# COLUMNS

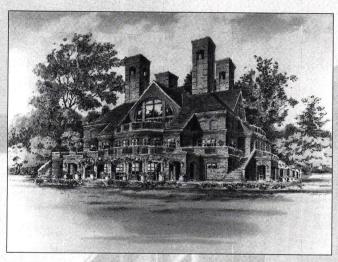
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AIA PITTSBURGH, A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

JULY 1993

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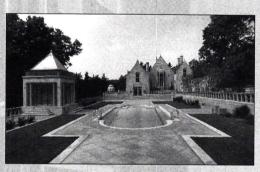


The Armenian room located on the third floor of the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh is the 22nd nationality room to be established at the university. The stone arched room copies the masonry techniques of church and monastery builders of the 11th century. This magnificant classroom was designed by Torkom Khrimiam who emigrated from Armenia in 1978.

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"Elm Court", a 9-acre private estate located north of Pittsburgh, involves unique additions and renovations. For example, the pool above is heated and has an ozone purification system. The deep blue water is surrounded by a granite surface edged in limestone. The pool is lined with hand made ceramic tile. On the left is a pool house sitting area. To the right is the "Fish Slide" built to hold two antique Indian carved marble panels giving the appearance of two carved fish swimming in the current of the fountain.

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## Start'er Up

by Anne Swager, Executive Director

#### Mt. Lebanon has the reputation



Some of the homes in my neighborhood look like someone stuck a Lego addition onto a Lincoln log house.

as a tony suburb which in large part it does not deserve. With its high incidence of multi-family housing and its wide disparity of income levels, it is unlike most of its suburban counterparts. Even the single family housing stock varies dramatically from two bedroom bungalows. to typical four bedroom Ryan homes, to near palatial Tudor estates. While the town fathers are quick to downplay any essence of snob appeal, in fact, the town's tony reputation is largely their own fault. Only in Mt. Lebanon, do you find a sizable community magazine, published ten times a year and full of such information like who's been promoted to what and what your neighbor's prodigious child has over accomplished this month. To be fair, there are also reports on community doings like the garbage collection schedule and a column from your local commissioner telling you his or her opinion on the proposed cat leash law while touting fiscal responsibility. Further, the magazine does its level best to reassure you that you live in the best community and therefore, your annual tax bill, which is more than you pay to feed your family for a year, is well worth it.

Imagine my surprise recently, when I learned that I lived in a *starter* neighborhood. Even my real estate professional (?) confirmed this designation. I was left feeling like I'd run the Kentucky Derby only to find that instead of winning I'd ended up 200 feet short of the finish line. I

must confess I always thought once you made it to Mt. Lebanon you'd made it. I'm not sure where else I should be aspiring to be. On a recent early morning walk with my son Henry's new puppy, I had plenty of time to consider what my neighborhood really is-starter, arrived. finished, or somewhere in between. Starter sounds like a neighborhood of young wanna-bes while finished conjures up images of wheelchair races in the street. My neighborhood is neither of these. The age of the occupants vary as much as the length of time they have lived in their houses. In fact, the one trend that to me defies the starter nomenclature is everyone's propensity to add on to their houses. Of the five houses I can see from my backyard, three have sizable, albeit not necessarily tasteful. additions. The next morning that Henry's puppy took me for a walk, I started to really look at the number of houses with additions. They abound. Unfortunately, they are hard to miss because they most often look like someone stuck a lego addition onto a Lincoln log house. Many I would never consider buying because of their addition, which leaves me to wonder about the ultimate resale value of these homes. In many cases, I would bet the owners did not recoup what they invested in the addition.

I fielded a call the other day from an architect wishing to relocate to Pittsburgh from California. Go figure that one.

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### 

uncertain healthcare climate and what it means for architects.

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What point of view is Pittsburgh's architectural critic coming from? Donald Miller tells some, but not all.

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The geometric outdoor dining area from Phase II of Burt Hill's Ohio Valley General Hospital project. Photo by Scott McDonald

The Pittsburgh Chapter AIA serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and the Pennsylvania Society of Architects. The objective of the Chapter 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. Chapter Headquarters: CNG Tower, 625 Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15222 Telephone: 412/471-9548; FAX: 412/471-9501.

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## A River Ran Through It

by Michelle Fanzo, Editor

#### I finally did it. I went to Fallingwater.

Columns' art director was appalled when I said I hadn't gone yet. As he usually sees me surrounded by architectural magazines, directories, press releases—even note paper with blueprint art on it—he felt I surely should have seen this architectural masterpiece. You can't do it all at once, was my feeble excuse. But really, I was waiting for one of my closest friends to come visit Pittsburgh—we had studied architecture history together and

I thought it was only right to experience Fallingwater with someone who could really get tickled pink about desks built into windows and boulders dressed up as livingroom floors.

We were appropriately tickled pink. Our docent Bill, an older gentlemen with a red cardigan and bright new Reeboks, gave the impression of knowing everything imaginable about the house, the river that ran through it, even how the change of sea-

sons affected the surrounding

foliage and what that meant to Frank Lloyd Wright. One thing that meant quite a bit to the architect, was the need to explore ideas. In fact, I dare say he was less interested in the durability or practicality of his work than he was in its pure design elements.

From what I know of the man, he was quite a character. Caught in one of his many "exaggerations," he would respond with a shrug and say, "There you have it." That tendency to over elaborate sometimes transferred to his drawings. Soon after moving to Pittsburgh I remember seeing his rendering for a bridge (two bridges actually) across the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, merging at a wide-L at the Point. How would cars maneuver that angle? Or his utopian tower, reaching to the heavens, sketched as a solution for the Allegheny County Court House—a bit ambitious. Yet these examples speak of

the man's inherent, driving desire to *create*. He pushed the envelope of design like only someone paying little attention to established conventions, codes and budgets could.

It's amazing how quickly that kind of exploration and verve gets discarded when practical realities descend. We all have more requirements to meet and certainly tighter budgets to maneuver than Wright did then. In economically uncertain times, many clients want to play it safe. No stairways descending to waterfalls please, just a private deck off each bedroom. So how do we capture that unrestrained essence of design?

Doodles. Squiggles, thumbnail sketches—parti diagrams to be technical. In an effort to capture that ethereal design quality poured out onto cocktail napkins and yellow legal pads next to phones, *Columns* is having a call for doodles. For one issue this fall, we'd like to step back from focusing on the glossy photos of the finished product and look at the ideas poured out onto the drawing board to get there. We want to see what occurs before the many compromises, architecture critic Donald Miller talks about elsewhere in this issue, after the design.

I have been told many firms save these preliminary sketches so I'd like to ask everyone to route through their desks and find their best examples of the early stages of the design process. The sketchier the better. I'll need to know who did them and, if possible, what the design turned out to be or what problem it was addressing.

Maybe somewhere, there's a sketch of a space needle tower with built-in furniture and a river running through it. Such a structure may never be built, but wouldn't it be neat to see...

Michelle C. Farmyo



One thing that meant quite a bit to Frank Lloyd Wright was the need to explore ideas.

#### Start'er Up

- Continued from page 3

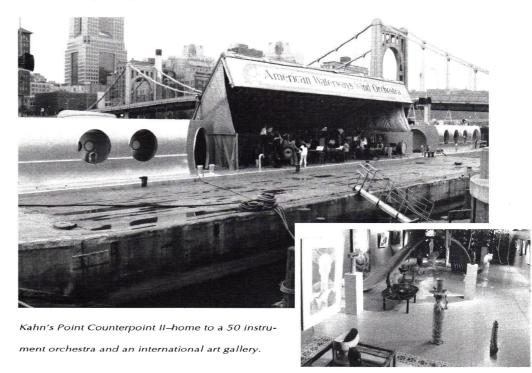
At any rate, he asked me too numerous questions to recall except for one. He wanted to know how many firms did residential design. He went on to tell me that he felt people in this part of the country did not hire architects to design their homes and additions primarily because the price of housing and the land it sat on was cheap by comparison to his part of the country. This gave me new food for thought on my next drag by the puppy aspiring to be a big dog. It's hard to think of your house as cheap when your monthly mortgage payment could feed a family of four for three months. But, I gave it my best unbiased effort.

I concluded the fellow was only partially right. In my driveby survey of the more arrived neighborhoods of Mt. Lebanon, better executed additions are more in abundance. However, there is no way to tell how many of these additions were designed by architects. Instead, I think the problem is more a matter of education. I applaud the Pennsylvania Society of Architects' recent efforts to educate municipal building officials throughout the state about why it is important to have an architect's seal even on single family residences. But like us, PSA does not operate in a vacuum. Twice in recent history Mt. Lebanon Magazine has panned the profession of architecture by quoting homeowners as saying they designed their additions without the help of an architect because the owners felt they could do the architect's job themselves. I wondered if these same homeowners would consider removing their own gallbladders and if Mt. Lebanon Magazine would quote them if they did. Yet, I did not see any letters to the editor objecting to these ridiculous assertions. In coming months we will be aiding and abetting PSA's educational efforts. I hope you will join us by speaking out on what architects do and why they should do it.

At the risk of being able to touch my toes without bending over, I will continue to let Henry's puppy walk me as I ponder my next housing move. When my ship comes in, should I finish my *starter* home by adding onto it or should I add fast growing trees to my backyard to block out everyone else's folly?

### On the Waterfront

Louis Kahn rides the international waves of Pittsburgh's American Wind Symphony Orchestra



It's a time machine! It's a symphony! It's a giant flute! Moored between the Seventh and Ninth Street bridges until mid-July, floats one of the last creations of renowned architect Louis I. Kahn. *Point Counterpoint II*, a 195 foot one-of-a-kind vessel sporting a hydraulic acoustic shell, was launched in 1976 as part of the Bicentennial celebration and is home to the unique American Waterways Wind Orchestra. The only piece of Kahn's work to be based in Pittsburgh, the floating Heinz Hall is captained by Music Director Robert Boudreau and his wife Kathleen while the 50-plus person orchestra travels by land. After Kahn's death, architect George Djurkovic completed the project, with ingenious sleeping accommodations for Boudreau and his family designed and executed by Pittsburgh's Syl Damianos, FAIA.

The vessel houses an intriguing and comprehensive art gallery, chock full of contemporary American and European crafts. Handmade oak tables constructed by a Maine artisan share space with a hypnotic kinetic light sculpture, part of the gallery's far wall, by a Finnish artist.

Extremely well known abroad, the Lawrenceville-based orchestra has broken ground in many areas, much like the architect who designed its boat. The water bound symphony recently returned from clocking over 60,000 miles on the rivers of Europe and will be performing Sunday nights at North Shore Landing until July 18th, when they embark on a tour from Pittsburgh's Point to Chattanooga, TN. Check out the boat while it's around—it's a sight and sound experience.

### Mailbox

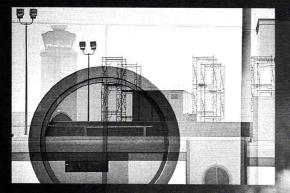
In my remarks May 25th at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, where members of the AIA discussed *Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures*, I said our great eclectic architect, Beno Janssen (1874-1964), left Pittsburgh permanently for Charlottesville, VA in 1930. The year was 1940.

Sincerely,
Donald Miller

Post-Gazette Art and Architecture Critic

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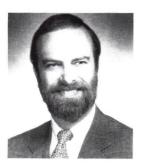


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### **Healthcare Talk**

## Members in the know offer predictions about the uncertain healthcare climate and what it means for architects



Though it will be years before healthcare reforms are fully implemented and in place, **Bryant Robey, AIA** WTW principal, feels architects will see less of an emphasis on facilities for expensive technology and more focus on updating and renovating existing facilities. "I think the fierce competition we have seen between hospitals will wane. I expect, unfortunately, we'll see a return to a more institutional approach to healthcare design,

moving away from the shopping mall, upscale hotel approach seen in the last ten plus years."

Robey anticipates the healthcare profession will be bogged down with administrative red tape for the next four to five years. "But I think there will always be work for architects in healthcare. As money becomes tighter for medical institutions, the expertise our profession brings to the table will become increasingly sought after."

"There is less commitment to healthcare projects now than a few years ago, but that's a normal reaction to uncertainty," says **Mike Marcu, AIA**, principal of IKM, one of the largest healthcare architecture firms in the nation. "I tend to be optimistic. I think healthcare will continue to be a very active area for architects who know about the field." Marcu feels more hospitals are presently taking a wait and see attitude while new reforms continue to be talked about in Washington. Medical fa-

cilities, he says, will be less willing to take risks with firms who do not have a healthcare track record.

"The healthcare boom of recent years occurred because competition fosters construction," continues Marcu. "I don't know when the Hillary Rodham Clinton efforts will hit the fan, but once resolved I think architects will see substantial construction projects emerging, especially in outpatient services. I just hope competition prevails or else we'll have a socialist system, and then God help us."





"We're going to see medical facilities in more joint ventures and consolidations, which may lead to only five or six hospital systems in the area," says **M. Craig Allen, AIA**, principal of Image Associates, Inc. "I think we'll see the advent of hospital systems, rather than free standing, individually operating facilities, with more emphasis placed on the outpatient level." He sees the probable results of present healthcare reforms moving the field

into managed care. "People will be taken care of through their primary care network."

In the near future Allen feels there will be more competition among architects for a smaller amount of healthcare work. "Hospitals will really be stretching their dollars allocated for construction."

Apprehension is in the air, agrees **J. David Knapp, AIA**, Director of Hayes Large's Pittsburgh office.
"Shadyside, Allegheny General and Presbyterian hospitals are all laying-off staff. Hospital managers are acting preemptively, in anticipation of what's going to happen with healthcare reforms."

What this means for Pittsburgh area architects, says Knapp, is hospitals reducing their number of beds, with a focus on more intensive care (because of the area's significant aging population). "Pittsburgh has a large number of older hospitals and these will continue to be replaced and updated as long as finances can be found for the work. I anticipate hospitals being much more discerning on how they spend their funds in the next few years." Knapp also projects people will have to take more responsibility for their own health needs. "If you smoke, you may have to pay more. Hospitals will defer responsibility for health related behavior to the individual."

# Medical

In the midst of

by Michelle Fanzo

a major

overhaul of the

American

healthcare

system,

Pittsburgh

architects

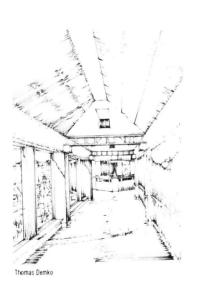
continue to

exercise their

expertise in the

field of medi-

cal design.





Dennis Marsico

## St. Margaret Memorial Hospital

Pittsburgh, PA

#### Reid & Stuhldreher, Inc.

St. Margaret Hospital's ambitious expansion program will significantly change its existing campus and provide a framework for site development over the next twenty years. The present project includes a new medical office building, a helistop, and substantial additions and renovations to the existing structures. Future developments will include more office space, hospital additions and a parking garage.

One of the welcome changes for both medical staff and visitors is the alteration of circulation patterns, providing patient drop-off areas independent of the main vehicular routes. A new concourse was added to the main floor to separate hospital and public circulation.

Principal-in-charge: Bruce C. Knepper, AIA
Project architects: Leonard D. van Heest, AIA, and Maria A. Viteri, AIA









Chris Barone

## Sewickly Valley Hospital

Sewickly, PA

#### MacLachlan, Cornelius & Filoni, Inc.

The hospital's first priority in its master plan was to build an eight-story addition, resulting in 60,000 square feet of new building space and almost that much again in renovated space. This wing includes the new main entrance, reception, registration and waiting, as well as a new operations area. A parking structure was built adjacent to the wing to accommodate increased traffic. To create a more comfortable patient environment—an issue of increasing popularity in medical facilities—non-industrial lighting and material finished with wood trim were used. Sensitivity to acoustic treatments, allowing the patient more privacy, was also a consideration.

The new wing's facade is composed of a series of stepped vertical planes. The arrangement of the building's mass allows light to filter into the existing hospital's facade, with the two structures becoming visibly linked with the intersecting forms.

Principal-in-charge: Albert Filoni, AIA Project manager: Kenneth Lee, AIA Project architect: Timothy Powers



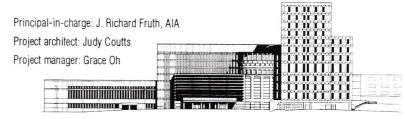
## Mercy Hospital

Altoona, PA

### **Hayes Large Architects**

A conference center, surgical additions and related alterations are the latest in a, to date, \$16,000,000 master plan project begun in 1988 for Mercy Hospital of Altoona. The conference center hosts activities ranging from pre-natal exercise classes to cancer patient support groups and debates in medical ethics. A comfortable lounge provides opportunity for informal contacts between meetings. A warm toned reception area, pictured above, greets patients immediately inside the entrance while comfortable individual reception booths insure patient privacy.

The scope of the project includes several completed renovations which serve to enhance patient care and staff efficiency in older wings of the hospital. Future renovations and relocations are expected for a large number of Mercy's facilities. New construction will provide a two-story, 15,617 square foot Surgical Unit that will connect a section built in 1927 with a 1970s addition. New signage, redesignation of floor levels, and new interior finishes and entrances for specific patient use reflect the emphasis on patient orientation and circulation.





Lockwood Hoehl



## Ohio Valley General Hospital

Kennedy Township, PA

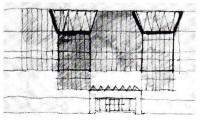
#### **Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates**

Burt Hill began working with Ohio Valley General Hospital seven years ago and has most recently moved into the fourth phase of the project. The early work improved the general atmosphere and efficiency of the facility by reorganizing nursing units so that medical staff could be reduced when fewer patients were hospitalized. Other projects include a canopy over the main entrance and reorganization of the traffic flow and parking, upgrading the cafeteria interiors, and the addition of an outdoor dining patio.

The next phase brought new interiors to the lobby and a reorganization of medical records, admissions, and transcription areas, along with newly design nuclear medicine offices and gamma camera facilities. Most recently, a fourth floor was added to house an eight-bed ICU, an eighteen-bed intermediate care unit, cardiology offices, testing and rehabilitation facilities, and family waiting areas.

Project architect: Farah Rosenberg, AIA

#### Farah Rosenberg



## Medicenter for Ohio Valley General Hospital

Robinson Township, PA

#### Image Associates, Inc.

An example of the trend towards primary care, the Medicenter was developed as a joint venture for Ohio Valley General Hospital and Blue Cross of Western Pennsylvania. This 22,000 square foot facility, completed in May, will obtain 90 percent occupancy with the completion of tenant suites in September. The exterior of the Medicenter was developed as a clearly identifiable prototype intended to be replicated by Blue Cross in association with other hospitals in the region. Particular attention was given to color coordination of the contrasting bands of brick with the deep blue of the window frames and roofing panels, meant to obtain a high profile appearance from afar and distinguish the primary care functions of the lower level from the private offices of the upper level. A nearly identical facility was simultaneously built in Harmar Township, PA in association with St. Margaret Memorial Hospital.

Project architect: Tom Teti, AIA

## **Patient Focused Care:**

A new design approach—focusing on the individual rather than the institution— may sweep the field of healthcare planning

While everyone is concerned about the future of healthcare, some people may actually be finding solutions that benefit all parties. How? Through Patient Focused Care, an innovative approach promising to improve the quality of care and increase patient satisfaction while reducing costs. The basic tenets of Patient Focused Care are: grouping patients together in a "focused" unit based upon the resources they will use; crosstraining staff into teams of caregivers; and decentralizing services. Will it work? Two Pittsburgh firms give their opinions.

"Patient Focused Care represents a radical change in the way hospitals function," says Jeff Heiskell, AIA, a partner of Reid & Stuhldreher, Inc. "Architects must have a good grasp of the concept, and understand during the design phase not only the physical changes required, but also how the space will ultimately be used by the staff. It is a challenging new perspective on healthcare planning and design."

"Patient Focused Care is doing a few things consistently to make everyone feel more comfortable," says John Brock, AIA, principal of Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates. For the patient, he says, it means appealing to all the senses with elements like appropriate

lighting, accessible kitchens and familiar surroundings. When facilities are redesigned with patient needs in mind, equipment and resources are placed as close to the patient as possible. Patient Focused Care takes procedures that were performed in large areas with many resources, and decentralizing them into smaller, more conveniently located satellites.



Replacing the traditional nursing station is the administrative center—offering more flexibility and a greater range of

This new approach is based on the premise that if you provide a better setting for treatment and recovery, you will restore health sooner. Extensive consideration is given to integrating "high tech" medical and administrative equipment into a personalized, bedside approach to care. For example, no longer are cartloads of medications wheeled through the corridors; now, a Pyxis drug machine dispenses an individual patient's dose to a nurse in much the same manner as an automatic teller dispenses cash. Additionally, the nurse call system in a focused care center is a hospital-wide information and management system that provides the nursing staff with access to a wide range of data—allowing them to respond to patients' needs faster and with better information.

While Brock feels the biggest part of Patient Focused Care is the operations component, he says architects play a major role. A key element to the approach is creating a residential feel. Furniture style in waiting areas, visitor seating in rooms, a place to hang your coat, having patients choose their own bedding from a series of available patterns—these are all efforts to treat the individual with the sensitivity of a customer.

"The challenge in the design of a Patient Focus Care unit is to get everyone to leave old habits behind," says Michael McDonnell, AlA, Reid & Stuhldreher's project architect for the recently completed 67 bed Ortho/Neuro Care Center at The Medical Center in Beaver. "Decisions must not be based on quantitative code issues alone, but they must also reflect 'quality of life' considerations for everyone."

Patients no longer go to a central admission area, or follow color-coded lines through the hospital maze for various tests. Everything happens in the focused care unit. Architecturally, the entrance to a unit is established as a significant place, similar to a doctor's office, complete with a waiting area and an exam room. All pre-admission paperwork and tests, as well as insurance verification, are performed here.



The Physical Therapy Area exemplifies the type of space not available in patient care units before Patient Focused Care.

"The baby boom generation expects to be treated in a more personal way," explains Brock. While healthcare reforms may affect how quickly Patient Focus Care enters the mainstream, he expects the change will not be daunted by federal reforms as many of the concepts are low cost. "People are looking for practical conveniences—

nearby parking, child care so adults can spend more time visiting relatives, a place to heat up a home cooked meal." Burt Hill has applied Patient Focused Care principles to a number of their recent projects, such as the highly residential labor-delivery-recovery rooms at St. Francis and the decentralized nursing concept at Presbyterian.

Patient Focused Care isn't a quick fix, Heiskell emphasizes. "Facilities which undertake this approach must be willing to make a considerable commitment of time and resources, and be determined enough to change their procedural patterns, not partially, but wholly."

Marian Bradley of Reid & Stuhldreher, John Brock, AIA, of Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates and Michelle Fanzo contributed to this article.

#### "We know that we stand on the shoulders of giants,

but in architecture it often seems we're standing on the toes of architects. They get squeezed." Donald Miller, *Post-Gazette* art and architecture critic knows more than buildings—he knows those who design them. "People say economics is the business science. I like to say architecture is the business art. There is so much compromise and I've seen so many architects very disappointed. Often the final product is not what they wanted. But when it is, it's a great thing."

A Pittsburgh native, Miller has been a journalist for the *Post-Gazette* for 37 years. Initially hired as a copy editor, this writer with a penchant for tweed jackets and colorful shirts progressed from conjuring headlines and editing other people's work, to authoring editorials for nine years. When the newspaper's art critic suffered from a broken leg one day in 1966, Miller got his own break as an art, film and theater reviewer, eventually focusing on his areas of particular interest—antiques, design and architecture.

How does a critic come about his criticisms and his praise? What makes Donald Miller, a writer exuding a bit of a Tom Wolfian persona, tick? A recent conversation with the man who keeps tabs on Pittsburgh's build environment ("I've seen them go up, I've seen them come down") reveals a similarity between the reviewer and those whom he reviews. Like an architect, he's ready to talk about his craft, but not as willing to give away all his secrets.

So what comes first—an inherent appreciation of good design and art, or does good design and art nurture a reviewer's appreciation? According to Miller, it was a little of both. Though he contends there is no single architect, architectural style or building that stands out as his favorite, many examples of talent and good design are clearly etched in his mind. "I grew up with art deco furniture—my parents bought it when most people in Pittsburgh were calling it moderne and thought it unattractive. I liked it. I remember as a child loving Auburn Cord automobiles, and my little round wagon. Most people had square, ugly wagons, but mine was wonderful because of the way it was designed. I can't say it any simpler. I've owned automobiles I regard as running sculptures. I love the look of them."

Not one to put all his eggs in one basket, Miller diplomatically avoided direct answers to questions about specific examples. "I tend not to think in favorites. Sometimes I like a particular architect or artist for some projects and not others. Similarly, as a critic, I don't see things in chapters or categories, but in layers that overlap each other. The history of art is that way—different styles, different mentalities going on at the same time. Why chop it up? You need a sense of the flow. It's much richer that way."

Miller's response to how Pittsburgh stacks up against other cities as an architectural reviewer's mecca was also couched in the words of a savvy diplomat, rather than a sharp-tongued critic. "Being based here so daily and solidly, I don't have the luxury of surveying other cities, but I think there's a lot going on everywhere. They seem to be going crazy in Phoenix, and LA is a world unto itself."

The Pittsburgh critic did share some of the times when he has felt every element of a design was right on target. "There are moments when you walk by something and it just speaks out: 'Look at me'." Such praise goes to reconstructions like Burt Hill's reclaiming of the Union Trust Building, an elegant summer house in Fox Chapel designed by Jim Johnson, and Syl Damianos's renovation of the old bowling alley in the former Carnegie Mellon art gallery that helped make the Pittsburgh Plan for Art happen.

#### Where's the City Going?

Addressing a less historic and more immediate architectural question, Miller ponders the sensitive issue of importing architects from outside Pittsburgh to work on area projects.

"When Pittsburgh architects have been involved building really large structures they

ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVE

What Point of View is Pittsburgh's Architecture Critic Coming From? Donald Miller Tells Some, But Not All

by Michelle Fanzo

have had to do so in connection with other national firms," he says. "There is no lack of imagination on the part of local architects, and I have always championed that opinion." Yet he wonders if the need for outside firms stems from "a lack of financial availability to make a building happen on behalf of one Pittsburgh firm."

What worries him more is the absence of a fixed idea about where the city is going. "I remember David Lewis saying we should have had a master plan a long time ago. I think it would be a good idea, if we had a means of effecting it—such as under someone like Napoleon, who has the power to change the environment over, say, a period of ten years. In a one-party town this is possible. Grant Street is an example of good planning on a small scale. I think it's quite successful. It's beautiful, it's urban, it works, it doesn't seem to bother anyone, it's holding up—the great test of architecture."

A proactive as well as reactive critic, Miller has made suggestions about buildings during the design phase. "I'm grateful to the architects who had the sensitivity to respond to my ideas. As a critic, it gives you a sense of contribution to your community. The little cat ears on top of the Firstside garage were due to me saying, 'don't just have the roof flat'. Similarly, I felt Liberty Center shouldn't be cut off straight at the top, hence the present mansard roof."

#### The Right Stuff

Before the writing life kicked in for good, Miller explored a number of studio art classes as a young man. It was during his undergraduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh that he decided a future as a writer offered greater opportunities than the life of a painter or sculptor. After receiving his degree in creative writing, with an emphasis on journalism, Miller spent 18 years at the *Post-Gazette* before returning to Pitt for a masters degree in art history in 1975.

In the early 1980s, he taught a semester of nineteenth century and twentieth century art history at Carnegie Mellon and led seminars on Tiffany and Wright, among others. Miller has spent the last 15 years as a tour escort for the University of Pittsburgh's Informal Program, visiting art capitals in the U.S. and abroad. In June he gave his 98th lecture for the organization. He feels being a journalist keeps him well informed, as he says, "It keeps me aware of the latest material being added to the art history mulch."

There is more behind the man knowledgable in furniture design, architectural ornamentation and (his specialty) Lewis Comfort Tiffany, than meets the reader's eye. Though he himself has no children, Miller has "a couple of children's stories in my computer just dying to be published. I love the idea of 'what if?' Architects do it all the time."  $\hat{\mathbf{m}}$ 

#### In Search of Stories:

Where Pittsburgh's architecture critic gets his story ideas and how you can become one of them

In one of his more revealing moments, Donald Miller recounted his fascination with actor Jeremy Brett's portrayal of Sherlock Homes. "Those great posturing gestures—I don't act that way but that's what's going on in my mind. I'm actually acting like a vacuum cleaner pulling the stuff right off the walls in order to read it."

It is the inquisitive investigator in Miller that uncovers many of his stories, but he is always interested in having area architects and firms send press releases and photographs. "Architects should send something that will stimulate my imagination and that will make some impact on an editor who is not necessarily knowledgeable about the subject." Phone calls, he says, are not as effective.

To come up with articles, Miller keeps tabs on annual architecture awards and events, but other times it's something he sees which sparks his curiosity. "For example, there was a great turmoil in Edgeworth about a year and a half ago when the B.F. Jones House, designed by Brandon Smith, was leveled. A great howl came from the community because at the time there was nothing to prevent it. I happened to drive by the site of the demolition the other day and saw the new owners of the property are having a home constructed, designed by Lee Ligo. So I'm interested in calling Lee and seeing if he has a rendering of what this new house is going to look like, because I'm sure everyone in Edgeworth, Sewickly and Sewickly Heights will want to know about the successor structure for that lot."

"There is something I've noticed that happens specifically in architecture, as opposed to other reviewing tasks," volunteers Miller. "An architect or firm would like an article written and there's something to do with timing. Maybe a third party, a politician, is there for a ribbon cutting, and the waiting around for the event to happen gets in the way of going and doing a story. I don't have time to waste. I have daily deadlines and four separate editors calling for finished articles. So I have very little time to sit and talk about approaches. The story has to pretty much instantly fall into place or else I'm in trouble."

Unlike many journalists, Miller is a self-assigning writer. "In architecture, it's whatever seems to be newsy. My personal criteria on the field is, if I pass a site and I don't know what's going on there, I figure there must be thousands of people passing by having the same feeling. Right now I'm trying to do a piece on the new county jail. I see those huge cranes up there and I think something's going on here the public will want to know about."

There are so many stories on architecture just waiting to be told, says Miller, he could do an architecture article every day. "While I can't say it is the richest time, it is *one* of the richest times to be writing about architecture. I could be kept busy on the issue of historic preservation and adaptive reuse alone, indefinitely."

14 Columns July 1993

#### breaking ground

#### Kudos

Four Pittsburgh architects have recently been honored with *Progressive Architecture's* Young Architects Award. Claire Gallagher, Associate AIA and Diane LaBelle, Intern AIA recieved recognition for both the "Our Town Program" for at-risk children and, with Associate AIA Member Linda Gates, the Saturday Children's Program at Carnegie Mellon University. Paul Rosenblatt, AIA and Bruce Lindsey received their award for the Piers Project, which won an AIA Design Award in 1991, their role in the Carnegie Mellon Niche Project, still underway at the university, and the Black Street Universal House Project for affordable housing. The July issue of *Progressive Architecture* will have a multi-page feature with photographs and information on Pittsburgh's award-winning architects and their projects. Be sure to pick up a copy! (Other magazines to keep an eye out for are the June issue of *PA* and the August issue of *Architecture*. Both will feature drawings and articles on the much discussed Wabash Bridge project.)

**Gallagher** and **LaBelle** have also been asked to speak about the success of the "Our Town Program" in September at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York. The Pittsburgh members were invited to lecture by The John Marston Fitch Charitable Trust.

In the June issue of *Outreach*, AIA National's internal publication, *Columns* was spotlighted in an article titled "Learn From Pittsburgh." The feature calls AIA Pittsburgh's membership publication "one of the best components we've seen" and describes in detail how the communications vehicle is put together as an example for other chapters to follow.

Frank Toker, a medieval archaeologist, University of Pittsburgh art historian and author of *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait*, has become the 28th president of the Society of Architectural Historians. This is the world's preeminent body of scholars and activists in the cause of architecture and the built environment. Membership is 5,000 strong with 26 chapters in the United States alone. Last year Toker and a team of colleagues received a \$107,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for publication of three books on the origins of medieval Florence, Italy and its cathedral.

Polly J. Cooper has been named the new Marketing Director for **Charles L. Desmone** and **Associates**. She will be responsible for directing the office's selling, marketing and public relations activities.

#### **Business briefs**

• Wright Office Furniture, Inc. announces the opening of their new downtown facility at 2735 Railroad Street. Their phone number is 412-471-2700.

#### From the firms

Construction of the new Syria Mosque will begin early this month. The 45,000 square foot facility, designed by Foreman Bashford Architects Engineers Inc., will replace the Oakland Syria Mosque, demolished in 1991. A neo-classical style was chosen to embody the spirit of the organization while bright colors and bronze domes create the sense of an Arabian Shrine. Located on 38 acres in Harmar Township, the new facility will have something the original Mosque did not, space to expand. Incorporated into the design are chandeliers, stained glass windows and four bronze sphinxes salvaged from the demolition of the Oakland temple. The estimated cost of the Mosque is \$5.5 million with the expected completion date being late 1994 or early 1995.

The Washington office of **Williams Trebilcock Whitehead** has been selected to design the new Ruth Powell Dining Hall Replacement Facility at Salisbury State University in Salisbury, Maryland. The two-story, 75,000 square foot facility should begin construction in a year and be competed by May 1995.

HealthAmerica has retained **WTW** to design the company's ninth and tenth health centers. The Cherrington Health Center will be a two-story brick and glass structrue compatible with other Cherrington buildings located in Moon Township. Construction began this spring and is expected to be complete in December. Construction on the five-story HealthAmerica Sterling Plaza Center in Oakland has been completed.

The Gustine Company has contracted with **Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann and Associates** to design a new 200,000 square foot facility for AEG Automation Systems Corporation. The company, currently located in O'Hara Township, will relocate to Southpoint, Washington County in the summer of 1994.

#### Announcement

• Image Associates Inc. has moved from their Monroeville offices to 733 Washington Road, Suite 312, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15228. They can be reached at 412-531-2620.

The Society of American Military Engineers' Ohio Valley Regional Meeting will be taking place in Pittsburgh, September 1-3 at the Westin William Penn Hotel this year. The topic is *Engineering the Future in the Ohio River Basin*. Call Darlene Muntean at 412-495-4304 for more information.

#### **Exhibits Committee**

#### David J. Roth, AIA, 261-1663

#### What, me enter?

On the heels of our workshop, *How to Win a Design Award*, I'd like to share some thoughts intended to spark your participation in our 1993 Design Awards Program. The following issues were discussed at the workshop:

#### Why enter?

- · Increase Pittsburgh's awareness of the value of architects.
- Raise our professional level through sharing ideas.
- · Your work has merit: reward for a job well done.
- The first step on the path to greater recognition: use the presentation for future marketing, publishing and a rehearsal for national design awards.

#### What to include in your entry:

- Include meaningful text: not just the usual content of a typical magazine article.
- Highlight the human and social issues: how does the project shape our society?
   (Show people in your project photos.)
- Drawings: show how the building works.
- Photos: Show only the views that best describe your project. (Crop the photo to eliminate distractions such as exit signs and mechanical equipment.)

#### Tips:

- The jury looks for exceptional work: beyond competent practice.
- Resubmit: your project is eligible for five years. (Each year a new jury has its own character.)

The effort involved in participating is justified with a view of the big picture—the use of your awards package for marketing and publication. *You can't win unless you enter.* As a profession we all win with your involvement.

#### Intern Development Committee

#### Rich Bamburak, AIA, 321-0550

On Saturday, July 17, 1993, the IDP Committee will hold its next regularly scheduled meeting at WTW Architects, Timber Court, Anderson and General Robinson Streets, in Pittsburgh.

We will be studying the construction of the SMS Engineering office building and headquarters on the North Side at the corner of Isabella Street and the Seventh Street Bridge. Karen Loysen, AIA of UDA Architects, has graciously accepted the task of coordinating our next site observation series. We plan to meet at 9:00 a.m. at WTW. Coffee and donuts will be provided.

After a short review, we will visit the site to observe the construction process. The steel frame is currently being erected and there is much to discuss about the foundation system. Hope to see you all at WTW's offices. (Parking is available in the Timber Court lot.) If there are any questions please do not he sitate to call.

#### **Membership Committee**

#### Warren Bulseco, Intern AIA, 321-0550

AIA Pittsburgh welcomes new members:



#### Robert J. Moro. AIA

firm: IKM, design principal schools: Carnegie Mellon, Harvard School of Design (summer program), Westminster College children: James Robert and John Paul past projects: Shadyside Hospital master plan/POB and garage; Allegheny General Hospital master plan/Hemlock Street

garage; Wood Street Subway Station interests: people, art, architecture, photography, music, life



#### Pedro C. Ortiz, AIA

firm: Foreman Bashford Architects/Engineers school: Catholic University, Washington D.C. spouse: Carol A. Foreman children: Eva, 3; Isabel, 7 months past projects: Wyland Elementary School, Hampton Twp. School District

interests: literature, writing, school building design



#### John J. Dziak, Professional Affiliate

firm: Reprographics Resource, Inc., sales/marketing school: Duquesne University, U.S. Air Force veteran spouse: Tula Dziak past projects: 1995 National A.S.H.E. convention: advertisement committee; AIA Azon Program interests: cycling, golf, my wife—not in that order: member

American Society of Highway Engineers

Robert Fenk, AIA Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann 2541A Branot School Road Wexford, PA 15090

Jonathan Stern, AIA

Mulach Parking Structures Corp. 2304 Sherbrook Street Pittsburgh, PA 15217

#### Terry L. Thompson, AIA

Foreman Bashford Architects/Engineers PO Box 189 Zelienople, PA 16063

Columns encourages new members to submit their bios to Warren Bulseco. We want to know more about you! 16 Columns July 1993 advertorial

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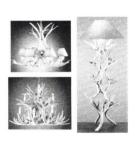
Energy savings and longer bulb life is what you'll get with the Philips Earth Light Collection available at Cardello Electric! Dramatic energy savings (up to 75% less) and environmental benefits are just some advantages of the compact fluorescents. The Philips SLS FAMILY of compact fluorescent bulbs are the most "compact" of their type and with an average rated life of 10,000 hours, the SLS lamps will last as long as 10 standard incandescents! CARDELLO ELECTRIC, 412-322-8031.



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#### CALENDAR

#### AIA ACTIVITIES

#### MONDAY, July 12

Architrave Board Meeting, 5:15 PM at IKM, Anne Swager, 471-9548

#### WEDNESDAY, July 14

Historic Resources Committee Meeting, noon at the Chapter office, John Martine, AIA, 227-6100.

#### SATURDAY, July 17

Intern Development Committee, 9 AM at WTW's offices, Rich Bamburak, AIA, 321-0550.

#### MONDAY, July 19

July Chapter Meeting, "Gold Medal Lecture" (See page 23 for details).

#### TUESDAY, July 20

Pittsburgh Chapter AIA Board Meeting, 5 PM at the Chapter office. All members are welcome, Anne Swager, 471-9548.

#### TUESDAY, July 20

Urban Design Committee Meeting, 5:45 PM at the Chapter office Steven Hawkins, AIA, 521-9399.

#### THURSDAY, July 22

Professional Development Committee Meeting, 12 PM in the Chapter office, Dave Brenenborg, AIA, 683-0202.

#### MONDAY, July 26

Exhibit Committee Meeting, 5:30 PM at Rosebud Cafe, David Roth, AIA, 261-1663.

#### TUESDAY, August 3

Communications Committee, 12 PM at the Chapter office. Rob Pfaffmann, AIA, 765-3890. There is no July meeting.

#### TUESDAY, August 31

Legislative Committee Meeting, 4:30 PM at the Chapter office, Al Cuteri, AIA, 471-8008. There will be no meeting in July.

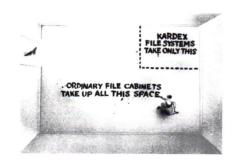
#### AROUND TOWN

#### ■ TUESDAY, July 13

Society of Architectural Administrators Meeting, Perity Waleko. 343-8077 for information.

#### TUESDAY, July 13

Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) Monthly Meeting, 5:30 PM at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Sheila Cartiff, 823-5063 for information.



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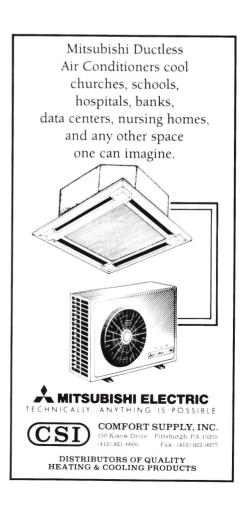
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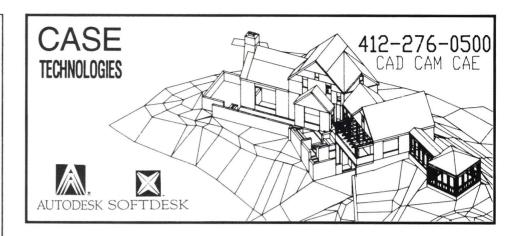


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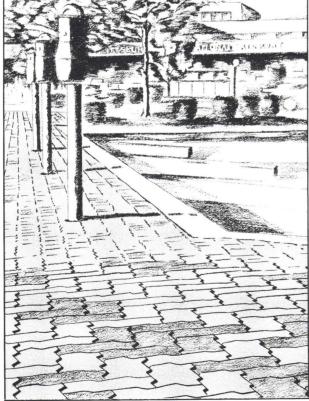
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## Alan L. Fishman, AIA

Firm: IKM Incorporated (Vice President and Principal)

Family info: Married to Libby Guth Fishman (attorney); two offspring, Beth (24), Charles (21).

School/Education: Cornell University (B. Architecture); Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M. Architecture).

**Project you're proudest of:** Founder's Pavilion (\$75 million, 450,000 square foot addition to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia); a functional, complex yet handsome building, finished on time and on budget.

**Building you wish you had designed:** The New State's Art Museum, Stuttgart, Germany, by James Stirling (locally, Rodef Shalom Temple by Hornbostel).

**Building you'd like to tear down:** All of the buildings on Market Square, except PPG, and start over to create a proper architectural background for the square.

**If you had not been an architect, what would you have been?** A rabbi—almost decided to become one, but decided I'd rather design buildings than deal with people's problems—little did I know!

What have you always wanted to tell your boss? "Bug off" or "Get off my back, I'll get it done (and soon)."

**Advice to young architects:** Learn how buildings are put together (i.e.: the physics of structures and materials) and how to communicate with contractors. (They don't teach you these things in school.)

**The one thing you wish they had taught you in school:** Per above, the physics of structures and materials—I sure learned enough about design!

**Favorite building:** Johnson Wax Company Research Tower and Office Building, Racine, Wisconsin by Frank Lloyd Wright—it inspired me at a young age when I was thinking of becoming an architect.

Best gift to give an architect: Money!

**Wish list for downtown Pittsburgh:** Fix up all the sidewalks and curbs, plant street trees, i.e.: get the "Forbes and Fifth" project done.

**People would be surprised to know that:** I am originally a "Midwesterner." I grew up in Elgin, Illinois, and now that I'm in Pittsburgh (via 26 years in Philadelphia) I'm getting closer to the Midwest again. (Is Pittsburgh the gateway to the Midwest or the East? It has the "feel" of a Midwestern city).



If I hadn't been an architect, I would have been a Rabbi.

## CALL FOR DODDLES!

All that brainstorming that often ends up in the bottom of your desk is valuable to Columns!

Start sending us your sketches, doodles and parti diagrams for the October "photo-free" issue, focusing on the language of design from its earliest stages.

Call Michelle Fanzo, 422-6727, with any questions.

20 Columns July 1993 classifieds

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|   | •       |          | •                | •       | •       | •       |           |          |            |             |             |
| Burchick Construction Co., Inc.<br>109 Nicholson Road, Suite 203, Sewickley, PA 15143<br>741-7970 Contact Joseph E. Burchic | •       | •        |                  |         | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           |             |
| Flynn Construction, Inc.<br>610 Ross Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15221<br>243-2483 Contact: Jan McCoy                            | •       | •        |                  |         | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           |             |
| Kacin, Inc.<br>795-22 Pine Valley Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15239<br>327-2225 Contact: Jeffrey D. Ferris                        | •       | •        |                  |         | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           | •           |
| Kory Builders, Inc.<br>739 Filth Avenue, East McKeesport, PA 15035<br>824-3660 Contact: Nancy A Krupa                       | •       |          |                  |         | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           | •           |
| Kusevich Contracting 3 Walnut Street, P.O. Box 95042, Pittsburgh, PA 15223 782-2112 Contact: George Kusevich                | •       | •        |                  | •       | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           |             |
| A. Martini & Co., Inc. 320 Grant Street, Verona, PA 15147 828-5500 Contact: Angelo Martini, Sr.                             | •       | •        |                  |         | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           |             |
| Mosites Construction Company 4839 Campbells Run Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 923-2255 Contact: M. Dean Mosiles                | •       |          |                  | •       | •       | •       | •         | •        |            | •           |             |
| Peters Building Construction Company<br>9800 Mcknight Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237<br>366-7440 Contact: Doug Gawronski        | •       | •        |                  | •       | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           |             |
| Recco Corporation Expressway Park, Gulf Lab Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238 828-9070 Contact: Bill Schwartz                      | •       | •        |                  | •       | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           | •           |
| Ross & Kennedy Corporation 1610 Babcock Blvd., Piltsburgh, PA 15209-1696 821-2424 Contact: John N. Broeren                  | •       | •        |                  |         | •       |         | •         | •        |            | •           |             |

## **Community Service by Architects:**

#### It's Worth It, Says One Long-time Member

**Gordon C. Pierce, AIA** recently retired after 40 years of practice. He has served on the Greensburg Planning Commission for 19 years, nine as chairman. The commission honored Pierce with a plaque containing a resolution, part of which is reprinted below:

Whereas, through Mr. Pierce's service, the City of Greensburg has become a community with plans for its future.

Whereas, all members ever serving with Mr. Pierce have been influenced by his architectural knowledge and enlightened by his friendship.

Now therefore, be it resolved by the City of Greensburg Planning Commission that all the gratitude in the world be extended to Gordon C. Pierce for all his valuable input through the past 19 years of volunteer service to the Planning Commission and most importantly to the citizens and communities of the City of Greensburg.

Further, let it be known that even though Mr. Pierce plans to relocate to another community in the State of Pennsylvania his "home" will always be here in the City of Greensburg. And the City Planning Commission will expect Mr. Pierce to visit each and every time he comes "home."

Such recognition, says Pierce, makes the volunteer community services offered by himself and many area architects worth the effort expended and time devoted. He plans to sell his residence and office and move to Lancaster, PA, where he hopes to work on the Planning Commission or Architectural Review Board there, plus do some consulting work.

### Marketplace

#### FOR SALE

Industrial size wooden drafting table. Good condition. \$300/best offer. Lisa at 746-2834.

To place your ad in Marketplace: Classified Rates: AIA Members: \$.50/word; non-members: \$.75/word. Mail typewritten copy to: The Cantor Group, 5208 Douglas Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Check must accompany copy. Deadline for Classifieds for the September issue is August 5.

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Architect: KSBH Architects Completion Date: 12-93 Contract Type: AIA Document A111 (G-MAX)



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#### Modernist Master Lectures in July

Prolific architect Kevin Roche, FAIA, of Hamden, Connecticut's Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates, has designed Modernist skyscrapers and corporate headquarters that help define America's skylines and landscapes. Irish-born Roche, recipient of architecture's highest honor, the 1993 AIA Gold Medal, will speak at Pittsburgh's City Theater about his work and design philosophy for the July Chapter meeting.

A captivating speaker, Pittsburgh members will be missing a major event by not attending the evening's festivities. An architect who inherited and advances the Modernist legacy of Mies van der Rohe and Eero Saarinen, Roche has designed such dynamic civic centerpieces as New York City's Ford Foundation Headquarters, California's Oakland Museum, and the Nations Bank Plaza in Atlanta.

Roche's dual passion for public service and design excellence is reflected in his plans for some of the major landmarks of the twentieth century. In 1950, he joined the firm that later became Eero Saarinen and Associates and continued to fulfill Saarinen's vision after the man's death in 1961 with such projects as the TWA Flight Center at JFK Airport, the St. Louis Gateway Arch and the United Nations Plazas I and II in New York. "It is easy to forget we build buildings for people," says Roche, 70. "We should accept the responsibility to create our environment and use the opportunity we have to lead and educate society into improving its habitat."



Kevin Roche. receives the AIA Gold Medal from President Bill Clinton as AIA President Susan Maxman looks on.

#### **Upcoming Issues**

September - Design Awards October - Call for Doodles

November - Heinz Architectural Center

Here's your chance to showcase your work in COLUMNS! Projects must be designed by a member or member firm and may be in any stage of development, but no more than one year old. The deadline for September information is July 25th. Artwork will not be returned unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is included.

#### **NOTE NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER!**

Send your project to: COLUMNS, c/o The Cantor Group, 5802 Douglas Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 or call Michelle Fanzo at 412/422-6727.

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Columns is NOT FORWARDED. Please send or fax old and new address and telephone number to: The Cantor Group, 5802 Douglas St, Pittsburgh, PA 15217, or fax to 422-6728.

#### **Duquesne Light and AIA Pittsburgh**

#### **Cordially Invite You**

To The July Meeting

### "Gold Medal Lecture"

featuring Kevin Roche, FAIA

Monday, July 19, 1993

City Theater Company, Inc. 57 South 13th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Parking: at US Steel (will be marked with City Theater's logo) on 13th Street between Muriel Street and the river.

5:30 pm Registration 6:00 pm Reception

7:00 pm Lecture

\$25 Members \$30 Non-members Hopitality sponsor:

The Mechanical Contractors Association of Western Pennsylvania

RSVP by Thursday, July 15

Monday, July 19

#### **RSVP** "Gold Medal Lecture"

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Clip/copy this form and send with check (payable to "AIA Pittsburgh") to: AIA Pittsburgh, CNG Tower, Suite 200, 625 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 or FAX to (412) 471-9501 by Thursday, July 15.

INSIDE DONALD MILLER INTERVIEW PATIENT FOCUSED CARE HEALTHCARE PORTFOLIO

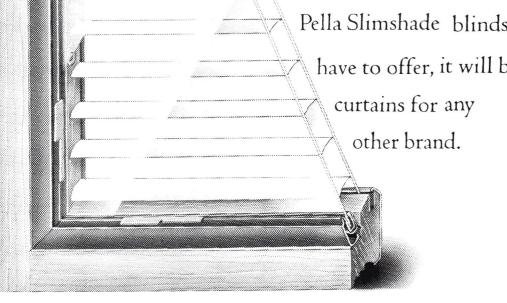


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