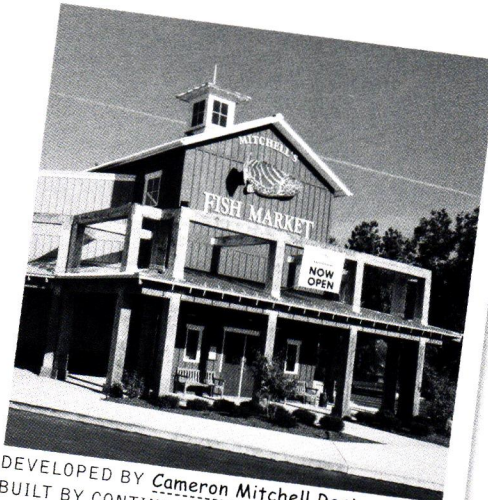


# COLUMNS

*What Is Fair?*  
*A Roundtable Discussion*  
*on the Selection Process*



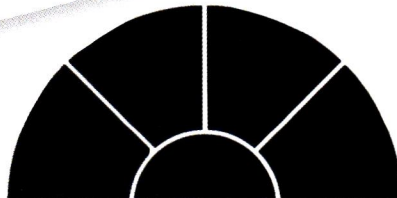
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# The Most Important Part of Our Profession?

By Anthony G. Poli, AIA • Vice President, Manager of Architecture, The Maguire Group



*The County did what we all hope clients do when selecting architects. They made a selection based upon qualifications and approach.*

## What is the most important part of

the profession of architecture? "Get the job..." according to Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, and supposedly, many of the stars of our profession. Although I disagree, clearly getting the job is important. In my current position of managing the architectural practice of Maguire Group in Pittsburgh, and previously as principal in my own firm and in partnerships, getting the job has been central to my professional existence. So when Allegheny County announced plans to build a major office building downtown to house the Department of Human Services and the Crime Lab, I began to evaluate a potential response to the County's request for qualifications.

To those of us who commit our firms' resources to business development, the selection process in a project of this size is so important. After considering such factors as the project type and the firm's portfolio, if the decision to respond is a "go," the selection process becomes central to much of what happens next. My favorite selection processes are with existing clients who want to "select" us for their next job. At the other end of the spectrum are publicly advertised projects, open to any firm who sees the solicitation, like this Allegheny County project.

We all know that many factors come into play when considering responses to these kinds of solicitations: previous experience with the client, personal relationships, the respective responses of each firm. The Transportation Group at Maguire had worked with the County and, in their experience, the selection process was based on qualifications and a fair evaluation of the respondents' submissions. For the new office building, the County crafted a design/build delivery method that provided two opportunities for an architectural assignment: one for completion of design development documents and management of the subsequent project phases and the second for the design/build team responsible for contract drawings and construction. By using two solicitations the County was providing the opportunity for two architectural firms to be involved.

Since Maguire's Pittsburgh Buildings Group was in its infancy, we teamed with a local architect, Renaissance 3 Architects, with their strong design ability and experience in urban office structures and lab design. We added URS to the team for construction management, Klavon Design for

landscape architecture, and Timothy Engineering for mechanical design. Elsewhere in the city, the same process of negotiations and teaming was playing out in similar ways since the County received 21 responses to this RFQ.

As expected, the selection process designed by the County involved the evaluation of these submissions by a diverse team of county personnel involved in this project. Members of the legal department, the office of MBE compliance, the Human Services Department and the Crime Lab (the primary user groups), and the Industrial Development Authority all read and ranked the responses. They chose to interview the top five firms, including our team.

These teams were then asked for a more comprehensive technical proposal, and a price proposal which was sealed and opened after the final selection. Each of the teams was given one hour to present their approach to the project in an oral presentation.

As this process unfolded, there were rumors about town: supposedly, one team that is well connected with the County had the project locked up. This prompted the AIA to contact the County with an offer to help regarding their process. Although the AIA's efforts were appreciated, in this case, the rumors were indeed rumors. The County did what we all hope clients do when selecting architects. They made a selection based upon qualifications and approach.

The County also selected a project delivery system that allowed more firms to compete for the work. A young branch office like Maguire, and a growing firm like R3A were able to get consideration for the design portion of this significant project. Had the delivery system been more conventional, only larger firms would have been under consideration.

Celli-Flynn Brennan Turkall was ultimately selected for the assignment (we came in second). I want to congratulate Tom Celli and his team on their efforts to secure this project. And I want to congratulate Tom Donatelli and Allegheny County for an open selection process, one that allowed such firms as Maguire and R3A, as well as Burt Hill, WTW and Kimball (the short list) to present their qualifications for a fair evaluation. If I may offer a word to the two Toms, *now* the most important part of the architectural profession begins: design. Continue to do well.

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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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## Influencing the Process

By Anne J. Swager, Hon. AIA

In the May issue of *Columns*, President Rich DeYoung, AIA reported on the planning meeting the AIA Board had attended in March. While every executive director extols the virtues and necessity of planning meetings, I must confess that sitting through them can be akin to a root canal without a pain killer. In the vast majority of these sessions our eyes are bigger than our stomachs, so we start by listing everything we wish the organization was doing, implying of course that the organization is not doing enough. By the time we finish, there is usually a huge list of possible to dos for the next year without any clear idea of who is going to do what.



*While we have a broad mission which speaks to improving the quality of the built environment, the means to this end is through you.*

As a staff person, you are mostly worried that the list will end up on your desk with no additional resources to get it done. A year evolves, the list is still there and then its time for another planning session and another long list. The only way to break this circular pattern is to engage a very competent facilitator who makes you focus on just a few doable goals. This year our facilitator, Sally Mizerak, helped us narrow our list and now, with Rich's leadership, I expect good results. I know from experience that the really important *stuff* rises to the top. Even the long lists have recurring themes that help keep us on track.

While we have a broad mission which speaks to improving the quality of the built environment, the means to this end is through you. We play a role in educating you, promoting you and what you do and advocating on your behalf. The baseline? Enabling you to do the best job you can do is what the AIA is all about.

Many years ago we began advertising in the yellow pages, touting ourselves as a referral service. When people call we refer them to our website which has lots of information

on what you do, how you do it, who does what, and how you charge. If the caller lacks access to the internet, we print the information and mail it to them. Over the past several years, these calls have included not just individuals but a whole host of organizations looking to hire architects. With increasing frequency, we have been helping a variety of entities with their RFQ/RFP processes.

Our offer is simple. If the potential client lets us influence their process, we publicize, at no charge, their RFQ/RFP to our members. This creates an opportunity for a better process that leads to a better fit between client and architect and, in the end, a better result. As simple as this may seem, it isn't. We don't always get to influence the process to the extent we would like since we usually aren't brought in soon enough to make a significant difference. The only tool we have to help potential clients is the information from our website and staff interface.

Nevertheless, we continue to make a difference. Church groups, municipalities, small companies and other groups have all benefited from our tutoring on what you do and how to hire you. Our conversations center around helping the potential client define what they want you to do.

In this month's issue of *Columns*, we asked several of you to talk with us about good and bad processes. We wanted to measure how important this issue was to you and, as you can see from the passion of the discourse, this ranks right up there with family, taxes and the future of the environment. Our hope was to generate some ideas on how the AIA can do a better job in this area. Our participants did not disappoint. They gave us much food for thought and we thank them again for taking the time to talk to us.

Now we ask you to please take the time to read what they said. Then let us know what *you* think.





## HAC Showcases Local Architects' Work

*Pittsburgh Platforms: New Projects in Architecture and Environmental Design*, on view at Carnegie Museum of Art's Heinz Architectural Center from June 28-October 5, looks at 19 projects designed for the Pittsburgh area. It explores how design can represent the region with its legacy of heavy industry and, more recently, a new economy.

These 21st-century endeavors are by Pittsburgh-based or Pittsburgh-trained architects, engineers, landscape designers, and artists. Most participants in the exhibition are in the early phases of their professional careers. The projects are loosely grouped into five categories: home, work, infrastructure, landscape, and culture. Each project is presented on an individual platform with drawings, photographs, and models, as well as material samples that allow the visitor to appreciate its physical character.

studio d'ARC's presentation of their Live Work House II on Pittsburgh's South Side features a panel of the weathering steel used as cladding. D.I.R.T.'s Testing the Waters, a water treatment park in Vintondale, Cambria County, revives a landscape marred by mining yet acknowledges the region's industrial past.

"Much like a set of adjacent islands, these platforms form an archipelago of installations through which the visitor is invited to roam and thus assemble impressions of a Pittsburgh emerging now and in the near future," says Raymund Ryan, curator of the Heinz Architectural Center and organizer of the exhibition.

Other projects in the exhibition include Springboard's Maridon Museum, an art museum built from a Victorian-era house and the more recent car dealership next door; dgpp architecture's Pittsburgh Glass Center, another car dealership, once abandoned, now an environmentally friendly setting for glassmaking classes, artist studios, a resource library, and exhibition gallery; and The Phantom's Revenge, a Kennywood Park roller coaster conceived by Kennywood Entertainment's chairman of the board, Harry Henninger, Jr., that travels at 82-mph while dropping 232 feet and snaking under and over an existing roller coaster.

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### Programs

In mid-July, the museum will host a site tour of selected Pittsburgh Platforms' projects (fee and pre-registration required). On September 20, there will be a "Meet the Architects" symposium. More information on these programs will be available on the museum's web site, [www.cmoa.org](http://www.cmoa.org) <<http://www.cmoa.org>> in June.

### UPCOMING ISSUES

**Columns will be back in September.  
To submit a project please contact the  
editor at (412) 563-7173 or email:  
tcerto@adelphia.net**

**SEPTEMBER** – Architecture as therapy  
in healthcare. How the brain experiences  
architecture.

**OCTOBER** – How the green movement has  
affected landscape architecture

**NOVEMBER** – Engineers and Architects:  
Successful projects, secrets to successful  
collaboration

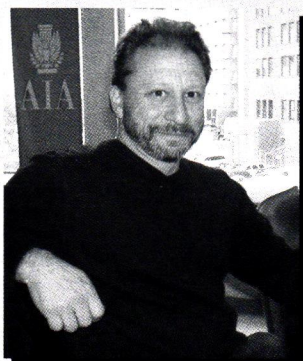
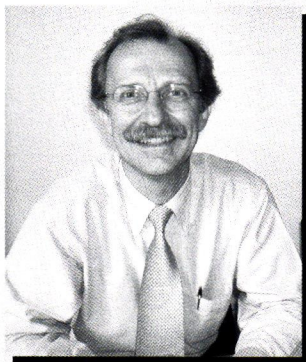
### New Member

AIA Pittsburgh welcomes Eric J. Harrison, construction manager, as a Professional Affiliate. A native Pittsburgher, Eric was raised in a general contracting family-owned business (Harrison Construction Company) and he is a strong advocate of close construction manager cooperation with architects and engineers. His professional goal is to establish, coordinate and supervise a construction manager presence here in western Pennsylvania, working cooperatively with architects and engineers.



## On the Selection Process

### A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



**PARTICIPANTS** (clockwise from top left): **Rich DeYoung, AIA**, **Jon Shimm, AIA**, **Anne J. Swager, Hon. AIA** (moderator), **Michael Stern, ASLA** and **Mihai (Mike) Marcu, AIA**

When it comes to the selection process, what's fair?

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What isn't fair? *Columns* recently brought together a group of architects for a roundtable discussion to take on this issue and more: what criteria should be used to differentiate between firms? What will it take for architects to get the recognition they deserve? How can we improve the selection process for all?

---

As you will see, the discussion proved to be quite interesting.

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We welcome your comments.



**Anne J. Swager (AS):** The genesis for this roundtable discussion comes from a rumor that was circulating about Allegheny County's selection process for their proposed new office building. Actually, from our research we think Allegheny County has put together an open and fair process which they used for this most recent choice of Celli Flynn Brennan Turkall. However, **this sparked the idea of asking you what you thought was a good way to hire an architect.**

**Jon Shimm (JS):** Just off the bat, the model that GSA (General Services Administration) has set up is a good starting point for design excellence. It puts emphasis on the ability of the firm and lead designer, their philosophy and portfolio. Then they go to a second round and get into the makeup of the teams. With the emphasis on design rather than fee or other components, it is design-based.

**Mihai (Mike) Marcu (MM):** I am familiar with GSA. It has one very basic flaw: there is a group of architects at interchange for getting work for the approved design excellence firms. Kohn Pederson Fox, Kate Diamond. But it's impossible to get in there.

**JS:** I disagree—there is only one peer reviewer on the selection committee. The selection committee is typically half a dozen people—usually six people, a project manager, contracting officer, etc. It's not just down to the peers but obviously the peers have a say, some more than others. But if we were to do something like that in Pittsburgh—what would be the downside? You're not going to get the KPF's of the world coming in. The City of Pittsburgh, for example, could say...

**AS:** Give extra points for local firms?

**JS:** Exactly.

**AS: Do you think that public agencies should include extra credit for local firms as part of their selection criteria?**

**JS:** Absolutely. Considering it is our tax dollars.

**MM:** I don't think they should even consider out of town firms.

**Michael Stern (MS):** My question is: Who's they? The City of Pittsburgh has so many different groups.

**JS:** The City of Pittsburgh commissions no work. It's all other entities, SEA, Port Authority...

**MM:** Let me suggest that Pittsburgh is controlled by the county executive. The line of control comes out to the mayor. While I agree there are several groups that tend to hand out work, it is all controlled by elected officers. The point is, if you know Roddey or the current county executive—they control what happens, whether it is private building, or public.

**MS:** Then it has to be on their agenda.

**MM:** I'm switching subjects a little. The question is why bring in Michael Graves? I know at least 10 architectural firms that could have done the job on the O'Reilly Theater.

**Rich DeYoung (RDY):** You see both extremes at the Science Center. It's a similar sort of thing. The original design which was, shall we say, uninspired, and then the current situation. Both extremes are less than desirable. We should be much more confident in our own abilities to compete on a national basis. We compete nationally all the time and get our share of commissions. I don't have a problem with out of town firms coming in here and competing with us. There is some advantage to being local; you're here for the client for long term.

**JS:** When the County issued the RFP, one of my concerns was that the County hadn't ever issued many RFPs before. Frequently, they just handed things to Tasso. So what was their selection process? It was never defined. With GSA, for all their faults—they tell you what the criteria are, their importance and they give you points so that you could say that firms within 20 miles of downtown Pittsburgh will get an additional x pts.

**MS:** With so many RFPs, you go through excruciating detail about what they want you to do to submit the proposal yet they don't ever tell you what the basis of the decision making will be. Then it becomes arbitrary or it becomes political or it becomes a big name or whatever. If they state the criteria, they have to at least explain what their decision is based on.

**AS: Let me ask a touchy question. If a public entity wants part of their selection criteria to be "good design", do you think they can competently make that evaluation?**

**JS:** You need somebody or some component that's able to address that component of evaluation.





**RDY:** With some level of sophistication.

**MM:** That's a tough question because what's good design to one person is not to another. It can get very personal and very difficult.

**MS:** What would be an alternative?

**MM:** If I were on the committee making that decision, I would look for firms that have done projects of this type and I would go visit them. I would make the decision based on what I see. I would not worry about anything else. I would definitely not go for the big name.

**MS:** There is a culture that has pervaded for the past five years that that is a requirement for a big project.

**MM:** It's not just the past five years. When I first started here at Carnegie Tech, every major building (in town) with the exception of certain government buildings were designed by out of state architects. Except for DRS who did Civic Arena and Three Rivers Stadium. Harrison and Abramovitz did Gateway Four, Alcoa, and the U.S. Steel Building. Every one of those big ones was Harrison Abramovitz.

**AS:** So you think it helps the selection process if the committee visits some of your projects. Does it help if they visit your firm?

**MM:** Sure.

**JS:** We just interviewed for a project for NASA in DC. They came to our office so they could understand the culture of how we work.



**AS:** I think that's great.

**MM:** That is so they can see if you have the staff to do the job. There are situations where you don't have any work and you're trying to get a job and you don't have draftspersons. People walk in and wonder how you're going to do a \$10 million job with just one person. That's always important for people to see. And of course the whole demeanor of the office is important—how do people relate to each other? The social aspect of the office has a lot to do with the quality of work in my opinion. That's all worthwhile but the issue is, there is a certain inferiority complex in this city. When I first came to this city the joke was that the first time U.S. Steel executives bought their clothes in this city was when Brooks Brothers opened. Otherwise, they went to New York.

I was thinking about this subject yesterday trying to figure out how many projects were designed by local firms without the help of a big outside name and the only one I could think of was the Design Alliance and Alcoa—which for all practical purposes they did themselves. Other than that, the garage on the North Side—WTW.

**MS:** You raise an interesting issue here. The business community has been much more supportive of local architecture firms than the public sector. Look at the project Burt Hill did for Mellon and what Astorino did for PNC or what Design Alliance did for Alcoa. Those are all major projects given to local firms with very good results. I think it's interesting that the business community has a lot more faith in the local talent than the public sector.



**MM:** It's new. It's not what they're used to happening.

**MS:** New or not, within the same time frame that we've constructed a billion dollars worth of public projects all designed by someone out of town, half a billion dollars of projects have been done by local firms for the business community.

**RDY:** Fore Systems interviewed most of us in town and then ended up going out of town. I think an interesting thing happens. So many of our clients are so conservative in this town that we can't do the creative things we do out of town. Somebody comes in town and looks at us and says, well you're not very creative and they go out of town and get a creative firm.

**JS:** It's hard to be a hero in your own backyard. Look at Robert Venturi in Philadelphia.

**MS:** A lot of firms have made their reputation out of town and are in higher regard for the work they do out of town. That's more of a challenge for a new firm like ourselves starting from the base of where we are but we feel the same pressure. We feel we've got to get out of town to get more respect here. And we actually get more respect from out of town clients who come here and hire us for seeing our talent out of town.

**RDY:** Back to the original question, we talk about public entities and how architects should be selected. You bring up the design excellence program for GSA, which I think is a very good program but the fundamental ground level is they should all be qualifications-based. There should be absolutely nothing else but qualifications-based. There should be a process where they review the qualifications of a firm to select the most appropriate firm. There is a risk in that. You may have a creative firm who hasn't done a particular building type, who has no directly applicable qualifications for the building type, yet might be the perfect architect for it.

**MS:** That was a question I had when Mike said earlier that they ought to go with someone who's done that project before. As the new firm—we think we're good and yet we haven't done 10 campus centers or whatever the project is. And yet we think we can do it.

**MM:** You're right. This is where affiliations occur. As long as the community has some sort of a rule that says if you're

from this community, which was said before, then you get so many points in addition.

**JS:** Same thing is true within Pennsylvania in terms of contractors. Contractors can come in from anywhere here in Pennsylvania but some states preclude out of state contractors and so again, it's coming from the top down.

**AS:** **Okay, time to put on my economist hat. I'm thinking about the whole idea of economic sustainability for Pittsburgh. One approach is helping local design firms grow their capability by including them on local projects especially where they might gain additional expertise. Then there is the approach of bringing in a star architect who will attract people to our city and is a drawing card.**

**MM:** When you bring in a star architect like Michael Graves and then you try to get money for your association from local architects, you insult us. But the point is, when they want money they want money for all these wonderful projects they're doing. And I'm wondering, what is going on here? We are being asked to give annual donations to local organizations but they very seldom deal with us.

**MS:** Some of these public agencies have theoretically tried to reform their process. I know Burt Hill went through this thing with the Port Authority and got one of their stations. And that was this closely designed process, correct?

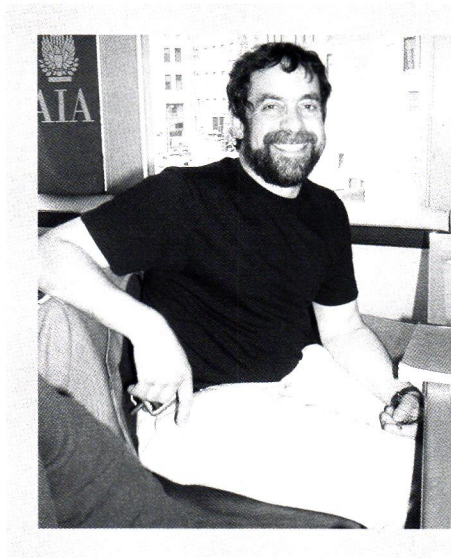
**JS:** The Allegheny Avenue Station. We did team with ZGF but I wasn't part of the process so I don't know exactly how they selected.

**AS:** But the reality is, both Mike (Marcu) and I talked to the Port Authority about how to put together a good process. From our standpoint at the AIA, we were disappointed with the end result. Procurement threw out most of our suggestions. Even being involved in the process does not guarantee a good process as an outcome.

**MS:** The interesting thing about the Port Authority is that the consulting engineers who work for them hate their process and much prefer PennDOT's process. If you've ever done a full-blown Port Authority proposal, it gives new meaning to the term onerous. You've got to spend a solid month doing spread sheets and manning charts.

**RDY:** I have a particular problem with a client like PennDOT





"Something came across my desk today about a project that we submitted for and interviewed for two years ago and they never went ahead with the project. Now they are starting over again. Tell me why I should chase this. Unless it's a new program, make your selection but don't put us and a dozen firms through the agony again."

Jon Shimm, AIA

or Port Authority asking you to do free design work up front. It becomes a beauty contest—we can all design something and I like the red Porsche and you like the black Mercedes and that's how I select the firm and that's a mistake. It's not understanding what we do as architects.

**JS:** Let's look at the convention center. Other than the fact that it wasn't a local firm, was the process itself a good process?

**RDY:** It was a much better process than others. At least it essentially followed AIA guidelines for design competitions. I think that only a few select projects warrant a design competition. That was a pretty major project and I think it warranted a design competition.

**AS:** As a design professional, what advice would you give to the public sector to help them differentiate between the different architectural firms? What criteria other than qualifications, visiting the projects, and visiting firms should they use?

**RDY:** Client references. I think you can't emphasize enough what Mike said about visiting projects because much like design awards, so much of what we do in our marketing is a beauty show, a photography show, and they need to walk through the projects and understand those pieces of architecture and talk to the owners who work there.

**MM:** Talking to clients is extremely important. As an example, we were just interviewed by an organization for a project and, unbeknownst to me, they wrote to two of our

clients wanting to know something about us. Two letters came in and they had the same paragraph—these guys really listen when we talk—and we got the job. So what does it mean? It means talking to a client and hearing, "we like to work with them, they're good and they listen to us". Add to that all the other criteria we talked about and you have a hell of a way to select.

**MS:** I think one of the big problems is, how you do make it purely qualifications-based? Particularly public sector clients feel, and rightly so, that they have a public trust and they've been entrusted with public funds and they need to spend that money responsibly. Then they say therefore, we have to spend as little money as possible.

**RDY:** But that's probably not responsible spending of the money.

**MS:** I agree. But how do you make that case?

**MM:** When you develop a reputation for being really good at one thing, for example, as WTW is with student centers, people start respecting your opinion.

**RDY:** I think all agencies have to do is look at their own projects and their own peers' projects and other governmental agencies that have been successful or not successful from a whole range of issues like cost overruns, construction litigation, and operational efficiencies with the building. Look at those things and you can see that the ones where they paid a little more for their services didn't have these problems.





"If I were on the committee making that decision, I would look for firms that have done projects of this type and I would go visit them. I would make the decision based on what I see. I would not worry about anything else."

Mihai (Mike) Marcu, AIA

**MS:** That depends on a very thoughtful and intelligent process from the beginning.

**MS:** We haven't had much success with it but we went through a couple processes with Penn State—and I can say it was a pretty good process. There's not a lot of work upfront. It's purely qualifications-based and they can make that judgment because they have a staff of intelligent and educated professionals administering it who have a whole repository of background information.

**RDY:** I think they're also able to do something that a lot of public agencies are not geared to do, and that is to give repeat work to architects with whom they have had successful projects. And that's important. You know, you work really hard to develop a relationship and design a great building and you expect more opportunities from that. But some government agencies think the more you have on the books with them today, the less likely you are to get another project. It doesn't matter how well you're doing, you're not going to get more work.

**MS:** That's the difference between a firm like yours and a firm like mine—you have a good track record and they rightly trust you to do a good job but we might try to break into a market that we can do a good job in...

**MM:** That's probably the argument behind putting that factor in.

**RDY:** You have to put in an innovation factor or some factor of evaluation that allows an unknown quantity to have an opportunity. Penn State does that. They often end up giving jobs to someone who has been trying to work with them for a number of years and giving them an opportunity to see how it will work.

**JS:** The advantage of Penn State is they are not encumbered by the whole DGS process. They have their own process but they're not encumbered by the legislature.

**MS:** The upshot of this conversation is, what's a good model? So that might be a place to start.

**JS:** I think DGS is the bad example. When I was talking to Master Builders about changing the DGS process when Rendell was coming in, they were all in favor of it. They said with the fees that DGS dictates to architects, you can't afford to produce good documents—the quality documents needed for multiple primes with low bids.

**JS:** Part of the problem with DGS is the fact that there is no end user in the selection process.

**MM:** I haven't found DGS to be a problem.

**JS:** The fees are a problem.

**MM:** I haven't figured out a very good process. It's a very interesting subject. Whether it's DGS, GSA, the City or the County, the bottom line is: you get the work because of who you know and what you know.





"In spite of high profile projects that are visible around town, in general day-to-day architecture is not perceived as a value added to the project. It's perceived as a cost."

Michael Stern, ASLA

**JS:** It's human nature. There is a subjective side of things.

**AS:** Let's move to the private sector for just a minute. We get a number of calls from the public asking how to hire an architect. First we have them go to our Web site which has a lot of information explaining what architects do and how they do it. We have residential architect listings on our site so potential clients can make their own calls. Finally, we encourage them to hire someone with whom they feel they have a good rapport. We explain that this is usually a lengthy relationship so you want someone with whom you can communicate well.

We had a semi-public client call us several years back about hiring a new architect. I asked about the last architect who had done a project for them. They said they were pleased which prompted me to ask why they didn't just hire the firm again for the next job. What do you think of our approach?

**RDY:** There's a fine line when you look at public work. There is some obligation to spread that work around to some other firms. Or you end up with a situation we had with the county in past years where one could have argued that this was the best architect and they felt confident in his abilities to give him repeat work. In the public trust you have to spread the work around somewhat. That shouldn't be a disincentive, either.

**MS:** There is a flip side to this. In spite of high profile projects that are visible around town, in general day-to-day work architecture is not perceived as a value added to the project. It's perceived as a cost.

**MM:** I want to go back to what I said—when someone hires HOK to do a stadium that makes sense—because I don't know anybody in this city who has designed as many stadiums. The fact that HOK took someone local to work with them should have been a lot more public. WTW should have gotten more credit for it. Then that could have led you to do a stadium somewhere else.

**AS:** They must be given credit.

**RDY:** And a significant role.

**AS:** We insisted that a local firm help with the convention center but it didn't happen.

**JS:** When we interviewed for the county project, that was mentioned. Not one person in the room knew that we were the MEP engineers and developed the green components of the design.

**MM:** Yesterday I was walking through PPG plaza and saw a friend and I asked him, how do you like the fountain? And he said, great job, who did it? I did it! There isn't enough publicity in the city for the work we do. Do you think there are any citizens who know that WTW did the theater garage?





"There should be a process where they review the qualifications of a firm to select the most appropriate firm."

"The worst experience for us is when you're asked to compete for projects where they've already selected someone and you are there to keep it honest."

Rich DeYoung, AIA

**RDY:** No, because every time it goes in the paper it only mentions Michael Graves who only had a very tiny part of that project.

**MM:** It starts with our publications, it starts with our newspapers. We're like the comedian who never gets any respect.

**MS:** It stems from some level of inferiority complex. It validates the projects you're doing by bringing in a big name and that's what's important, not the fact that a local firm actually produced it.

**MM:** We feel very fortunate that we've done several projects on our own that have now developed big reputations, like the Hillman Cancer Center, the conversion of the jail and Phipps. Those will be well received anywhere whether you're here or New York or China. But the penance you pay to get there is unbelievable.

**AS:** What about the fee? How much depends on the fee?

**RDY:** It depends on the client.

**JS:** How hungry are you?

**MM:** That's right.

**JS:** Is that the reason you should be selected because you cut your fee half a percentage point?

**MM:** That happens.

**RDY:** That's one of the advantages of working out of town and being an out of town expert because it doesn't happen nearly as much.

**MS:** Why?

**RDY:** Because they want you. Most clients have an expectation of paying a higher fee because you're out of town.

**AS:** It's the old saying: you become an expert as soon as you pass the county line.

**MM:** An advantage of being out of town is the exposure to projects. If you talk to Kohn Pederson Fox about a high-rise, they can show you hundreds of high rises. If you talk to another firm, they can show you ten. People who don't understand architecture go to firms based on numbers.

**MS:** We come up against that all the time.

**JS:** I worked for a firm in Atlanta that did hotels. Hotels are difficult projects, incredibly complex. But they couldn't get an office building to save their lives. We didn't have any real background so we ran up against a Smallwood Reynolds, it was the same sort of thing.

**AS:** In Mt Lebanon recently, we ended up giving the public safety building to an out of town firm and I asked why. We need an expert, they said. To build a garage? That's all it is, it's a bay with fire trucks in it. You don't need an expert. But it goes back to what you were saying; some buildings truly do need and deserve experts.



**RDY:** Public officials in particular hide behind their own fear of not making the right choice, and base it on the number that the person has done. You've done five and you've done seven, you win because you've done seven. Now if you've done three, you've probably done enough to know how to design the building.

**AS: Let me ask you about the most egregious process you have ever gone through: one in your tenure that really set your teeth grinding.**

**JS:** We submitted to public agencies and institutions and never heard a word. They don't understand the level of effort required to put together a proposal and an interview. Thousands upon thousands of dollars being spent.

**AS:** Do you think you would get good feedback if you later asked why wasn't I selected?

**JS:** Yes. Sometimes you do.

**RDY:** But it's interesting, there's always only one number one firm and five number two firms.

**JS:** In an interview process very often what they're looking for is a reason to eliminate you—not that he said right but that you said wrong.

**MS:** I have rarely gotten an honest answer.

**RDY:** Or a good reason.

**MS:** Often they can't explain it. That's fair. It's back to chemistry.

**JS:** Having sat on the other side of table selecting contractors, the psychology of the group definitely plays into it. There were certain preconceptions about players and all of us changed our perceptions through the process of the interview.

**RDY:** The worst experience for us is when you're asked to compete for projects where they've already selected someone and you are there to keep it honest. We had a project out of town several years ago and they paid us to do some design work and then asked us to design it a second time. Finally the selection committee selected another firm. A few years later, I was reading a magazine article about this project and learned the vice-president in charge of facilities had gone to college with the architect who got the job. Well, it was obvious that they put us through a whole lot of work for nothing.

**JS:** Something came across my desk today about a project that we submitted and interviewed for two years ago and they never went ahead with the project. Now they are starting over again. Tell me why I should chase this. Unless it's a new program, make your selection but don't put us and a dozen firms through the agony again.

**MS:** So many RFPs are so time consuming and expensive and they construct this grand scheme of process that protects them publicly. They don't care about the burden put on us.

**MM:** Keep in mind people who construct these have to have proof of what they're doing. It may take them six months but they're getting paid to do that.

**MM:** It justifies their existence, especially in today's economy.

**AS: Let me switch to the publicity around town that Mike Marcu mentioned earlier. We ran into a case recently with STRADA where the Pittsburgh Tribune Review ran an article and published a rendering by John Martine without credit. Rich DeYoung told me so I called John Martine and asked if he put his name on it. Not only was his name on it but Strada's name was on it, copyrighted. I sent a letter to the writer asking him to stop doing this to copyrighted work. He called me back raising an interesting question. He said, I don't understand what happens when we get a drawing from say, a developer. And the developer says, this is my property. We have a letter we routinely send when the print media does not give credit but how can we do this on a grander scale?**

**MM:** Why did they eliminate the name?

**AS:** He said he didn't know he had to print it.

**MS:** I think it goes back to the point of what is the value of design? We're viewed as not only a commodity; we're an expense that doesn't necessarily give back value. And so it's a development project. The building's going up. The newspaper doesn't really care about anything else.

**MM:** At the groundbreaking of the Hillman Cancer Center, there were huge tents, 2000 people, everybody talking about everything and they had this fascinating video made by a PR company—but neither the video nor the accom-





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panying speech mentioned the name of the architect. As we were walking out, a friend said what's the matter with these guys? They never even gave you credit. I said, if I dropped my pants right here, I would make the paper. But the fact that I designed this building means nothing.

**RDY:** But that's part of our job as architects and the AIA. The AIA has the ad campaign to raise public awareness of the value of architects because the public doesn't have the understanding of what we do.

**AS:** It's a constant education.

**MM:** It's not a problem in Boston or Chicago or New York. The press in those cities considers architecture art.

**MS:** I would say it's less of a problem but it's also true there.

**MM:** If there's a building of any note designed in those cities, they critique it like a show and of course it drives the architects crazy but at the same time, it publicizes projects and raises awareness of architecture.

**MS:** There's the bigger issue of educating the media as well as the public.

**MM:** We should educate media because they educate the public. If you could only have all those people in one room and have a seminar.

**AS:** I was thinking about the quaint story of how the Frick Building towers over the Allegheny County Courthouse to prove that commerce is mightier than government. Here in our own time is the World Trade Center story and how we can honor the people who died. It's become an important and far reaching public conversation that has elevated symbolism that is in architecture.

**MS:** It has created a level of public discourse of civic and urban design that didn't exist before.

**MM:** I think the convention center did that.

**MS:** It was a lot higher level of discourse of civic and urban design around that than around other projects.

**JS:** Periodically you get works like that. Look at Guggenheim in Spain. It's a phenomenal piece of work. And people were talking about architecture.

**MM:** But. I've been to Spain, I'm from Europe, and there's a totally different attitude. Architects are regarded differently there.

**AS:** Let me ask you this: **What role should the AIA play in the RFQ/RFP process?**

**MM:** Educating the press about architecture, what's in the city, the architects, and the difficulties they have in garnering work.

**MS:** The AIA does have a position about the selection process. It would not be inappropriate to have a seminar, to invite public agencies, on qualifications-based procurement. And say we encourage you to follow this procedure.

**RDY:** I think we have to be careful at the AIA to not over-complicate the process. There is a tendency to create a process that's fairly complicated for small projects that doesn't make sense.

**AS:** **One last thing: is the best marketer always an architect?**

**MM:** I think so.

**MS:** There's a big difference between marketing and selling. The best salesman is the architect. They have to be there to close.

**MM:** First and foremost, you get work because of what you know and who you know. The process of actually signing a contract could be somebody else. They don't hire firms. They hire people. Although we have a marketing department, they identify potential projects, they don't do the marketing. I consider that intelligence gathering.

**MS:** That's the difference I am talking about.

**RDY:** I think it takes a different sort of person to do that. Many architects just don't have the skills to do that.

**MS:** You can say that of a lot of designers—the personality profile is counter to the sales. What you really want to do is the project. And the biggest mistake we make is trying to solve the problem when getting the job. Get the job and then solve the problem.

**AS:** Thank you everyone for being here today and doing this.

**MM:** We should do this more often.



*Thanks to Maya Haptas of AIA Pittsburgh who transcribed the discussion while nursing a broken leg.*





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## From the Firms

► General Industries, Prof. Affiliate, is the general contractor for construction for the new three story, 27,000 sf addition to the Mon Valley YMCA in Charleroi. The architect is **Gerard-Nagar Associates**.

Michael Baker Jr., Inc., a unit of Michael Baker Corporation, has been selected by the Fort Pitt Society of the Pittsburgh Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution to conduct a Phase II archaeological investigation of the Fort Pitt Blockhouse, downtown Pittsburgh. The Fort Pitt Blockhouse is Pittsburgh's oldest building and is the only surviving piece of the original Fort Pitt.

Dynamic Building Corporation, Prof. Affiliate, recently began construction on an interior fit-out for Armstrong County Memorial Hospital and Armstrong Imaging Specialists. Architect is **WTW Architects**.

DBC has also begun construction on interior renovations for various Verizon retail stores throughout Pennsylvania. Architect is **Fukui Architects**.

**Radelet McCarthy Architects and Interior Designers** designed the addition and renovation to Beaver Area Memorial Library (below) that was formally dedicated on May 17th. The 4,200 sf expansion borrows design elements from the existing building, yet enhances the library's compatibility with the surrounding residential structures.



Massaro Company recently broke ground on a 50,000 sf cargo building for Aviation Facilities Company, Inc. Project engineering & architectural firm is **Baker & Associates**.

Massaro Company was recently awarded two new construction projects from Franciscan University of Steubenville: Renovations to the John Paul II Library; architect is **Integrated Architectural Services Corporation** and renovations of St. Thomas More Residence Hall; architect is **Maclachlan Cornelius & Filoni, Inc.**

**Repal Construction Co.**, has been awarded the contract for the construction of a new Blue Beacon Truck Wash facility located in Breezewood. Architect is John A. Shaver.

Construction will be completed shortly on the Wexford Imaging Center, designed by **WTW Architects**.

**WTW** has also been selected to design a new academic building at Penn State Altoona. Construction of the \$10 million project is expected to begin shortly and be completed in the summer of 2004. Project architect is **Barton Schindel, AIA**.

**JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design** has been selected by Louis Anthony Jewelers to design a 900 sf remodel and expansion to their existing store in Norman Center II in Bethel Park, PA. Project manager for the project is **Dwayne Mihalow, Assoc. AIA**.

**CelliFlynnBrennan** has recently announced its merger with Turkall Associates to form **Celli-Flynn Brennan Turkall, Inc., Architects and Planners (CFBT Design)**.

**Urban Design Associates** has recently been retained by the University of California to prepare a campus plan for the University of California at Santa Barbara. The plan will organize the public space of the campus, identify future building sites and provide design guidelines for architecture and landscape elements.

## Business Briefs

► **Hayes Large Architects LLP** announced the following promotions: Randal S. Diviney, director of structural engineering & Operations, Altoona; **Michael L. Federici, AIA**, project manager, spec writer and director of operations, Pittsburgh; Carol A. Gensimore, chief operating officer; Brian W. Hayes, project manager & director of operations, Altoona; Richard E. Hazlett, chief financial officer and Associate; **Jonathan L. Teicher, AIA**, project manager & director of operations, State College; and Don W. Weller, job captain III, Harrisburg.

**Hayes Large Architects** also recently hired the following employees: in Pittsburgh, Bernard J. Lamm, director of civil engineering and Todd Demangone, designer; in Altoona, Michael J. Comp, structural technician, Andrew T. Costea, mechanical technician, and Melissa A. Smith, interior designer; in Harrisburg, Sean E. Gray, technician and Amber-Lee Hilbert, technician, and in State College, Jeanna D. Ventura, graduate architect.

**STRADA** announced that **Sean Beasley, Assoc. AIA**, Sylvia Chen Sze Wee and Jason Franklin have recently joined the firm.



**Perkins Eastman** announced the addition of **Dario Giandomenico, AIA** as architect; Shayne Blacksborg, as intern architect; Renee Deets as operations assistant, and Shawn Nix, as a desktop support specialist in the firm's IT Group.

**Perfido Weiskopf Architects** hired **Carlton Bolton, Assoc. AIA** and **Jan Lyle Irvin, AIA**.

**Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates** re-elected **John E. Kosar, AIA**, **P. Richard Rittelmann, AIA**, Peter T. Moriarty, Harry T. Gordon, **John E. Brock, AIA**, **Anton H. Germishuizen, AIA** and David R. Linamen to the firm's board of directors.



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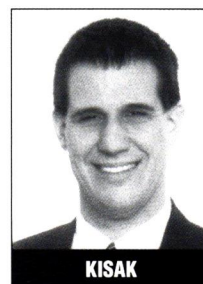
## Kudos

► **Renaissance 3 Architects, P.C.** announced its placement on Inc. Magazine's Inner City 100 list for the second year in a row. R3A was ranked 30 on the list of the fastest growing inner-city companies in America. R3A, the only Pittsburgh architecture firm to be named to the list, was one of 5,000 companies nominated from 155 cities nationwide.

**Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates** announced that Jayesh Hariyani has received his professional architectural registration.

Tower Engineering announced the hiring of Stephen J. Kiskak to the position of firm principal. Steve joined Tower in April 2000 and heads the firm's electrical engineering department.

**Dina Fredrickson Snider, AIA**, of **STRADA** earned the Leader in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) 2.0 Accreditation from the U.S. Green Building Council.

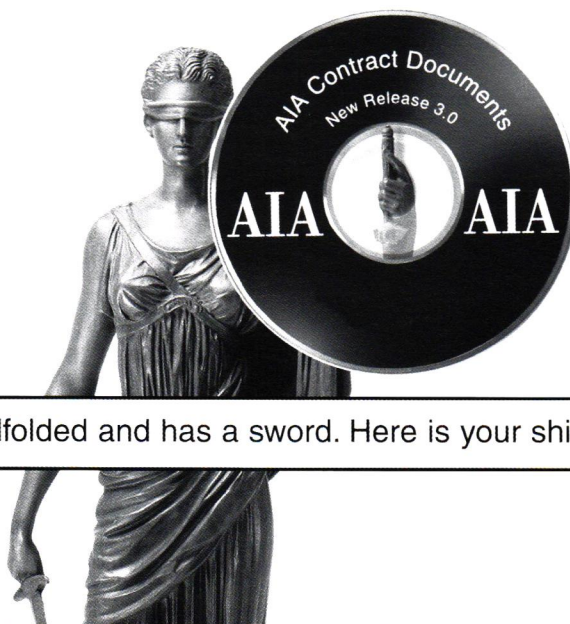


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**Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates** announced that two projects, Blattner Brunner Inc. and Xplorion, received the Building Design Excellence Award for 2002 from the Master Builders' Association. — *By Courtney Curatola*

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## 2 C O A L E N D A R

### AIA ACTIVITIES

#### July 15, Tuesday

**AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting** 5:00 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are welcome 412-471-9548

#### July 17, Thursday

**Legislative Committee Meeting** Noon at the Chapter Office, Chuck Coltharp, AIA 724-452-9690

#### July 23, Wednesday

**AIA Pittsburgh's Foundation for Architecture** 5:00 pm at STRADA LLC office, 925 Liberty Avenue. Contact Ed Shriver, AIA 412-263-3800

*Most AIA meetings will not take place in August due to summer vacations. See you in September.*

### AROUND TOWN

#### September 19, Friday

**ULI Meeting.** Mayor Tom Murphy and County Executive Jim Roddey will discuss intergovernmental cooperation. Begins at 8 a.m. at the Rivers Club. Go to [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org) for more details.

#### September 24, Wednesday

**ASLA Membership Meeting** at the offices of The Gateway Engineers, 1011 Alcon Street, Pittsburgh, starting at 6 p.m.

#### September 25, Thursday

**ASID Trade Show** at the Hilton downtown from 3-9 p.m. Trade show will include exhibitors, food, CEU's and much more. For more information call Anne Ditmanson at 412-201-3363.

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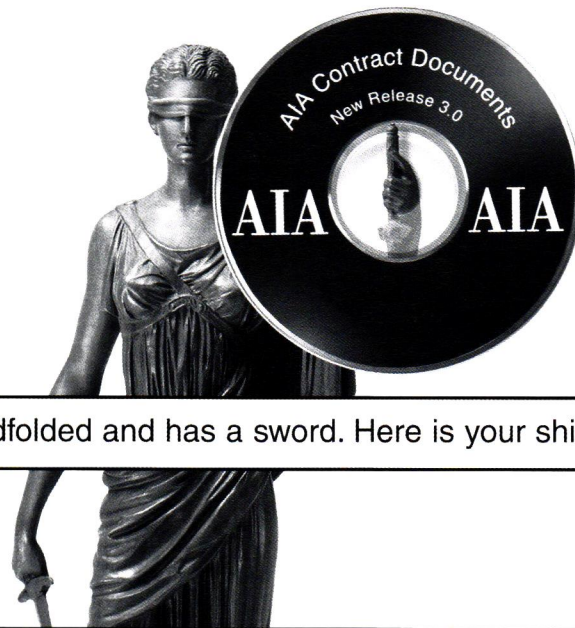
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Jennifer Davis, Landau Building Co.

John Leuch, Carpenters Local 142  
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Rich Pagiane, Carpenters Local 211  
Kento Ohmori, Fukui Architects  
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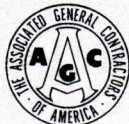
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Tom Wippenbeck, Burt Hill  
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Dan Driskill, Carpenters Local 230  
Kelly Docter, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson  
Steve Mahoney, TEDCO Construction Co.

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# Paul Rosenblatt, AIA

*SPRINGBOARD Architecture Communication Design LLC*



**PERSONAL LIFE:** My wife, Petra Fallaux, and I have been married for 13 years. We have two kids, Lucas, 5, and Ella, 4, and a yellow Labrador Retriever, Cashew, 8. I love books, travel, contemporary art, movies, music, theatre, running, playing with my kids, and cooking. For awhile, I tried to play the saxophone. My secret wish is to have jammed with Coltrane.

**YEARS IN PRACTICE:** 19

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor of Arts, Yale College 1981, and Master of Architecture, Yale School of Architecture, 1984.

**PROJECTS THAT HAVE SPECIAL MEANING:** In 1996, I developed an art installation called The Parthenon Project with photographer Judith Turner. It was a wood construction I built myself in response to a portfolio of Turner's photo-etchings of the Parthenon's pediment sculptures. Wood studs, white fiberglass sheets, fluorescent lights, and a video monitor were the major materials. Visitors to The Parthenon Project experienced a contemporary analog to the ancient Greek Parthenon. It was first exhibited in 1996 at the Hewlett Gallery, Carnegie Mellon University, then at the Erie art Museum in 1998, and finally at Lafayette College's Williams Center for the Arts.

Among other things, this project lead me back to working on art projects — installations and exhibition design — in conjunction with my practice of architecture. The inter-relationship between art and architecture continues to inform work at SPRINGBOARD, whether it is the design of a workplace, museum or any other type of building or environment.

**FAVORITE MOVIES AND WHY:** *Stranger than Paradise*, by Jim Jarmusch and *Until the End of the World* by Wim Wenders, because one is economical and precise, the other complex and elaborate.

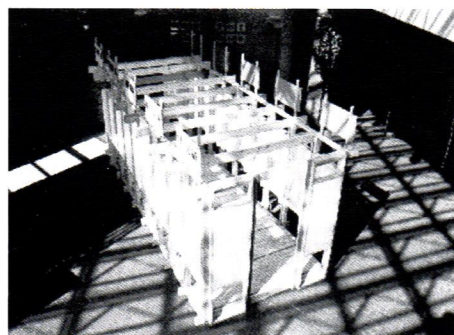
**FAVORITE BUILDING AND WHY:** Brion Vega Tomb by Carlo Scarpa, because of the connections it makes between the earth and sky, life and death, permanence and growth.

**FAVORITE ART WORK AND WHY:** Earth Room, by Walter de Maria, because of its directness.

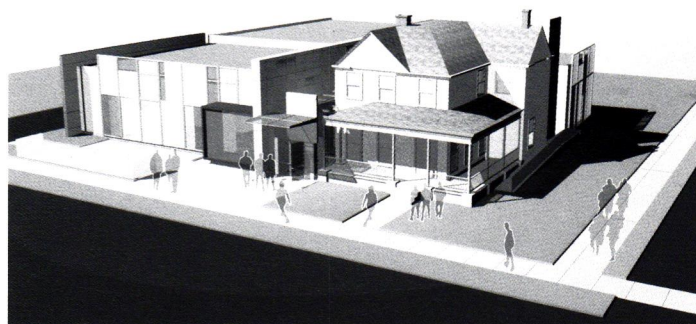
**FAVORITE BOOK AND WHY:** *Ship of Gold (in the Deep Blue Sea)* by Gary Kinder, because of the ways Kinder weaves history and ideas together.

**FAVORITE WEB SITE:** Bruce Mau Design Inc, because of his incomplete Manifesto. ([www.brucemau-design.com](http://www.brucemau-design.com))

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*The Maridon Museum in Butler, PA is on view at the Heinz Architectural Center June 28-October 5th. It is part of Pittsburgh Platforms: New Projects in Architecture and Environmental Design.*



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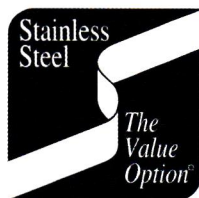
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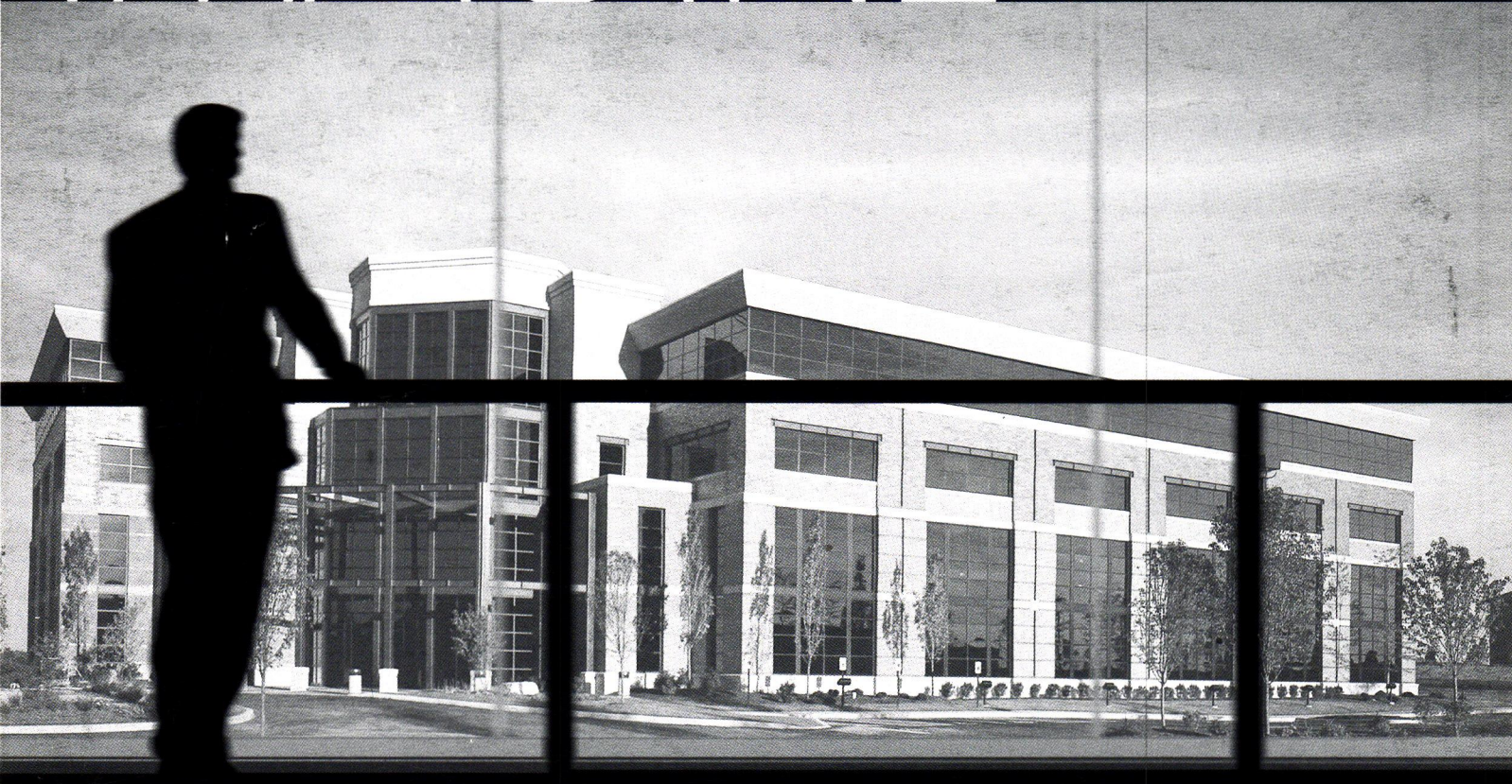


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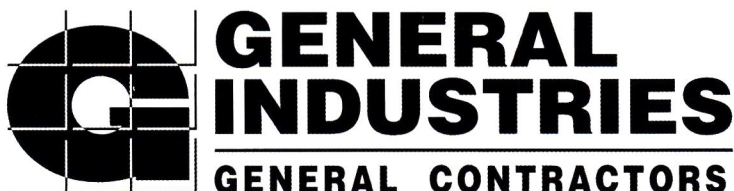
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