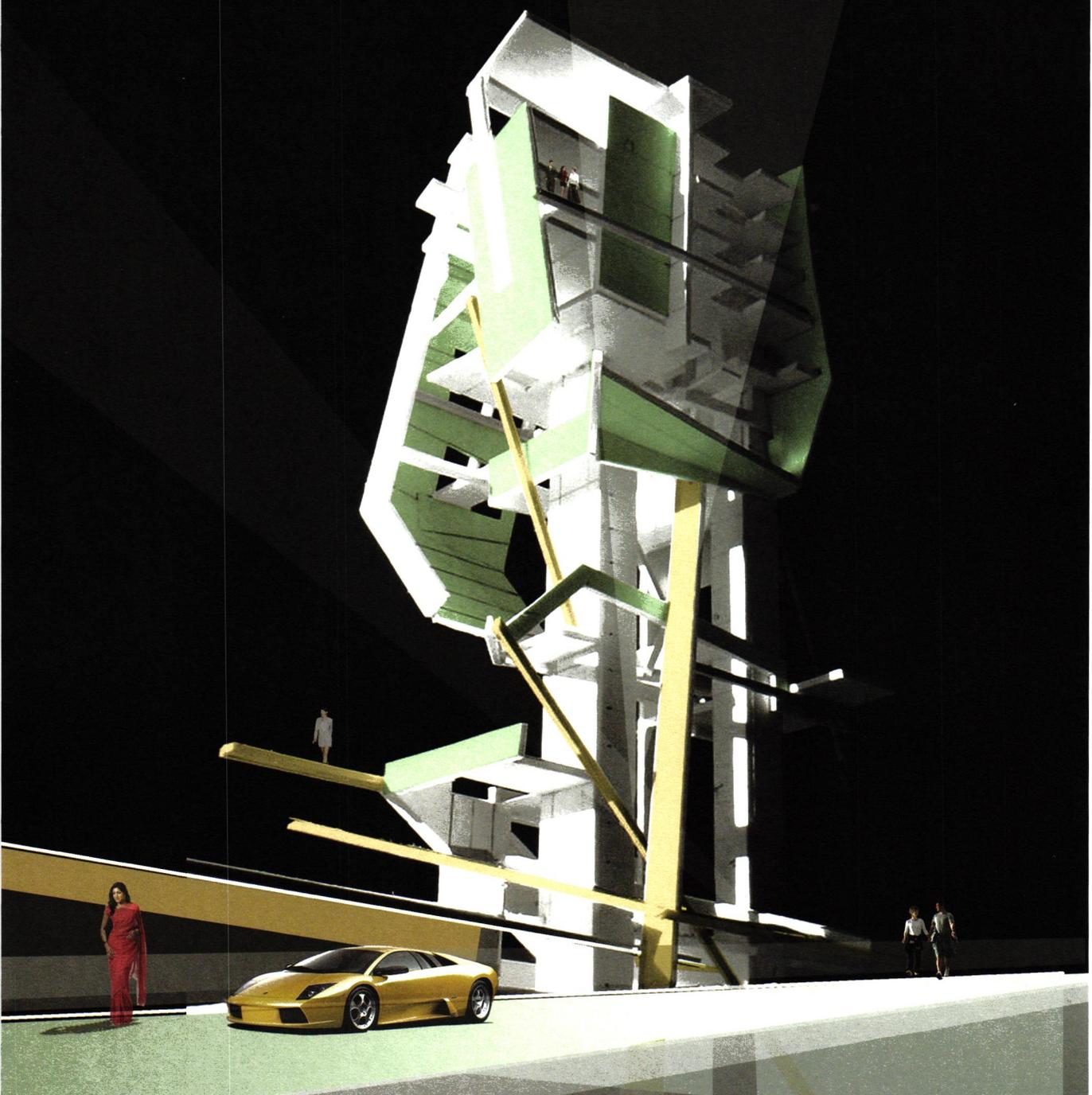


# COLUMNS



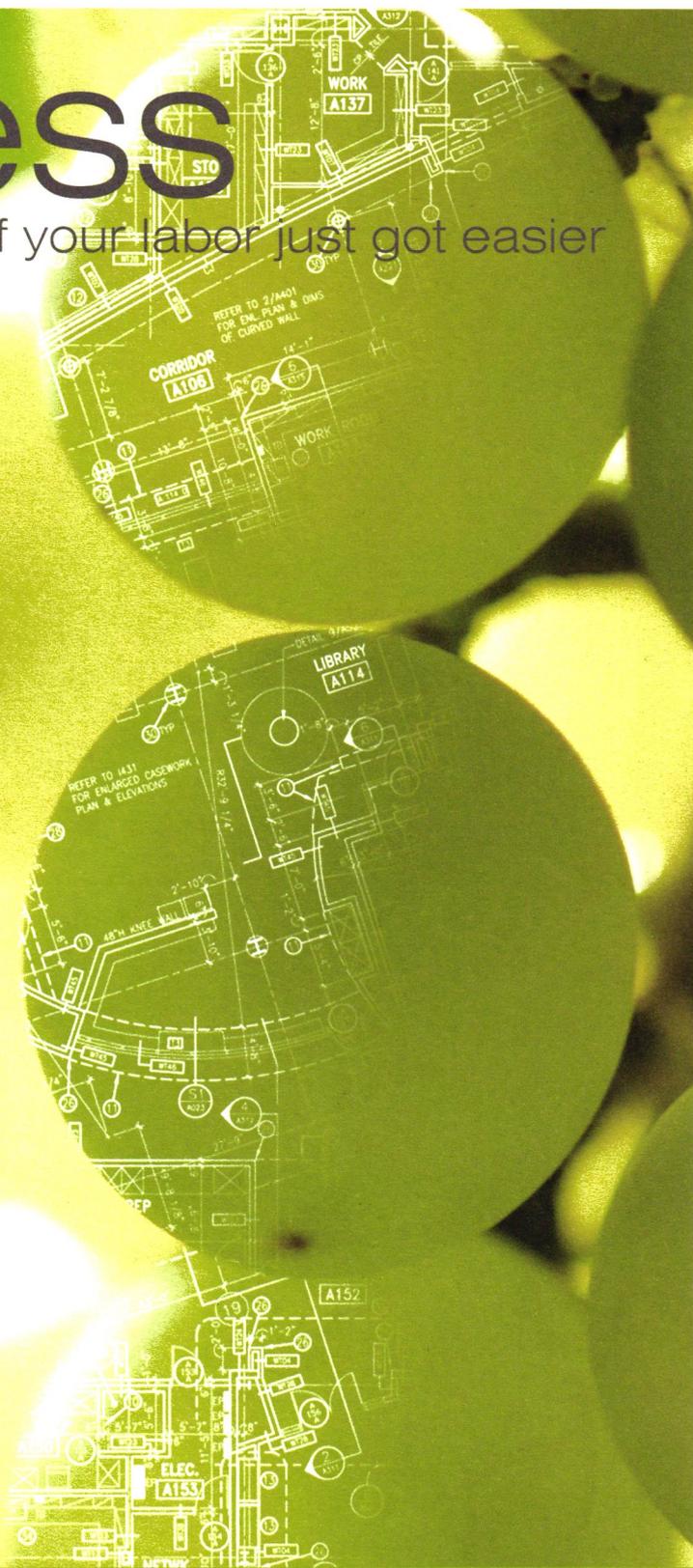
AUG/08

The Art of Experimentation: Where art and architecture meet | The Eighteenth Anniversary of ADA: One advocate's tale | Habitat: Exploring the places where architects work | AIA Pittsburgh, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects

# COLUMNS

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# HOMEFRONT

BY BECKY SPEVACK



**AIA Pittsburgh receives** a lot of magazines. I don't know how we were placed on many of the mailing lists, nor can I figure out why we would be targeted to receive such publications, but with each visit to the mailbox, it seems as though I introduce a new piece of reading material into the office. If you have been to the office, you may have noticed them, stacked high on the small metal cabinet in the bathroom. The stack slowly grows, an inch here (Architectural Record), a half-inch there (Architecture Boston), until closing the door threatens to tumble the pile. At that point I usually spend a solid half hour sorting through them, deciding which ones are worth keeping – those that get tossed at my feet – and which ones have exceeded their shelf life – those that are chucked into the hallway to be bundled for recycling. We usually hold on to the architectural magazines, whereas the weekly Pittsburgh Business Times is discarded after only a week or two. But once in a while, something will catch me by surprise.

During my most recent dig through the magazine pile, I came across an issue of BusinessWeek SmallBiz. I didn't recognize it, but the graphics and images were interesting, so I set it aside for future reading. The cover boasted "Meet the Antipreneurs: They're Against Advertising, Globalization, & Big Business." It sounded provocative, if not exactly interesting. On the bus that afternoon, I pulled out my new find, and started leafing through it. The thing is, weeks after bringing it home, I still haven't read about those "antipreneurs". Instead I focused on an article called "Graveyard Shift", which highlights a new line of entrepreneurs in the funeral industry, business men and women who have introduced a number of spins to a centuries-old business, offering everything from eco-friendly burial shrouds to the opportunity to have cremated remains scattered through a fireworks

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On the cover: Jindal Villa, Mumbai, India

display. The stories told in this short feature fascinated me on a number of levels. What stood out most of all were the people behind such ideas. Not only had they thought up the products, but they followed through, investigating what it would take to create such opportunities, going through research and development, trial and error, and then having to sell someone else on the marketability and need for their idea.

This willingness to try something different, to step outside the norm, is where the chances are often found to create something great, to reinvent public perception - within a profession, and on a larger scale. As a profession, architecture has had its fair-share of risk-takers, architects who refuse to conform, who push materials, ideas, physics, and even contractors to the very edge, who only feel comfortable at that edge, where they can look out into the vast unknown, and begin filling it with their own ideas of what a building should be. Just like the trailblazers in the funeral business, such architects are willing to take risks, and to experiment. Our main feature in this issue focuses on experimentation and how it has impacted the built environment. Writer Deborah Knox spoke with some local architects who have drawn attention for their innovative design work about the risks they have taken.

In the vein of experimentation, we are also introducing a new feature for *Columns*. You may recall the occasional “Habitat” feature of old, in which former editor Tracy Certo explored the places architects call home. “Habitat” is back with a new spin – a look into architects’ offices and work spaces, their home away from home. If you are like many of the architects I know, you know what it is to spend long hours in the office – arriving early in the mornings, into the evenings, on the weekends. Architects have a reputation of having a strong, lasting work ethic, and of being extremely detail-oriented. It seems that architects spend a lot of time in the studio, and some weeks, it seems as though they live there. It is with this in mind that we introduce the new “Habitat.” *Columns* will visit an office, acquire photographs of the space, and talk with members of the firm. We’ll find out what it is like to work at a featured office and how the design of the space reflects the work the firm does. For this introductory edition of Habitat, we visited the newly-named Rothschild Doyno Collaborative. With a new space in the Strip District, the firm has a lot to say about location, mindset, and design. If you think your firm would like to be profiled, please let me know at [bspevack@aiapgh.org](mailto:bspevack@aiapgh.org)! 



# WALKING THE WALK

BY ANNE J. SWAGER, HON. AIA

**When the ADA** was first signed there was a lot of noise as architects, contractors, and the like focused on the lack of clarity inherent in a law that was essentially about civil rights but also happened to address issues of the built environment. The development community was understandably concerned about the impact these new regulations would have on costs. The law lacked the surety of a building code and no one was trained to interpret it. Luckily for Pittsburgh, we had Bob Lynch, FAIA, who understood the law and the nuances necessary in designing for a wide range of disabilities. Bob has spent the majority of his career insuring that the needs of this ever-growing population are met and that we are all the beneficiaries of his work. Be sure to read our interview with him on page 26.



When the ADA passed in 1990 I knew only a few people with disabilities. Things changed for me in 1996 when my youngest child Ellen was born and subsequently diagnosed with cerebral palsy. While her disabilities are much less severe than many others with the same condition, she has spent varying amounts of time in a wheelchair. She has also walked with the aid of a walker. She transitioned to walking independently after she was caught running down the corridors of her elementary school, lifting her legs and “gliding” until her walker stopped. This terrified the entire school, as witnesses were sure she was headed for disaster each time she flew by.

While Ellen now walks independently she cannot negotiate steps without a railing. If a curb is relatively small she can step up or down from it unaided, but if it is typically sized she needs an arm assist. Ellen becomes more independent each day but many challenges remain.

By the time you read this column, I will be recovering from total knee replacement surgery. I have struggled for the past several months with a very painful knee condition, with the inability to walk very far or to stand for any length of time. I am fortunate that my lack of mobility is temporary. However, I have had it just long enough to really appreciate the differences that thoughtful design can yield. I can't wait to walk easily again and in the meantime, I have to confess... I am grateful for drive-throughs.

In this issue we also sadly say goodbye to Jon Shimm, AIA. Jon suffered a heart attack that ended his life far too soon. I had the privilege of working with Jon for a number of years. He was a thoughtful and diligent Board member. He always spoke his mind and could be counted on to present alternative views. Jon believed in the talents of everyone around him and always pushed me to do my best work. He was one of the few people in my life who called me “Swager” and got away with it. One year, Ellen was recovering from some painful surgery at the Children's Institute. My husband Bill and I were with her around the clock, except one Sunday when Jon rescued us and took us on a tour of “Summerset”. We checked out the whole site, the views, and then toured model homes. Then, of course, we critiqued everything. That was Jon... reaching out to others.

Jon deeply loved his family. He was proud of his boys, Abe and Alex, and his wife, Judy. He loved the family dog, Jazz, too – despite her mischief. I will miss Jon's sense of humor, his intense interest in all things political, his encouragement, and our frequent lunches when he always bragged about Alex, Abe, and Burt Hill. Jon was the real deal and I am grateful for the gift of his friendship. **C**

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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Volume 22, No. 4



## DESIGN PITTSBURGH 2008 = PAPERLESS SUBMISSIONS

In a continued effort to streamline processes and cut down on waste, AIA Pittsburgh introduces paperless submissions for 2008. All submission kits and information will be available on our website for download. Please make sure to read submission criteria thoroughly and feel free to call the AIA Pittsburgh office with any questions.

## AIA PITTSBURGH CONTINUING EDUCATION ACADEMY

Still need some continuing education credits? Looking to learn something new? Join Ron Blank and Associates and AIA Pittsburgh on Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> for a full day of continuing education seminars worth 6 AIA/CES LUs (HSW). This opportunity will be held at the Regional Enterprise Tower, 425 Sixth Avenue, 23<sup>rd</sup> Floor, and includes complimentary breakfast and lunch. The cost is \$100 for AIA and CSI members who register before the early bird deadline of September 7<sup>th</sup>, \$125 for those who register after the deadline; \$125 for nonmembers before September 7<sup>th</sup>, and \$150 for nonmembers after the deadline. To register, you can contact the AIA Pittsburgh office at 412-471-9548, or register online by going to the AIA Pittsburgh website: [www.aiapgh.org/calendar.html](http://www.aiapgh.org/calendar.html)

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:00 AM – Registration & Breakfast

#### 8:30 AM – Anti-fracture/Sound Control & Waterproofing Flooring Underlayments

This session will focus on anti-fracture membranes for ceramic tile and stone flooring and why these products are an important part of today's tile installations. Also covered: sound control and more.

*Speaker: Rocky Hill, Protecto Wrap*  
(1HSW LU)

#### 9:30 AM – The Basics of Polished Concrete

At the conclusion of this course you will have a better understanding of what polished concrete is and how it is achieved mechanically, enhanced chromatically, and protected chemically.

*Speaker: Jason Barnes, Productions Team*  
(1HSW LU)

#### 10:30 AM – Understanding Quartz Surfacing Material

What is quartz and where can it be found? What is the Breton manufacturing process? What are the differences between acrylic solid surfaces, stone, and quartz surfaces?

*Speaker: Dennie Rickman, Consentino USA*  
(1HSW LU)

11:30 AM – Lunch

#### 12:30 PM – Best Practices & Guidelines for Tile Installation

We'll explore best practices for surface preparation, tiling over radiant heat flooring, installing glass tiles, and installing porcelain tile.

*Speaker: Brian Petrucci, Flooring Group*  
(1HSW LU)

#### 1:30 PM – Specifying for Mold, Moisture, & Fire Management

This session will examine construction materials that inhibit mold, fungus, insect propagation and preventing Sick Building Syndrome. We'll also look at materials that offer ASTM fire/water/smoke protection, and more.

*Speaker: Michael Raimondo, Dragon Board*  
(1HSW LU)

#### 2:30 PM – Solutions for Large Openings

This session will focus on the use of large, movable wall systems and door systems for large openings.

*Speaker: Kevin Mowery, Nana Wall Systems*  
(1HSW LU)

3:30 PM – Closing & Networking

## IN MEMORIAM: JON SHIMM, AIA

The architecture community has lost a friend, mentor, and talented designer as a result of Jon Willingham Shimm's death on Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Having no real ties to Pittsburgh, Jon, with a Master of Architecture degree from Columbia University, came to the city in 1990 in search of opportunity. Although he thought the move would be temporary, he began what turned out to be a 17-year career at Burt Hill. Jon aimed to grow professionally, and quickly became an important asset to the firm. In recognition of his devotion, Jon was promoted to Principal on January 1, 2000. As a leader he excelled, and he also served as President for the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 2002.

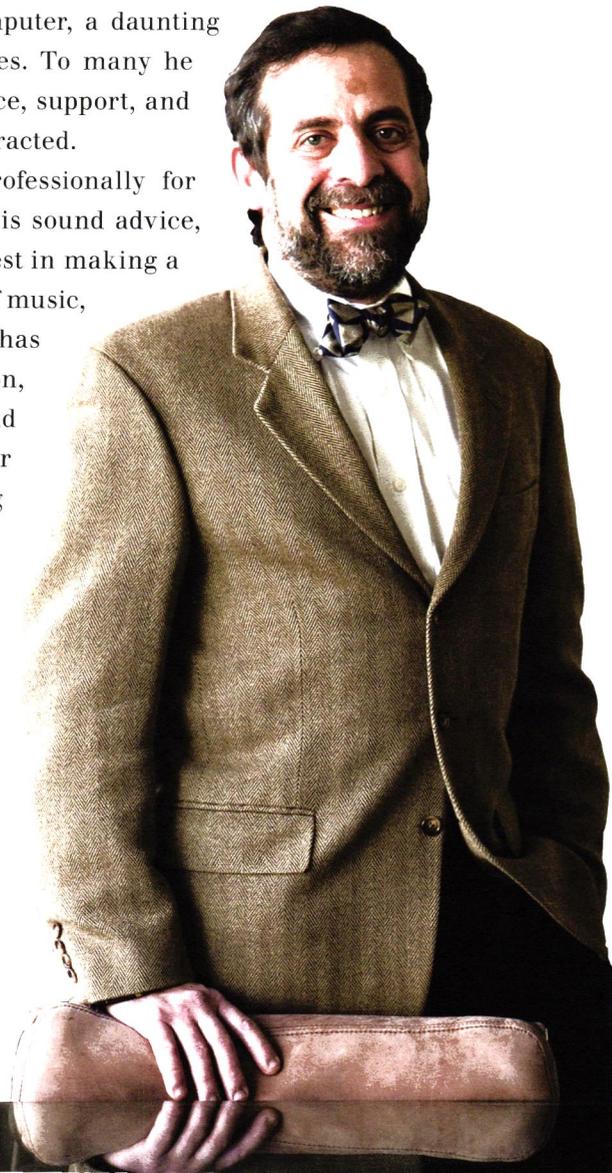
Throughout his time in Pittsburgh, Jon used his unique talents and strong determination to help his company expand and improve its capabilities, contributing to its growth and overall success. Many can still recall his earlier years at Burt Hill when he, the first architect in the Pittsburgh office to do so, persevered to develop a complete set of construction documents on the computer, a daunting and seemingly impossible task of the times. To many he also served as a teacher, providing guidance, support, and encouragement to those with whom he interacted.

Jon will be remembered not only professionally for his design talent, but also personally for his sound advice, penchant for good food and bow ties, interest in making a genuine connection with others, and love of music, the outdoors, and the arts. Everyone he led has become a reflection of his own dedication, creativity, curiosity, intelligence, wit, and passion. Those who have worked with him, or were taught by him, benefited from learning from the best.

Jon is survived by his beloved wife, Judy (Willingham) Shimm, and his children, Abe and Alex. Memorial contributions may be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation at [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org). 

*"I have come to love Pittsburgh in a way I have not any other place that I have lived."*

*– Jon Shimm, AIA in a memo to his Burt Hill family, February 1, 2008*





# the art of experimentation

Where art and architecture meet

BY DEBORAH KNOX

**Experimentation is an essential part** of the design process, but is it a secret activity carried out by a team of designers huddled in the studio, or an open process, supported by the client? What makes the magic happen? Ultimately it can happen either way. Ideally it incorporates a little bit of both.

## EXPERIMENTATION AND VISION



Known for his wildly imaginative designs, Burt Hill's James O'Toole, Assoc. AIA may be best known for the steelworkers sculpture at the Hot Metal Bridge and the two dinosaurs he designed for Dino Days a few years ago – the “Tonkasaurus” and the winged Da Vinci T-Rex, sponsored by his former employer Astorino. His experimentation and creativity comes from an emotional place deep inside.

Most architects, when asked to come up with concept sketches, study history and context, look through magazines, and examine other similar work to inform the design (as they are taught)

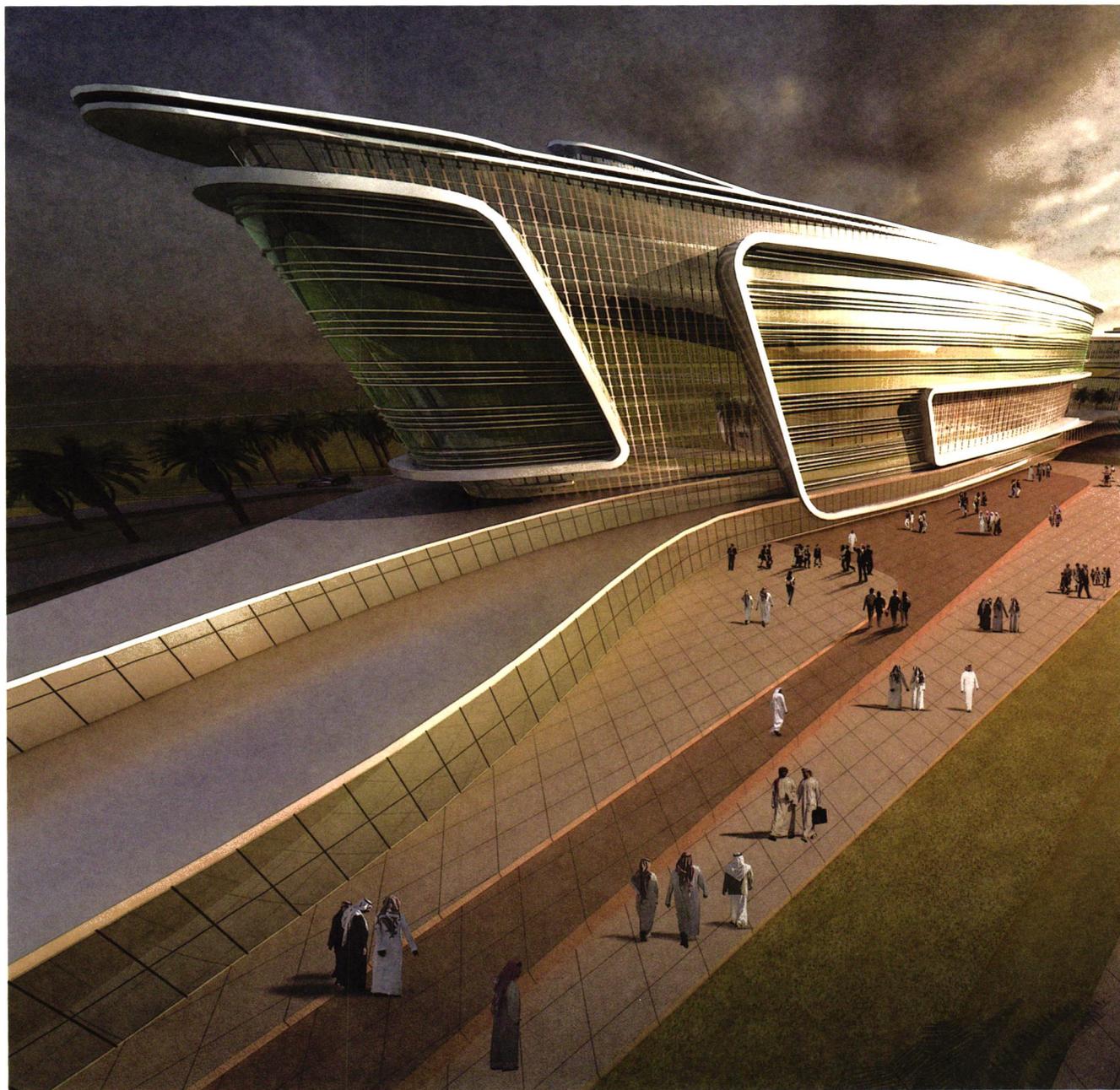
and then integrate the elements, through experimentation, to create a design in line with the client's program. O'Toole doesn't work that way at all. To him, it's an emotional-visceral process that perhaps cannot be learned; many of his inspirations come from dreams and observational analogies. His sketches inspire his work, and designs sometimes re-emerge years after original concepts.

"Before I could understand materiality, I had to understand the internal poetic proportions of the space," he explained. "I don't think it's about buildings."

It certainly isn't.

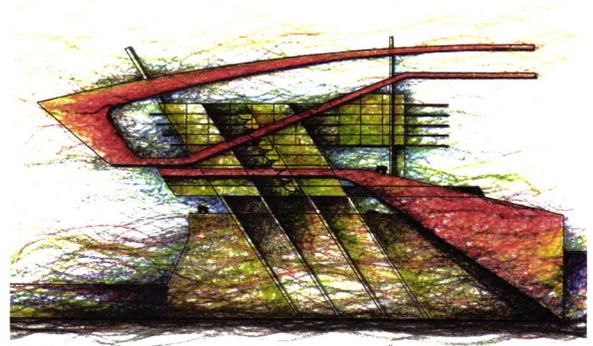
O'Toole talked about experiencing a "Chiros Moment." He described it as that moment when heaven time and earth time intersect; things align and become very clear and you have to seize that opportunity right then, because another one like it may never come along. O'Toole feels that the growth and development in Dubai exposed such a moment, which has, in turn, given him new life and new zeal for his discipline. He has found an artistic home where the experimentation continues within Burt Hill. They have given him the space to live and breathe in his artistic interpretation of architecture.

In 2006, O'Toole had the opportunity to



create the design for a massive hotel and residential complex in Dubai. The design included a 431-meter tower, 90 stories in steel and concrete, with a 17-story podium that included swimming pools, atria, and restaurants. It was far larger than any project he had designed to date. The podium was comprised of a building pedestal with an intricate array of curved and carved arches and an elaborate tower with a façade of tulip-like leaves wrapping the structure and reaching toward the top.

“At a certain point,” O’Toole said, “I could come up with an exterior design, but when I had to structure it, everyone started running away



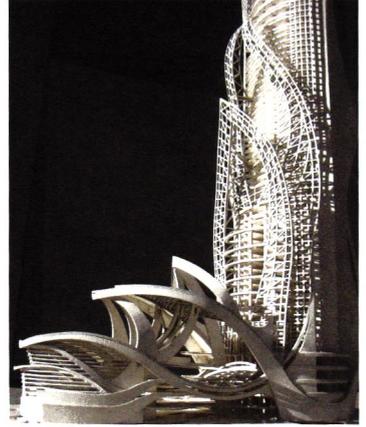
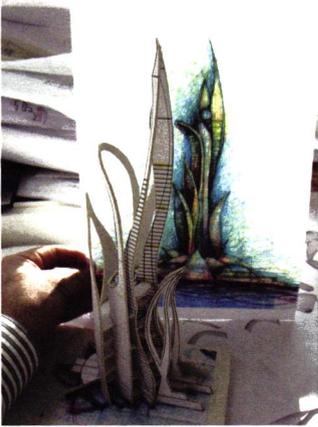
from me.” Knowing that it was possible to make his “seemingly untouchable” creation into a viable, buildable structure, he met with world-renowned Leslie Robertson Associates, LLC Engineers. He brought them a hand-sculpted physical model that he had built with a laser cutter. The engineering team asked for O’Toole’s Autocad drawing diary of the laser model and the sculpted model, and, after review, simply said to him, “It’s done.” Everything was aligning. The project could finally move forward.

The Dubai building was finally slated for construction until a new client administrative project team came into the company and reevaluated the master plan. The plans for the tower have been put on hold from the development, and construction was halted. Fortunately, another client has shown interest, and the design is now being reconsidered.

For another project, when sharing a conceptual model with the design team, O’Toole explained that they reacted as though the design was complete; they saw it as a “pristine white sketch model.” To emphasize that it was simply a work in progress, he poured his morning coffee over it – shocking everyone but breaking the stifling intensity of the session. From there, the team could freely discuss how the design could continue to evolve. O’Toole has the ability to see beyond what’s immediately in front of him; to see that the root of architecture is more about being sculptural. His buildings allow him to leave the world of the tangible and enter a



Top: 10-story residence tower, Palm Island, Dubai, U.A.E.  
Left: Yas Island Hotel, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.

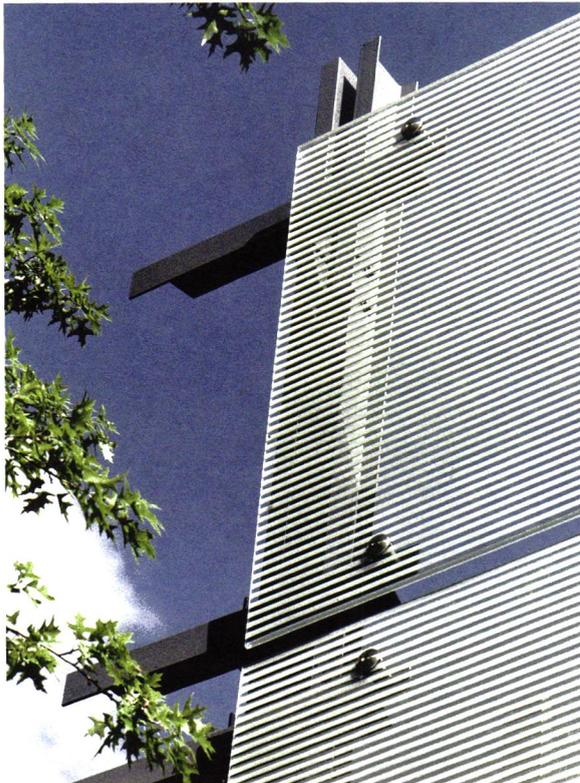


99-story residential/hotel tower, Dubai, U.A.E.

spiritual realm where he is creating, drawing, sculpting. He goes to the root of the profession, acting not only as the designer, but also the creator and the builder.

## CLIENT SUPPORT IN EXPERIMENTATION

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson is fortunate to have a progressive clientele, which affords them the opportunity for experimentation and research toward design ideas. As an example, previous experimentation with glass at the Corning Museum of Glass – Rakow Research Library has



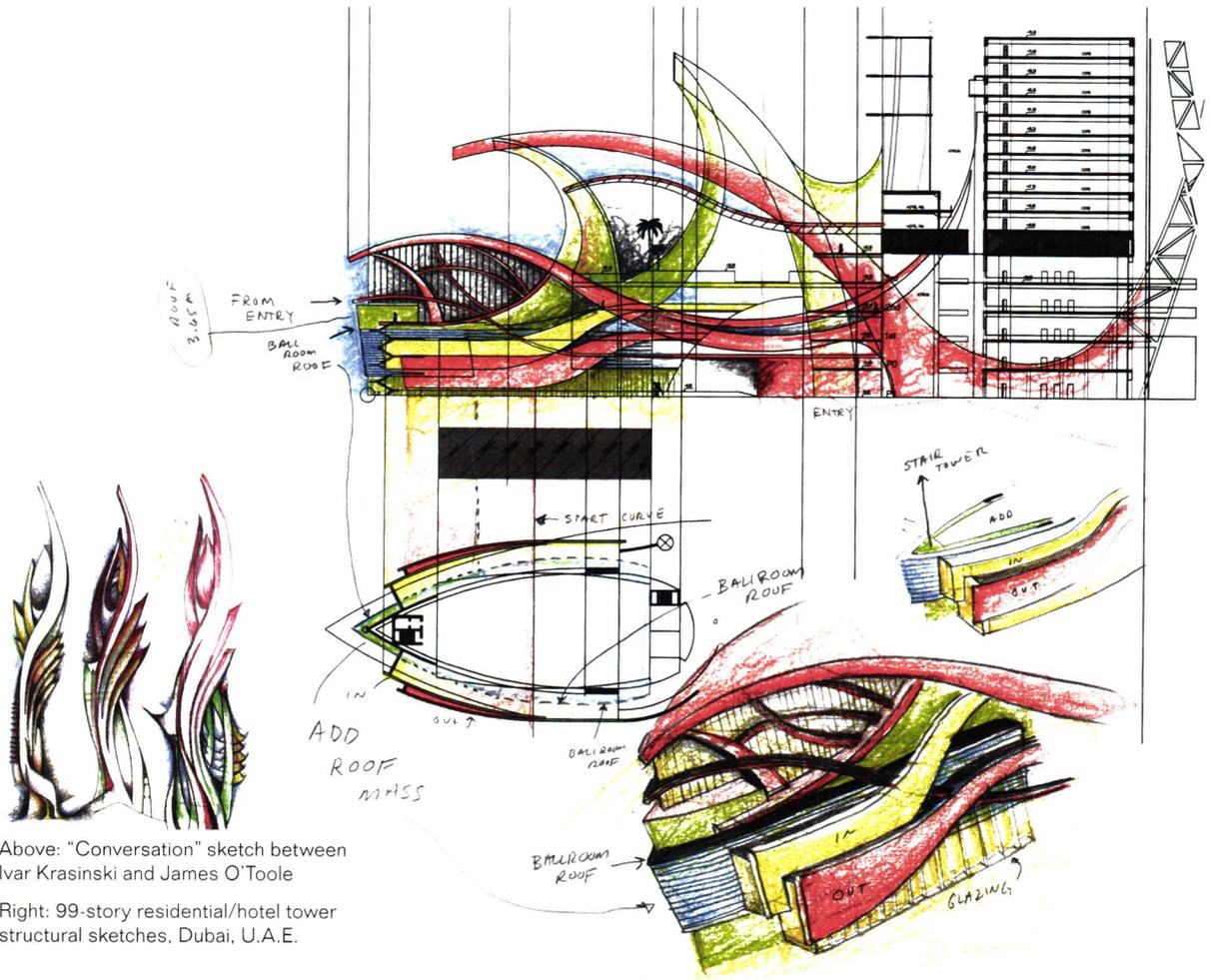
led from that project to other ambitious uses of glass within the firm's work including several signature buildings for Apple.

Michael Maiese, AIA, was the project manager for The Corning Museum of Glass Rakow Research Library in Corning, NY. The project provided an opportunity to explore the utilization of glass and glazing. The library houses a massive archive with a vast array of published materials on the subject of glass. Corning Incorporated has, over the years, brought in national architects for projects in the area to create a dynamic community – they have been good stewards for the development of Corning, NY. Often the design solutions contained an ambitious utilization of glass technology.

To the BCJ design team the Library project posed another interesting opportunity. Exposure to natural light was a critical design factor because while the books and historical papers can be damaged by natural light, the patrons, researchers, and archivists desired daylight and views. The goal was to accommodate both,



Left: A collaboration yields a unique design solution  
Above: Corning Museum of Glass Rakow Research Library



Above: "Conversation" sketch between Ivar Krasinski and James O'Toole

Right: 99-story residential/hotel tower structural sketches, Dubai, U.A.E.

and the experimentation began. The BCJ team studied various design solutions in sketch form, computer and physical models, mock-ups and samples, including a few full-scale mock-ups constructed on-site.

Glass technology was not new to the firm, but they had the opportunity to experiment more, with various uses for glass throughout the project. Among the ambitions was an opportunity to create a specialized shading panel, by coating both sides of glass, which would allow views out, but provide shading from the sun. The first challenge was predicting light refraction through the screen panel at different angles through the various layers. A Corning Inc. scientist – who also was an astronomer – volunteered to assist in the development of mathematical formulas while the BCJ team derived empirical information via the mock-ups. The second challenge was fabrication of such glazing. A key fabrication challenge is that glass cannot be coated

on both sides, and exact tolerances are virtually impossible to achieve. Thus the final collaborations were with the glazing fabricator to marry the technology with the design ambitions to produce the custom glass shading panels. "If it weren't for the client, this extended experimentation may not have happened," Maiese said. "They had an appreciation for the design value and the patience for it."

Since that experience, using expertise gleaned from the Rakow Research Library experiments and continuing relationships developed with designers, engineers, and fabricators during the process, Maiese and the firm have had the opportunity to incorporate various developing glass technologies into other of the firm's designs. "A great deal of energy goes into coordinating all of the technology into a design to make it look very simple," he added. "The amount of effort to make it all work is stunning." As is the result.



Apple Store SoHo

## A CAUTIONARY TALE

Andrew Moss, AIA is the principal of a 6-person firm in East Liberty, open since 2006. His own firm emerged after 15 years with Semple Brown in Denver, CO. In his experience, experimentation can sometimes come with less-than-stellar results.

Before coming to Pittsburgh, he designed the Adegia restaurant in Denver. “The clients were very open and wanted a contemporary design,” he explained. His two experimental features evoked the west’s expansive sky and the stone piles that were a remnant from the region’s mining history.

The first was a series of ceiling planes that were folded and spanned the ceiling. That element was a great success and worked well for acoustics and lighting. The other feature consisted of two stone walls, one made of real stone, clean and stacked, intentionally detailed in a stainless steel frame. The other was a glowing resin stone wall. He found a fiberglass craftsman and worked with him in his shop. He met

with his clients and showed them colors and samples, and believed that everyone on the client team was on board. In his mockups, light glowed through the wall in a bold visual terminus. But, the built result wasn’t what was expected and the client was displeased. Moss ended up having to tear it out and rebuild. “It was a real mess,” he admitted.

Having gone through that, he explained that “it cost a lot of money and while not perfect in the end, I was satisfied with it.” He believes if the team had been clearer about the fact that the fiberglass wall was an experiment, everyone’s expectation would have been more realistic.

That experience has not dissuaded him from trying new things again. “It was so exciting,” he said. Since then he has incorporated fiberglass into other designs that have been very successful. “What I love about experimenting is finding craftspeople to fabricate the designs. The architect has to work with the guys who will actually be producing the design, and the dialog that occurs is a great experience.”



The Adegas restaurant, Denver

Moss said he learned a lesson: Make sure you talk to your client so that they understand the inherent risks in doing things unconventionally.

## BASED IN MATERIALS

“I’ve never drawn a line between art and architecture,” said Sylvester Damianos, FAIA about his more than four decades of practice. He is well known in the Pittsburgh community as both an artist and an architect. His art, especially his wood reliefs, embody his ability to draw out the innate design structure of the material. Perhaps it isn’t experimentation per se, but his sculptural sensitivity has enhanced the work of others.

In 1984, Fritz Sipple, FAIA, from DRS (Deeter, Ritchey, Sipple) asked him to consult on

the (then called) Westinghouse Energy Center in Monroeville. The issue was a free-standing 85-foot long granite wall designed to screen the entrance to the company dining facilities. DRS conceived the wall as an art gallery and wanted to talk about the details of hanging and special lighting. The suggestion to turn the wall into a piece of art was accepted by both Westinghouse and DRS and the collaboration resulted in a sculptural grid of gently curved aluminum shapes, created by Damianos.

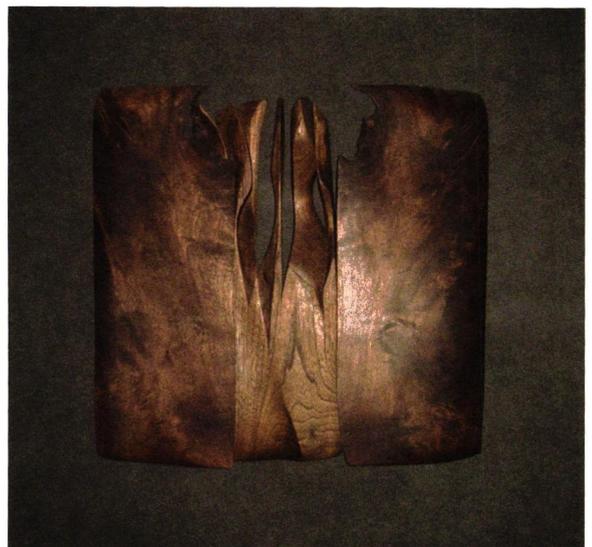
Over the years, Damianos has been commissioned by more than ten other architectural firms to incorporate art in their work – a fact that he is proud of.

## A STUDENT AND TEACHER

Originally an art student, Art Lubetz, AIA now focuses on design solutions that rise from experimentation. At Lubetz Architects, he explains, “Our work is very inexpensive. We’ve never had a big budget for our work.” Lubetz used to think that was a limitation, but now it’s one thing he enjoys working around in finding creative solutions with relatively low-cost materials. He said that the larger challenge is to find contractors who will work with the firm and not raise their price because they are asked to create elements they haven’t built before.



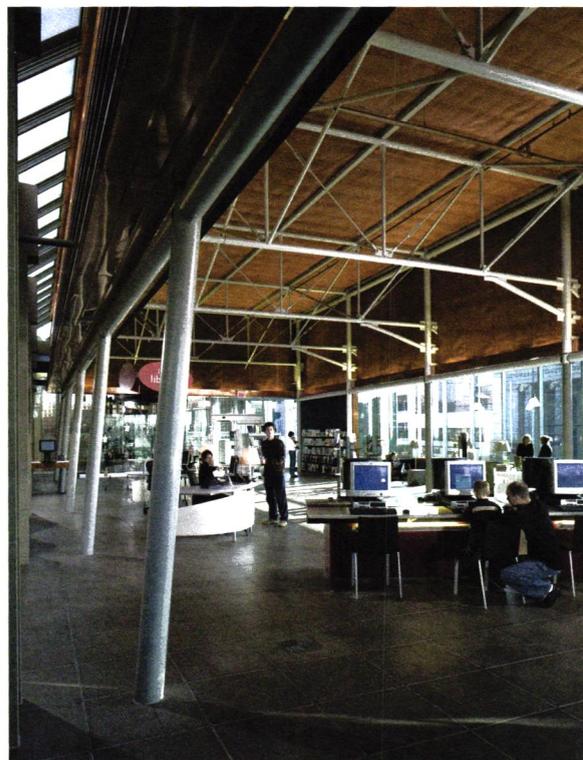
Wooden relief sculptures by Syl Damianos, FAIA



For the Carnegie Library Squirrel Hill, Lubetz ran a series of tests with different materials. They created one feature shaping copper insect screen with black acoustic insulation behind – simple and visually interesting. He explained that they worked with contracting firm Easley and Rivers and they were cooperative and helpful. “The actual workmen make it a pleasure many times.”

He added that they get their work built by being pretty maniacal about what it costs and adhering to budgets, which means experimenting during the process. “When we’re going to use an unusual material or use it in an unusual way, the experience of it becomes unusual. We do research and experiment. The biggest risk is putting it out there and letting people react to it.”

Lubetz adheres to the firm’s philosophy of creating experiential architecture, but doesn’t reach overboard to create sculptural elements. He offered that his projects may appear more sculptured due to the places they’re in and the users’ experience of being in and moving through them. He added, “We engage the embodied mind in the space.”



Carnegie Library Squirrel Hill. Photo © Ed Massery

In addition to experimenting with his project team, Lubetz explained that his students at CMU have been the key to many project successes. “I cannot impress enough how much I’ve learned from my students in the last 20 years. I teach what I do so what I do becomes more informed because 12 to 14 students have dialog in the classes. I can’t tell you how rewarding that is.”

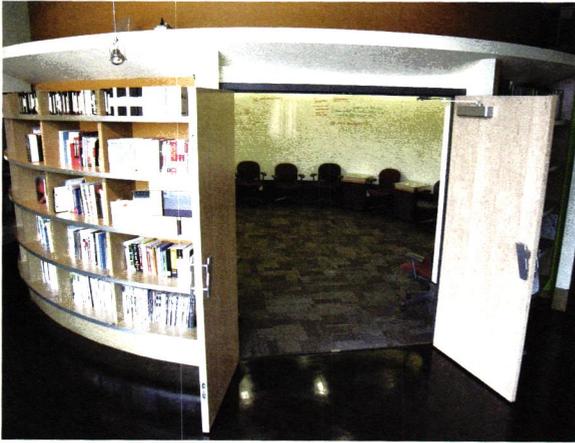
## IT ALL COMES BACK TO DESIGN

After 13 years at EDGE studio, Dutch MacDonald, AIA has shifted into a field with parallels to architecture, but takes it into a new realm. He is proud of the work developed during his years at EDGE, and found the work extremely fulfilling, but this was a change that has moved his career forward.

Since March, he’s been the Chief Operating Officer at MAYA Design and is enjoying parlaying his design expertise to work with their broader scope – a scope that relates to graphic design, industrial design, the influences of computer design/technology, and of course, architecture. “I was intrigued with MAYA and their philosophy of Pervasive Computing – the idea that information is not only in devices, it is all around us,” he explained. “This creates a paradigm shift of what space is and how we understand the relationship between architecture, space, and planning.”

MAYA does a lot of internal research and development, and they are currently experimenting with systems on their own. One experiment is on how to run ideation sessions (translate: meetings). MAYA’s main conference room is the Kiva, a round room that has white boards on every surface, whose name references the round underground chambers used by the Pueblo Indians. A brainstorming session can work its way around the room and at the end of the day people can see all the ideas and put them together. The team first started to enhance the room with digital tools and are now working with a prototype technology of their own design. They can record an entire meeting on a 360-degree

## ADVANCING technology ENHANCING experimentation



Kiva conference room at MAYA Design

camera – *Kivo* technology in the Kiva. One piece of technology uses a Nintendo Wii. There is a secondary camera that captures where they are in space and records them talking. Each person in the meeting is connected. If something is relevant to them, they can hit their name tag and bookmark the moment and the system records the last 30 seconds of discussion for them. Then, at the end of the day, the camera captures the entire circumference of white boards.

Using this technology in a productive way is the goal. “Results are fine if they’re meaningful,” explained MacDonald. “If you aren’t doing usability studies with real users, you may not be uncovering their true unmet needs.” They want to get their prototypes in front of end users as quickly as possible to make something better.

In the end, they want their process – whether it’s a building system, a gadget, or the ambiance of a public space – to be meaningful to people and still be easy to use. The challenge, through their experimentation, is to hide that power and let people simply do what they need to do.

*These stories illustrate the kaleidoscopic emergence of design through experimentation and artistry. Experimentation, whether via trial and error, research supported by the client, dreamscapes, or just creative play with materials from our local hardware stores create projects with a unique expression. **C***

- CAD is a fabulous tool, and it is just that – a tool. It doesn’t change how design is done. I still draw by hand, then put the designs into CAD, then draw over. The biggest key is that we continue to design through the process, and CAD makes it easy to make changes later in the process. Maybe in 5-10 years, we’ll be doing everything in 3D systems.

For every significant project we still build cardboard models. We do electronic too. There’s no one best way. Different clients respond differently to certain media. We still use drawings at the early phases of a project, because it looks like (the design is) still being worked on. They have to understand that we haven’t moved too far ahead. It’s about client expectations. ANDREW MOSS, AIA, MOSS ARCHITECTS

- Technology has helped a lot. Computer modeling allows us to see more clearly. That’s been a big help but we still build physical models of our major work too. Our clients understand them more clearly if they are 3-dimensional. We don’t do much early drawing. We start in 3 dimensions early in the process now. ART LUBETZ, AIA, LUBETZ ARCHITECTS
- I want to be in control of the design. I still draw and conceptualize by sketching and I’ve always designed using models created by hand. I’m pre-CAD. SYL DAMIANOS, FAIA, DAMIANOSGROUP

- The computer as a tool allows us to push more information. That doesn’t mean that the information is good. It helps with visualization, but it doesn’t shorten the process. Computer modeling doesn’t predict the essence of what you are trying to do. We still use our drawn images and manipulate them in the same way.

Technology improvements make projects like the Apple stores happen. At BCJ, we leaned heavily on expertise from TriPyramid Structures, Inc. (a Massachusetts company that specializes in steel and titanium fittings that originally specialized in rigging for sailboats). Their first architectural commission was I.M. Pei’s Pyramide de Louvre project, and now they have an impressive portfolio of architectural projects.

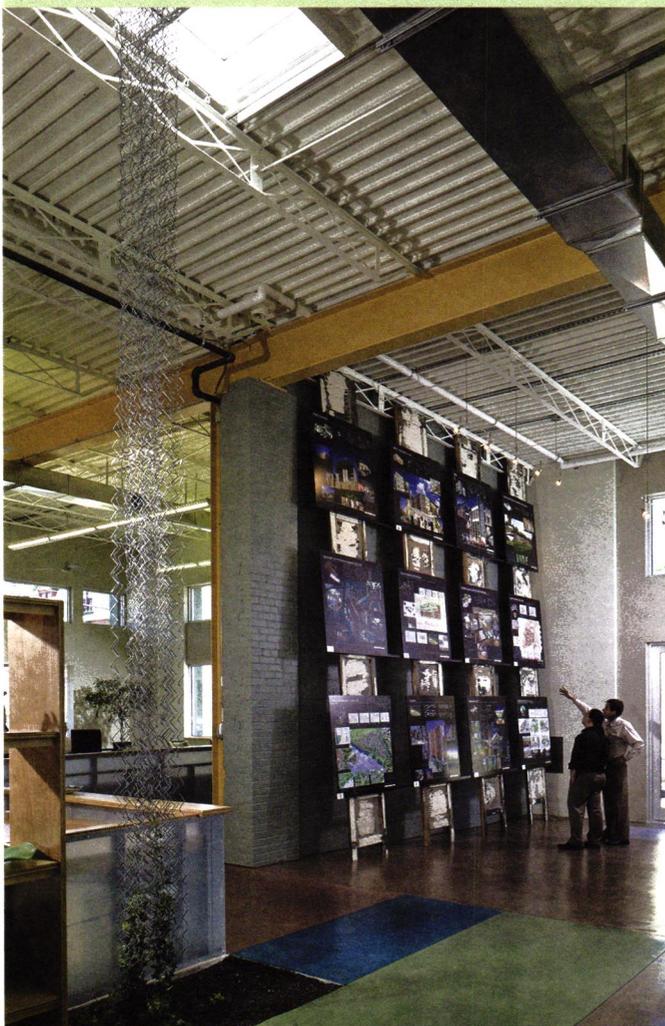
MICHAEL MAIESE, AIA, BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON

- It’s about the way information is being shared. BIM allows people to design with the data attached and shared – all integrated into the designs and approvals. And, along with CDs, a building owner can use it to continue managing the buildings. Nobody really knows how this (technology will) all shake out. It’s relatively new. DUTCH MACDONALD, AIA, MAYA DESIGN **C**



# habitat

Exploring the places where architects work > ROTHSCHILD DOYNO COLLABORATIVE



Above: The entryway uses reclaimed garage door panels to display design boards.  
Photo ©2008 Ed Massery

Right: Collaboration Alcoves are available for impromptu meetings with staff and clients.  
Photo ©2008 Ed Massery



**With a new name, a new space, and a staff of 12, Rothschild Doyno Collaborative is leading by example when they say that architecture and urban design does not fall into an “either/or” classification. Both the choice of community and the design of the building help embody this firm’s motto of “People, Process, Place”. *Columns* spoke with firm principal Ken Doyno, AIA.**

## How long have you been in this space?

The firm moved into the space in March, so just over a quarter of a year.

## Why was this location and neighborhood chosen as home base for the firm?

A gift is only as good as the awareness that is given. By choosing this space (what was an old garage), we are creating an awareness of what we are trying to do, that is, to engage people, spark curiosity, to get people to think about their surroundings in a different way, and to care about those surroundings. We felt this site was one where we could not only build our workplace, but was also a location where we could have a positive impact on the neighborhood. We are not quite in the Strip District, but also not quite in Lawrenceville. By existing in between the two, we are in a place of exchange – social, knowledge, and business exchange.



## Who designed the space?

The whole staff participated (and is still participating) with the design, construction, ideas, and materials. The opportunity provided by starting with a shell of a building was invaluable – we were able to experiment with things we didn’t know much about, without having to try new ideas out on a client.

Would you say that the philosophy of the firm is expressed through the design?

Yes! Our focus on collaboration, on the shared experience, can be seen throughout the design. We wanted not only to bring the inside out, but also the outside in. Through the use of the metal panels printed with selected pages from our Design Sketchbook along the exterior of our building, the pages relate to the context of the streets they face, they reflect our goal of engaging people in their surroundings. Our choices in the size and scale of the windows, the garage door that can be opened, the skylights, these all reflect our desire to be connected to our immediate surroundings, to create a transparency between the office and the community. As we sit in the space, we are aware of noises, natural light, and the environment that we exist in.

Everything was designed so that we can continually move forward. Everything was created as the pinnacle of sustainable design features. With the future in mind, we created a rooftop that is ready to support a solar array. Ideally, we would like the building to exist as an energy producer.

What is the office coffee policy?

The first person in the office in the morning who wants a cup makes the coffee. Always available – open pot. ☑



The "Penn 29 Café"



Open studio space



# BREAKING

## FROM THE FIRMS

**Burt Hill** is working on a \$45 million project with George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. The firm will design two new on-campus student-housing facilities, which will be the university's first student housing project to achieve USGBC LEED Silver certification. George Mason University proposed the new Fairfax student housing buildings due to its extraordinary growth over the last three decades and increased demand for on-campus student housing.

**Desmone & Associates Architects** is working on Building 5 at Penn Center East, a 125,000 sf multi-tenant, high-rise office building renovation, as well as the interior renovation of all lobby and corridor spaces within the Gateway Towers Condominium downtown, and the DoubleTree Hotel, Pittsburgh City Center. In partnership with Jendoco Construction Corporation, Desmone & Associates has completed a design-build office project within the Duquesne University Wellness Center at 1000 Fifth Avenue.

**JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design** has been selected by Washington Federal Bank to design their new branch office in McMurray, PA (above). The new 3,500 sf branch will feature a classical design with a side portico that will provide cover for two drive-up teller lanes and one teller/ATM lane. The bank building has also been designed to meet LEED Certification. JSA project team includes **Jim Eckles, AIA**; **Richard Oziemblosky, AIA**, LEED AP; **Jim Gaynor**; **Anita Myers**, and **Joe Price**.



**JSA** has also been selected by Permasteelisa USA as the architect for the design of four new Brooks Brothers stores to be located in Birmingham, AL; Rockefeller, NY; Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia. JSA project team includes **Thomas J. Mrozenski, AIA**, NCARB and **Joe Price**, project manager.

**Rothschild Doyno Collaborative** is in the design phase for the adaptive reuse of South Hills High School in Mount Washington. The firm will be collaborating with Thoughtful Balance to revitalize this community asset, which has been vacant for over 20 years. The 150,000 sf project includes

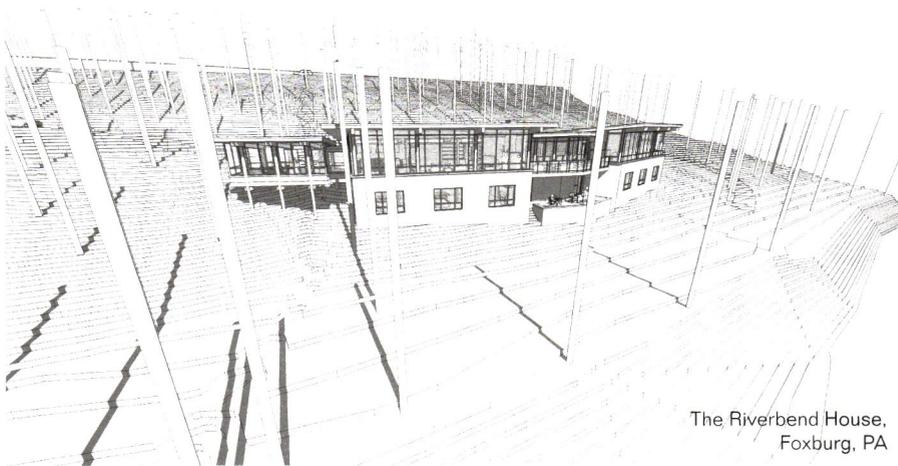
senior housing, daycare, and a community wellness and fitness center. In other projects, the firm is beginning the design of a new 55-unit apartment building located in the center of the business district in Braddock, with plans to incorporate historical and recent urban history of the town. Based upon the completed acquisition study for Chatham University, the firm will provide programming, planning and architectural services for the Chatham Eastside Campus, a 7.4 acre site at the corner of Penn Avenue and Fifth Avenue. Construction has begun on the firm's first new single-family residence, The Riverbend

House, located on a ten-acre wooded site along the Allegheny River near Foxburg, PA.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

**Astorino** announced a number of internal promotions and a key new hire. The new appointments include: **Dino Persichetti** as Chief Operating Officer; **Ron Dellaria** in the position of Chief Compliance Officer, **Astorino** and president of **Astorino Development Company**; **Robert Ward** as President of Engineering; **Nikola Doichev, AIA** as Senior Vice President of Design; **Traci McGavitt Yates** as Vice President of Business Development.

**Bohlin Cywinski Jackson** has announced the promotion of **Roxanne Sherbeck, AIA** to principal, with a focus primarily on design direction.



The Riverbend House, Foxburg, PA



Persichetti



Dellaria



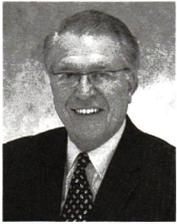
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Doichev



Yates



Bonassi



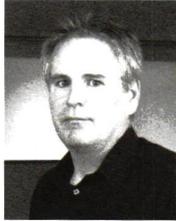
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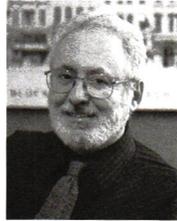
Kalina



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**Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.** is proud to announce that Emily Jo Gaspich, P.E., has achieved the status of LEED Accredited Professional. CEC is also pleased to announce that **Raymond J. Sinagra, AIA**, was recently hired to lead the property condition assessment service within the firm's due diligence practice. Mr. Sinagra brings over 20 years of experience to the firm. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University with a BA in Architecture and a BA in Bio-medical Engineering.

**Desmone & Associates Architects** has hired **Eric A. Booth, AIA** as a project manager.

**L. Robert Kimball & Associates** has hired John Bonassi as vice president, business development. Bonassi, who will be working at the Downtown office, has over 20 years of senior management experience in architecture, engineering, and construction industry marketing and business development.

At the recent grand opening of their new workplace, **Rothschild Doyno Collaborative** announced that **Geoff Campbell, AIA**, **Jeff Kalina, Assoc. AIA** and **Kate Tunney, Assoc. AIA**, are now Associates in the firm. Recent additions to the staff include **Michael Gwin, AIA**, who has practiced in the

Pittsburgh area for the last ten years, and Justin Losego, a recent graduate of Miami University, who interned with the firm for two summers.

**R.O. (Rock) Kernick, AIA** has joined Strada where he is working on the new Dick's Sporting Goods corporate headquarters in Findley Township. He brings to the firm his experience in college and university projects.

The Sextant Group has appointed Patrick Padovan as the Vice President of Technical Services and John Cook to Vice President of Client Services. Sean Weida has been promoted to the position of Principal of Operations and Paul Doolay has been named

Principal of IT/Security Design. Additionally, both Mark Gillis and Brian Patrick have been promoted to principals.

## KUDOS

**Strada principal John Martine, AIA** began his tenure as a member of the Pennsylvania State Licensure Board, one of five registered architects on the nine-person board. The Board is responsible for upholding and promoting the standards of professional conduct and establishing rules and regulations for the examination of licensure applicants. He will serve through June 2010.



Padovan



Cook



Weida



Doolay



Gillis



Patrick

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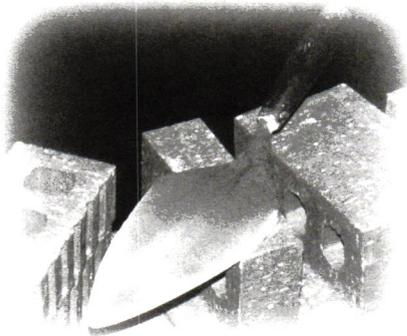
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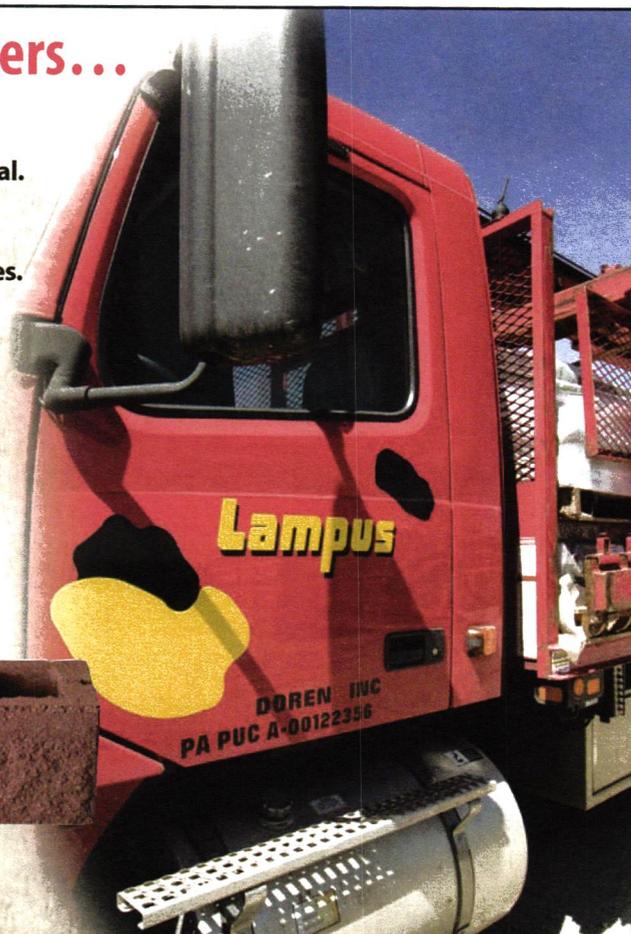
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## ONE ADVOCATE'S TALE: An Interview with Robert Dale Lynch, FAIA



BY BECKY SPEVACK

Marking the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, *Columns* talks with a local architect who was (and remains) one of the key advocates of accessible design.

### CREATING AN ADVOCATE

Registered in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1970, Bob Lynch, FAIA has been a practicing architect for 38 years, working for himself since 1982. Although accessible design was not a driving interest in his early years, a series of events created the opportunities that have led to him becoming an expert in the field.

“My story is a very unremarkable one,” Lynch claims. “There was no tragedy in my life, nothing like that, but I became interested in accessible architecture back in 1973.” That year the Rehabilitation Act was passed at the Federal level, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. Out of the Act grew Community Development Block Grants to provide accessibility throughout communities by first identifying barriers in public space and subsequently removing them. “The architecture firm I belonged to at the time had connections with Beaver County, which had received Block Grant money. I was assigned [to] a project and instructed to find architectural barriers throughout the county.” To identify such barriers, Lynch created his own process, incorporating his love of photography. “I picked out ten communities in the county, went out early on Sunday mornings throughout the summertime, and took

some great pictures along the main streets... identifying things like curb barriers. After we filed the report, the county went to the state and federal governments and got grants to remove these barriers. That’s where it began.”

At that same time, colleges and universities had started receiving grant money to make their campuses accessible. “My boss thought it would be a good idea to go out and start a marketing campaign among these colleges and universities, so I started a lecture circuit.” Using the photographs he had already taken, Lynch started researching accessibility standards and began formatting a slide show. He started giving his presentations to schools in Beaver County, then all of Western Pennsylvania, and gradually his name became known and associated with the topic. “For about two years I was out there making presentations, pretending I was an expert, and all of a sudden, one day I realized that I at least knew more than everybody in the room, that I had become an expert.” As someone who had always enjoyed public speaking, Lynch appreciated the chance to educate others. “I felt good about it,” he remembers. “I felt like I could inspire and motivate people.”

### CREATING LAWS

In the early to mid 80s Lynch started to meet and get to know many people with disabilities. “I became an advocate for people with disabilities, and learned a lot about what cerebral palsy consists of, learned about spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, Lou Gehrig’s disease, the catastrophes and aftermath of spinal cord injuries. I realized that while PA did have an accessibility law, passed in 1965, it was very outdated.”

With this knowledge, and the community he was rapidly becoming a part of, he started to draft a new law. “We found a state senator and a representative in the House and wrote a bill under the auspices of these two sponsors for Pennsylvania’s Universal Accessibility Law. It took us four years, but it finally passed in 1988, and it passed unanimously.”

While that bill was being passed in Pennsylvania, George H.W. Bush had been elected to the White House. In keeping a promise to the disabled community, the first bill that he submitted to Congress as president was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Lynch started to track its progress, as did Al Eisenberg, the head of governmental affairs at AIA National. By the time the subject and the bill began garnering attention, they had started drafting language for the ADA as representatives of the American Institute of Architects, and were given the chance to testify before a subcommittee. “It’s a heady feeling to testify before a congressional committee. The best thing was, after the hearing was over, after almost everyone left the room except for us and some of the staffers for the congressmen, we started discussing the issue and that’s when we really made our inroads.” Due to his recent success, Lynch was pushed to the front. Concerns about the amount of change to be required by the law for a renovated building were set to rest with the use of a formula that he had already established; the formula that had been written for PA evolved into what was used for the ADA. “The idea requiring that the renovations be in the law came from my idea, from the work that had been done in this state. And it was wonderful.”

Additionally, the AIA wanted to be involved with the legislation to ensure that the impact it would have on the profession would not be a negative one. First and foremost was the language of the law. “We wanted it to have the proper orientation to construction and design vernacular, to make sure that it had the right intent, keeping it harmonious with the design and construction arena.”

Second was technical standards. “We wanted to ensure that we had good design guidelines for architects, appropriate to the building industry, on which to base compliance and to make their buildings accessible or renovate them successfully.”

The third area of concern was historic preservation. The AIA had been a driving force behind advocating for historic preservation, creating an understanding of the value and the need in the built environment. Lynch and the AIA wanted to make sure preservation “did not get killed in the process of passing the ADA.” They feared that if the proper language was not drafted to make allowances for historic preservation, the bill might be killed, or it could ruin the awareness that the AIA had worked to create.

## CREATING AWARENESS

Once the ADA was passed, the AIA created a three-part teleconference to educate the profession about the Act and its impact on architecture. This was broadcast through PBS and was viewed by over 5,000 designers. Experts were brought in, and information was presented in the form of panel discussions, slide shows, lectures, and Q&A. Lynch helped lead this educational tool and lectured all over the country to introduce the new regulations and guidelines.

One thing has become apparent though: even with full compliance of the guidelines, architecture cannot address every person’s needs. “You never know what sort of disability will encounter any given facility. We just can’t, as architects, as builders, accommodate every disability to every extent.” To achieve full accessibility, Lynch expounds, designers need to look at building design with a human perspective. “If the principle of walking a mile in someone else’s shoes was more heavily encouraged, if architects knew more about the anthropometrics and the functions of the human beings that they have to design for, they would begin with a better understanding of what is needed. In the last 100 years, the spectrum of human beings and needs and abilities has greatly widened, and that needs to be addressed in each stage of design.”



We wanted {the language of the law} to have the proper orientation to construction and design vernacular, to make sure that it had the right intent, keeping it harmonious with the design and construction arena. ROBERT DALE LYNCH, FAIA



Justin Dart (right) joins President George H.W. Bush as he signs the ADA into law on July 26, 1990

Universal design is one focus that takes a hard look at that wide array of needs and abilities, and designs accordingly. Ron Mace, FAIA was one of the driving forces behind universal design and through his lifelong efforts, has helped ensure that design and functionality are considered with equal weight. The principles of universal design make architecture adjustable, address and encourage redundant features, and provide flexibility, a tolerance of error, and low physical effort for the user. One example that Lynch gives of a successful marriage is the Allegheny County Airport in West Mifflin. “The County Commissioners approached me, wanting to make it accessible, and wanted to put ramps leading up to the side door,” Lynch re-

calls. “I disagreed, encouraging them to incorporate the ramp into their main entrance, into the front door. That was an example of creating accessibility, preserving historic character, and giving people with disabilities the dignity of using the front door with everybody else.”

After almost 40 years in practice, Bob Lynch’s passion for the field of accessibility has grown nothing if not stronger. When discussing the future of architecture, and designing for those with disabilities, he encourages his fellow architects to stay focused on the needs of people, to remember that there is an ever-broadening spectrum of abilities. He also reiterates that there are limitations to what architecture can do, and when those limits are found, design needs to be approached from “the other side” to achieve full universal accessibility. That means more and better personal technical aids for individuals who have disabilities. “The driving force behind me getting into this – something I’ve always told my sons – is that I would like to leave the world a better place than I found it. This profession has an essential connection with human beings; I wanted what I did technically to benefit and make life better for humans, and architecture was just the ticket.” **C**

## The ADA and One American Family

BY ROBERT DALE LYNCH, FAIA

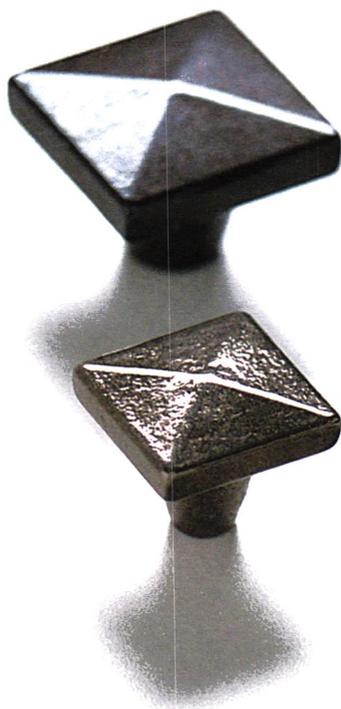


Seven years ago, my son David Garrett Lynch was a design engineer for the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan. After work one day, as he was completing his daily jog, he was hit by a car, suffered a traumatic

brain injury and was comatose for two months. After long months of hospitalization and rehabilitation, David was moved to Origami, a residential facility near East Lansing, Michigan founded by Michigan State University for persons with head injury. For the last seven years, my wife Anne and I have visited or brought Dave home

for the weekend every two to three weeks. We have driven thousands of miles, stayed at many hotels, and eaten at scores of restaurants. Although compliance with the law has not always been perfect. I thank God that the ADA is an integral part of America. The Lynch family has benefited greatly from it. Now, because our family has plans to live closer together, we have built a home in Virginia, close to David’s brother, Dale, and his wife, Carolyn, and their two small children, Shane and Megan. In the coming days, we will move to Virginia; Dave will follow soon after, as will my mother, Grace, now 92 and living in Coraopolis. Four generations will live close together and enjoy a more intimate life than we ever would have. God works in mysterious and sometimes wondrous ways. **C**

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