By the People

The "By the People: Designing a Better America" exhibition was displayed during the fall 2017 semester in the Fred and Mary Smith Exhibition Gallery and other locations within Vol Walker Hall. It was organized by Cynthia E. Smith, the curator of socially responsible design for Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York. This touring exhibition featured about 40 design projects from every region across the United States. This exhibition of "By the People" presented on campus by the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design was the first to take place nationally outside Cooper Hewitt. (Photo by Russell Cothren)
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Dear Fay Jones School alumni and friends,

Spring greetings from Vol Walker Hall and the Steven L. Anderson Design Center! It is a season of growth for the school. In the last year, the school’s overall enrollment grew by 13 percent. And, importantly, we’ve been able to place 100 percent of our students across all disciplines in professional employment or graduate education. We’ve just recognized 87 students with more than $164,000 in scholarships — our largest amount to date and an increase of 15 percent from last year.

Join me in applauding the outstanding work of our students, faculty and alumni highlighted in this issue of ReView, including the project featured on the cover. The Bob and Sunny Evans Tree House at Garvan Woodland Gardens was a collaboration that included the design firm Modus Studio, Tres Fromme of 3 fromme design and Tanner Weeks with Ecological Design Group (see p. 20). Garvan Gardens, as much as the University of Arkansas Community Design Center and our newly launched Resiliency Center, is an important outreach center of the school. Increasingly, Garvan Gardens is occupying our curricular development, community outreach and overall advancement of resources. The Evans Tree House is a signal of that essential character of the Gardens as well as being simply a joyous place for children and adults alike.

Modus Studio, a practice led by and engaging many of our alumni, is simultaneously now leading the design and construction of the university’s new Stadium Drive Residence Halls on campus — in collaboration with Leers Weinzapfel Associates in Boston, Mackey Mitchell Architects in St. Louis and OLN in Philadelphia. These residence halls are in fact the largest mass timber construction project in the United States at the moment and the first mass timber residential facility on a college campus — and are therefore innovative in their design conception and tenets. Yet they are moreover innovative in their very inhabitation, as they will be the home for a cross-campus Living Learning Community comprised of first- and second-year students in architecture and design, the visual and performing arts and others — a true creative community.

Also on the horizon for the school is the design and construction of the Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation, made possible by the family owned company based in Bearden (see p. 50). Anthony Timberlands contributed $7.5 million to support the construction of this new $15 million facility, which will be a center of excellence for innovation in wood design and product development to expand the use of wood in architectural design, construction techniques and product design. It will be located within the Art and Design District, near the new University Libraries Annex — itself a demonstration of innovative wood construction. There certainly will be more updates on this exciting project!

This edition of ReView is again rich with examples of work of superb character and value — from the award-winning design work of students in interior design, landscape architecture and architecture, to the award-winning design work of the Community Design Center, to the award-winning design work of our faculty and alumni. I’d also ask you close your reading of the articles describing the studio work undertaken in our advanced options studios, all of which are emphasizing collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches across our three departments, and across a variety of scales and types of design projects.

In recent years, the school has developed a discernable emphasis on housing design, in part due to the strong growth of the population of the state of Arkansas, and its critical circumstances occurring across the state and the nation. During the last academic year, in 2017-18, we embarked on Housing Northwest Arkansas, a three-tiered initiative led by the school and funded through a grant from the Walton Family Foundation. This included a professional design competition and a regional symposium, which featured The Honorable Shaun Donovan, former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. A housing design studio was led by Anne Fougeron, principal of Fougeron Architecture in San Francisco and Kent Macdonald of California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, both serving as the Housing Northwest Arkansas Visiting Professors and co-teaching with Carl Matthews, head of the Department of Interior Design, and Alison Turner, clinical assistant professor in Architecture (see p. 22).

In addition, the Community Design Center focused its efforts on affordable housing for the Willow Heights public housing complex and strategic planning for the redevelopment of the city of Poteau (see p. 16). Another project designed by the center, which will provide transitional housing for the homeless, recently broke ground in Fayetteville.

We also continue to support the official launch this fall of our Master of Design Studies graduate degree, with two initial concentrations in Resiliency Design and Retail and Hospitality Design, with anticipated concentrations in Preservation Design and Design for Health and Wellness. Our recruitment and admissions efforts for this post-professional graduate degree will intensify as the year progresses, especially with the recent approval of a third concentration in Integrated Wood Design.

This past year, we’ve again benefited from significant visitors serving as the Housing Northwest Arkansas Visiting Professors, including H. P. Davis, president and managing director of The Arctic Institute; and Sylvia Lavine, who is a professor of architecture in the School of Architecture at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. For this upcoming summer, our annual Design Camp expanded to seven camps in six cities across Arkansas, with a second session added to the Fayetteville camp was expanded into two sessions, and camps were added in Bentonville and El Dorado, through partnerships with the Scott Family Amazeum and the South Arkansas Arts Center. Spots in the Bentonville camp and both Fayetteville camps filled up weeks before registration was set to end.

Lastly, I’m very pleased to announce the establishment of two new scholarships aimed at assisting freshmen students entering the school. The H.P. Engineering Freshman Recruiting Scholarship gives a preference to Native American students. The Bob J. and Virginia Beavers Advance Arkansas Endowed Scholarship was created by their daughter, Beth Beavers Prescott, and her husband, Hal, to honoring her father’s career in architecture, his impact on Eastern Arkansas and his love for the University of Arkansas.

As you can tell, the 2017-18 year overflowed with events, activities, achievements and initiatives to the point where a single issue of ReView isn’t enough to hold them all. As a result, we are shifting our communications, starting with the new FAY View newsletter we are sending via email. FAY View will contain current news, events and activities related to the school. To ensure we have your current email address, please send a note to Michelle Parks, director of communications, at mparks17@uark.edu.

I appreciate your consideration of this issue of ReView magazine and look forward to providing you with more updates on the 2018-19 year. It too promises to be equally eventful and equally productive, and those qualities are in no small part due to your support as alumni and friends.

With thanks and best wishes,

Elizabeth Whitaker, AIA, who is the founder and principal of Merge Architects in Boston; Victoria Herrmann, who is the president and managing director of The Arctic Institute; and Sylvia Lavine, who is a professor of architecture in the School of Architecture at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. For this upcoming summer, our annual Design Camp expanded to seven camps in six cities across Arkansas, with a second session added to the Fayetteville camp was expanded into two sessions, and camps were added in Bentonville and El Dorado, through partnerships with the Scott Family Amazeum and the South Arkansas Arts Center. Spots in the Bentonville camp and both Fayetteville camps filled up weeks before registration was set to end.

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With thanks and best wishes,

Peter Mackenth, dean
Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design
Multiple Approaches to Improved Housing Options

Text Michelle Parks
Photography Shawnya Meyers

NEWS—

Improved Housing

Approaches to Photography
Shawnya Meyers

In 2017, the number of families living in poverty in the United States reached 12.3 million. This is a significant rise from the 2009 recession, when the number of families living in poverty was 11.4 million. The average size of apartments in the United States is less than 600 square feet, making them unlivable for many families.

In addition, the cost of housing has increased significantly in recent years. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the average cost of rent for a one-bedroom apartment is $1,250 per month. This is more than the average income for many people who are part of these neighborhoods.

The Northwest Arkansas region, and Bentonville in particular, faces the conflicting forces of rapid growth and the desire to maintain the small-town character of its communities. A 2017 study on the vitality of the five largest downtowns in the region found that residential per-square-foot sales prices have increased by more than 200 percent in Bentonville since 2012, and commercial per-square-foot sales prices have increased by more than 30 percent in downtown Bentonville. This study was conducted by the Center for Business and Economic Research in the Sam M. Walton College of Business.

“Northwest Arkansas downtowns are known for their dynamic energy, and that vibrancy is driven by the diversity of the people who are part of these neighborhoods,” said Alice Walton, Walton Family Foundation board member. “These innovative designs will open downtown living and its amenities to a wider group of residents by increasing access to attainable housing options.”

The design competition winners were DigSAU of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Kevin Daly Architects of Los Angeles, California; 5468796 Architecture of Winnipeg, Canada; and Merge Architects Inc. of Boston, Massachusetts.

Works Progress Architecture of Portland, Oregon, received an overall commendation from the jury. PAU Studio of New York City received a jury commendation for their urban design approach to a particular site, while Bucholz McEvoy Architects of Dublin, Ireland, received a jury commendation for architecture and originality, in particular for their unit planning.

The 25 projects submitted for the competition were among more than 100 nationally and internationally acclaimed design professionals invited to submit qualifications. Competitors had seven weeks to design an innovative, inspirational and fully practical proposal for building attainable housing on one of five sites in and around downtown Bentonville.

In addition, a two-day symposium held in early February 2018 in Bentonville and Fayetteville addressed issues of attainable housing at the regional level through an exploration of national housing issues and solutions. Shaun Donovan, former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, presented the keynote lecture.

The symposium featured presentations and moderated discussions by national, regional and local experts on housing policy, finances, design, development and construction. It offered a wide overview of issues, challenges and design exemplars in attainable, affordable and mixed-use housing.

Case study presentations were made by R. John Anderson, with Anderson|Kim Architecture and Design and the Incremental Development Alliance; Kurt Creager, with Urbanist Solutions; Ali Solis, with Make Room; Lisa Sturtevant, with Lisa Sturtevant & Associates and The Land Urban Institute; Esther Yang, with the Detroit Planning and Development Department; and Garner Stoll, development services director for the city of Fayetteville.

Stephen Luoni, director of the University of Arkansas Community Design Center, and Matthew Petty, a Fayetteville alderman who leads workshops for the Incremental Development Alliance, provided an overview of regional conditions. An advanced design studio for architecture and interior design students focused on housing design research and design prototypes for this region. Visiting practitioners Anne Fougeron of Fougeron Architecture in San Francisco, California, and Kent Macdonald of California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, co-taught this studio with Carl Matthews, head of the Department of Interior Design, and Alison Turner, clinical assistant professor in architecture (see p.28).

Stephanie Foster, an alumna of the school’s architecture program, served as grant coordinator for the project. More information on the Housing Northwest Arkansas initiative can be found at: housingnwa.org.
The Vol Walker Hall renovation and new addition earned a 2018 AIA Honor Award for Architecture.

The Vol Walker Hall/Steven L. Anderson Design Center project, home to the Fay Jones School, received an Honor Award for Architecture, while the U of A Community Design Center project, home to the renovated historic Vol Walker Hall. This was the center’s 14th AIA Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design. The interdisciplinary collaboration between architects, planners, engineers, economists and ecologists addressed the impact of urbanization on the 42-square-mile urban sub-watershed that incorporates much of Conway. Problems include increased flooding, water quality contamination and property damage.

The AIA jury called the project “head to tail very rewarding. A thoughtful, sophisticated and holistic response to a recurring problem across the country.”

The Conway framework plan imagines a cityscape that cultivates a highly livable green urban environment that solves some of the challenges cities face from climate change. These improvements can be made through low-tech/high-concept enhancements to ordinary infrastructure investments already scheduled to serve the city’s growth.

The three-year project was funded by a $498,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, administered by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, with matching funds from the city of Conway, Faulkner County, the University of Central Arkansas and the Lake Conway Property Owners Association.

The Conway framework plan was released as a book by ORO Editions (San Francisco) in October 2017. The book features transferable technology other communities can apply as a design guide for how to build a green city.

The Vol Walker Hall renovation and addition was part of a larger $9 million project to update and expand facilities at the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design. The design team included Marlon Blackwell Architects, which led the design effort, and FORGE Landscape Architecture, which coordinated the project.

The Landscape design by faculty was part of the yearlong Art in its Natural State exhibit.

Installation Chosen for Statewide Competition

The landscape installation Visible Invisible was selected in a juried competition for exhibition at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute in Morrilton.

Phoebe Lickwar and Laura Terry collaborated as the lead designers on the project. Terry is an associate professor of architecture at the Fay Jones School. Lickwar, previously an associate professor of landscape architecture at the Fay Jones School, is now an associate professor of landscape architecture at the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture. The installation was unveiled April 18, 2018, “as Art in its Natural State, a daylong celebration of the arts in Arkansas and new addition earned a 2018 AIA Honor Award for Architecture.

The visible Invisible project provided an experience for visitors that highlighted the ecological and cultural significance of a pine grove planted by former Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller. Connections were made between what is visible – a dense plantation of shortleaf pine (Pinus echinata) – and what is invisible or touch – the invisible, but essential aspects of the forest ecosystem.”

“It’s our hope that this work not only created an experience for people that strengthens their appreciation for the magical sensory qualities of the grove – the changing light raking through the canopy, the volumetric space of the vertical, regularly spaced trunks, the color and texture of bark and needles – but also alerted visitors to the extensive and complex relationships between species that comprise and inhabit the grove as an ecosystem,” Lickwar said.

“We rarely consider the web of life that lies beneath our feet – or species, like the red-cockaded woodpecker, who rely upon mature forests for habitat,” Lickwar continued. “We hope this work contributes to building ecological literacy by acknowledging the significance of what we cannot see, hear or touch – the invisible, but essential aspects of the forest ecosystem.”

In addition to Lickwar and Terry, the competition team for this project included Moll and Erin Cox, therefore architecture student. Moll also led the fabrication team for the Abundant Green project. Cox, Angi, Kyle Beard, Caleb Bertsell, Corrine Burns, Beau Burriss, Sydney Davis, Kate Elhausen, Callie Fleetwood, Max Frank, Ace Jerusalem, Maddie McCutcheon, Dallas Meyers, Ali Preston and Danielle Yatesock.

The Fay Jones School sponsored the site for this installation, in recognition of the example of such collaboration and in recognition of the work of the students.

Text: Michelle Parks

The landscape installation Visible Invisible was part of the yearlong Art in its Natural State, a yearlong exhibit at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute in Morrilton. (Photo by Phoebe Lickwar)
NEWS—

10TH ANNUAL HBG DESIGN STUDENT COMPETITION

One architecture student won the full $5,000 prize in fall 2017.

Text Shawnya Meyers

Phoebe Norcross created the winning design in the 10th annual HBG Design International Design Competition in the fall 2017 semester. The competition recognizes work students complete at international locales within the Fay Jones School’s required study abroad programs. Norcross, then a fifth-year architecture student, won an Award of Excellence for the design she created during her study abroad semester at the University of Arkansas Rome Center in fall 2016. She received a $5,000 prize for her project, “reciprocITY.”

“This competition and this awards program recognizes the value of our international program in architecture and design, presents this design work from these programs as a standard of excellence for us all, and encourages each and every student to participate in this awards program as we go forward,” said Dean Peter Berring.

HBG Design, the Memphis firm that helped judge the entries, awarded the $5,000 in total prize money. Mark Weaver, a partner and principal architect with HBG Design and a 1982 graduate of the Fay Jones School, coordinated the competition. Brandon Canepa, then a recruiter with the firm, and Landon Shokey, a 2007 interior design graduate of the Fay Jones School, joined Weaver at the October 2017 awards ceremony in the Young Auditorium.

Jury members said Norcross used outstanding graphics that revealed a command of the design process, using a variety of drawing types, including diagrams, transact and perspective vignettes. “The program in Rome gave us a chance to work independently without too much professor input,” Norcross said. “I got really excited about figuring out my own personal way of expressing what I want to do with architecture.”

Terry said Norcross’ project work was joyful, communicating her passion about both the process and the project. Norcross used color – primarily shades of blue – to help express her design plans. “I feel like a lot of architecture is grayscale, and I wanted to bring some life to that,” Norcross said. “I’m really interested in color and learning how to use it better.”

HBG Design established the international design competition for architecture students at the Fay Jones School in 2007. Moving forward, the firm will expand this annual competition to also include interior design student projects done in study abroad programs. Those will take place at the U of A Rome Center as well as in the Latin American Urban Studio, a summer studio in Mexico City.

Fay Jones School students have participated in study abroad programs at the U of A Rome Center in Italy since 1989. The school also has conducted the Latin America Urban Studio in Mexico since 1994.

MacKeith commended Weaver and HBG Design for expanding the competition and celebrating the Fay Jones School’s multidisciplinary programs. “I’ve been involved in the university for 25 years now; Weaver said. “It’s great to stay in touch with students and keep up with their work.”

Preservation Work Honored

Preserve Arkansas recognized faculty and alumni for promoting historic preservation and the state.

Text Shawnya Meyers

In the 2017 Arkansas Preservation Awards, the book Shadow Patterns: Reflections on Fay Jones and His Architecture received the Ned Shank Award for Outstanding Preservation Publication. Jeff Shannon, Fay Jones School professor and head of the architecture department, edited the 172-page volume of 15 essays and dozens of images.

Shannon was among several individuals and organizations honored in January 2018 for projects focused on historic preservation, advocacy and education throughout the state.

The book was published by the University of Arkansas Press in collaboration with the Fay Jones School. Fay Jones School alumnae Tommy Jameson, AIA, was awarded the Parker Westbrook Award for Lifetime Achievement, Preserve Arkansas’ only award for achievement in preservation over a period of years. The Parker Westbrook Award recognizes Jameson’s passion for preservation throughout his lifetime, as he has devoted nearly all of his 40 years in practice at Jameson Architects to working with historic properties across Arkansas.

He received a Bachelor of Architecture from the Fay Jones School in 1977, and it was during his final year of college that he first became interested in historic architecture. Jameson has served on numerous preservation-related boards and commissions, lending his expertise and donating countless hours of his time to this cause.

The Department of Landscape Architecture in the Fay Jones School received an honorable mention for Outstanding Achievement in Preservation Education for “If Walls Could Talk: The Story of the Hixson Property.” The project uses Esri story mapping and a Historic American Landscapes Survey to tell the story of the Hixson and Draft mining town and a prominent family who lived there in the early 1900s. Kimball Erdman, associate professor of landscape architecture, teamed with Angie Payne and Brian Culpepper of the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies and Fay Jones School students to create these multimedia resources.

The team documented the existing site with photographs, measured drawings and a detailed report, and then created a virtual tour to lead residents through the growth, boom years and subsequent decline of the Buffalo River mining town. Culpepper is a Fay Jones School landscape architecture alumna. Addison Warren and Jordan Pitts, both then undergraduate students, served as research assistants on the project and did much of the work, with additional contributions from students in the spring 2016 Historic Landscape Preservation course, including Nathan Adams, Morganne Bryner, Dalton Carlson and Benjamin Magee.

Other local projects honored during the awards ceremony included:

• Lane Hotel/Hass Hall Academy in Rogers, honorable mention for Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation
• War Eagle Bridge in Hindsville, Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation – Infrastructure
• Cane Hill College in Canehill, Excellence in Preservation through Rehabilitation – Nonprofit

A full list and details of the awardees from the 2017 Arkansas Preservation Awards are available at: PreserveArkansas.org.

Shadow Patterns: Reflections on Fay Jones and His Architecture received the Ned Shank Award for Outstanding Preservation Publication in the 2017 Arkansas Preservation Awards.
A Rush Historic District story mapping project and a Mayflower planning project won 2017 Arkansas ASLA Honor Awards.

Text Bettina Lehovec

A project by faculty, staff and students of the Fay Jones School and the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies at the University of Arkansas received an Honor Award for Communications from the Arkansas Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

“T Wallelig: A History of the Hicks Property, at Rush Historic District on the Buffalo National River, Arkansas” uses Esri story mapping and a Historic American Landscapes Survey to tell the story of an abandoned Ok Trade mining town and a prominent family who lived there in the early 1900s.

The award was presented at the 2017 Arkansas ASLA awards luncheon, held in October at VanArsdel Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs.

Kimball Erdman, associate professor of landscape architecture, led students in creating the multimedia resources, which are digitally housed at the U of A Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies. The team was assisted by CAST staff members Angie Payne, JD scanning and visualization specialist, and Brian Culpepper, GIS research associate.

Students were members of Erdman’s spring 2016 Historic Landscape Preservation course and a subsequent summer research team with undergraduate student research assistants Addison Warren and Jordan Pitts.

“This project combined education, service and advocacy with undergraduate student research, education and technology – an ideal teaching situation that combined the best of all worlds,” Erdman said.

Students completed a Historic American Landscapes Survey to lay the groundwork for the project. They documented the existing site with photographs, measured drawings and a detailed report, all of which will be available to the public at the Library of Congress.

They then created a virtual tour to lead residents through the growth, boom years and subsequent decline of the Buffalo River mining town. The story map features historic and contemporary photographs, newspaper clippings, maps, oral histories and historic records to illustrate the detailed narrative. The highlight is a digital reconstruction that affords visitors a glimpse of what the Hicks property might have looked like in its heyday.

Funded through a grant from the National Park Service, the goal was to provide public education about a landscape frequently visited but not well understood, Erdman said. The Rush Historic District is on a popular access road for Buffalo National River floaters in north central Arkansas. People sometimes stop to probe through the stone ruins – a retaining wall, garden features and portions of the Hicks general store – without understanding the rich history of the site.

Rush was a boomtown built to support the mining of zinc. The Hicks family arrived in 1903, building a hotel, starting a livery and opening a general store to meet the needs of miners and their families. The town reached its heyday with a population of 3,000 during World War I, when demand for U.S. zinc was at its height. The population decreased in subsequent years. The last Hicks family members moved away in the 1950s.

Other goals of the project were to encourage site preservation through documentation and heightened awareness and to educate students engaged in the project in ongoing preservation efforts.

In addition, a design project by the University of Arkansas Community Design Center received an Honor Award for Analysis and Planning at the Arkansas ASLA luncheon. “Slow Street: A New Town Center for Mayflower, Arkansas” envisions a walkable mixed-use neighborhood center for the central Arkansas town of Mayflower, which was struck by an EF4 tornado in 2014.

The U of A Community Design Center is an outreach program of the Fay Jones School.

These Arkansas ASLA awards were selected by a jury of design professionals from the ASLA Prairie Gateway Chapter located in Kansas and Missouri, as well as design professionals from the faculty at Kansas State University.
A student design competition in the spring 2018 semester aimed to generate ideas for recycling within the Fay Jones School. “RE: Fay” allowed students to explore a vision for recycling in Vol Walker Hall by incorporating recycling through design. The University of Arkansas student organizations of the American Institute of Architects, American Society of Interior Designers and American Society of Landscape Architects approached the school’s administration about the need for a better recycling system in Vol Walker Hall, said Ken McCown, head of the Department of Landscape Architecture and competition organizer. McCown and school administrators decided the competition was a great way to get student ideas in the process of developing an effective recycling system. “The recycling system in the building is not effective for us right now,” McCown said. “It is a fixable problem - thus, that makes it good to explore.”

The competition, held over a weekend in January 2018, challenged participants to collaboratively analyze information and respond with effective design concepts that made use of spaces in Vol Walker Hall – all within a tight timeframe. McCown said the students came up with wonderful ideas, ranging from pragmatic to visionary.

Participating teams had a maximum of four members and were required to have at least two disciplines represented from the architecture, interior design and landscape architecture programs. Students were also encouraged to form teams with students in different year levels, allowing them to collaborate and look at designs from different points of view. Students had 10 minutes to choose a name and pull together their teams. Before the competition started, Eric Boles, director of the U of A Office for Sustainability, talked to students about recycling on campus and in Vol Walker Hall. During the competition, students had the chance to discuss questions with campus recycling and sustainability representatives.

The teams had building plans and recycling system files, and they were tasked with determining a recycling site and analyzing the current state of recycling. McCown said that Boles and Michela Cupello, a campus planner, hope to implement a new recycling system in the building. “They found several viable ideas, including ones they had not considered,” he said. “They are eager to move forward, and opportunities exist for students in the competition to work with them in realizing a better recycling system in the Fay Jones School.”

Caleb Bertels, an architecture student, said he was surprised to see how inefficient the building’s recycling program was. He said the school should be at the forefront of sustainability and environmental awareness.

Corinne Burns, an interior design student, said design competitions like this one are important because they involve students who use the building in decision-making. She said the competition helped her become more passionate about recycling, even across campus.

One team, The Disposables, added student incentives through a partial printing refund for every square foot of recycled white paper. Another team, The Trash Talkers, made convertible recycling hubs that can transform into a table workstation or a vertical pinup structure.

The first-place award went to The Disposables, with team members Burns, Kyle Beard (architecture), Conner Payne (architecture) and Abigail Redmon (interior design). Their project – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refund – was awarded a $750 prize. Their idea simplifies recycling by placing the mobile, convertible SETH recycling units around the building, as well as relocating the recycling center – now tucked on the bottom floor – to a more convenient location.

The second-place team, The Trash Talkers, consisted of Bertels and Jacob Costello (landscape architecture). Their project, SETH (Sustainable Effort Task Hubs), was awarded a $500 prize. Their idea simplifies recycling by placing the mobile, convertible SETH recycling units around the building, as well as relocating the recycling center – now tucked on the bottom floor – to a more convenient location.

The third-place team, The Graduates, consisted of students Maranda Gorga (architecture), Megan Leeth (architecture) and Heidi Matthews (interior design). Their project, which proposes reorganizing the recycling system by adding recycling stations to the studios, won a $250 prize.

A fourth team, Paper or Plastic?, won an honorable mention. Team members included Darline Dung (interior design), Anna Brux (architecture), Bryan Murren (architecture) and Trystan Spears-Thomas (architecture). Their project assigns students wastebaskets in the studio and the library in addition to the current recycling center to improve access and effectiveness.

The reviewers who determined the winning projects were Boles; Jennifer Webb, associate professor of interior design; Marty Matlock, executive director of the U of A Office for Sustainability; Torrey Tracy, visiting assistant professor of interior design; and Cupello.

The University of Arkansas and the Fay Jones School will offer a new Master of Design Studies degree program beginning in fall 2019. This is the first graduate-level program offered by the school in its 70-plus-year history. The graduate program, which was approved in April 2018 by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education’s Coordinating Board, features initial areas of concentration in Resiliency Design and Sustainability.

“These programs, developed over the last three years with input from multiple stakeholders, are the first steps in advanced architecture education,” McCown said. “They center on the strengths of the school, the university, the Northwest Arkansas region and, indeed, the state,” Dean Peter MacKeith said at the time. “Equally, graduate-level education in these specialized areas prepares students to address opportunities and challenges nationwide and throughout the world.” The concentrations have been developed with global leaders in the respective fields and are unique in their focus, expertise and resources.

Resiliency Design will engage students at the scale of the community and the region, investigating contemporary issues such as water, mobility, food, housing, aging and public health, while preparing communities for the challenges of the future. The Community Design Center, newly formed in the Fay Jones School, and the U of A Resiliency Design Center directly support this area of study. The Resiliency Center, whose creation was also approved last year by the state Department of Higher Education, provides leadership in sustainable strategies and cross-disciplinary knowledge necessary for complex problem solving. The Resiliency Design Center consists of strategic and policy and placemaking to solve for challenges across multiple sectors in the built environment.

The Community Design Center offers a professional staff with practice and teaching experience and design work that has received more than $1.3 million and brought $70 million in grant funding. The center is a Regional Resilience Design Studio, designated by the AIA Foundation. The center’s director, Steve Luoni, is also the Steven L. Anderson Chair in Architecture and Urban Studies in the Fay Jones School.

“Resiliency is driven by the public sector’s ever greater need to withstand disruptive events, entailing the reimagining of governance and management,” Luoni said. “To achieve this, leading cities and regions are becoming significant consumers of design thinking since this is the level where many of the social, economic and environmental challenges are addressed. The Resiliency Design concentration triangulates design thinking with policy and placemaking to solve for challenges across multiple sectors in the built environment.

Retail and Hospitality Design engages experts in the Fay Jones School with campus collaborators within the Sam M. Walton College of Business and the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences. Carl Matthews, professor and department head of interior design, noted that there is no other graduate design program in the United States with specializations in these market sectors. With online shopping challenging the value of bricks-and-mortar environments, retailers are investing in innovative environments that transform customer experience and engage the senses. Similarly, hoteliers must respond to guests seeking high-tech amenities and local, authentic experiences in personalized settings. With design fees in the retail and hospitality sectors exceeding $895 million in 2017, professional opportunities in these areas of specialization are robust.

Carl A. Kendrilli (B.Arch. ’91), vice president of planning and design worldwide for Hyatt Hotels Corporation, noted that, like so many architecture practice sectors, there exists the need to know specifics about that market. Traditionally, it takes years of experience to gain this exposure and proficiency. “This is an uncommon opportunity,” Kendrilli said. “Graduate students exposed to the specific industry vocabulary, organizational operations, planning nuances, customer drivers will be extremely valuable to the hospitality design firms. The hospitality industry will gain from the injection of these new graduates who will bring new ideas to the workplace with a unique familiarity that will allow them to immediately share their beneficial skills, creativity and energy.”

The concentrations within the Master of Design Studies will feature residencies in professional practices, business settings, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations.

In addition to the two initial concentrations, a concentration in Integrated Wood Design has been approved. The school is also exploring the viability of programs in housing design, preservation design and wellness design.
One proposed project for the Pine Bluff studio features a wharf with a Ferris wheel at Saracen Landing on the north end of downtown.

Two Plans Tackle Neighborhood Development

Text: Bettina Lehovec
Renderings: U of A Community Design Center
Projects in two Arkansas cities aim to redevelop neglected parts of town with a focus on remaking neighborhoods, not just housing.

The University of Arkansas Community Design Center, an outreach center of the Fay Jones School, addressed the issue of livability within a Fayetteville housing development and in downtown Pine Bluff.

The Re-live Downtown Pine Bluff project proposes redeveloping select neighborhoods with multi-family units to provide attainable workforce housing and catalyze investment throughout the entire downtown area.

The Livability Improvement Plan for Willow Heights Housing in Fayetteville aims to keep low-income residents within walking distance of downtown, where they can access needed services without using a car, while adding market-rate housing to attract new residents.

Both projects intend to reinvigorate overlooked parts of town by designing vibrant neighborhoods in which people will want to live.

Re-live Downtown Pine Bluff

Pine Bluff was once a place of cultural and economic prosperity, boasting the fourth-highest concentration of black wealth in the nation and a lively musical role on the Chitlin’ Circuit of blues and jazz.

But the city today is one of the poorest metro areas in the United States, with a high rate of crime and a rapidly shrinking population. The downtown is almost deserted, with two-thirds of its former housing stock gone.

The design center plans strategies to reverse that trend, bringing people back into downtown by building multi-family housing to promote a long-term redevelopment goals.

“If you really want to bring back downtown, you have to get people to live there,” said Steve Luoni, the center director and Steven L. Anderson Chair in Architecture and Urban Studies.

The Community Design Center developed the plan for the Simmons Foundation as part of an ongoing effort to revitalize downtown Pine Bluff.

The triage plan focuses on seven key areas of strength – Main Commercial-grade streets and a historic downtown, he said. “You have to align your design ambitions with stakeholder interests and addition to parameters from other governing authorities. Students have to reconcile the reproduction of typical scenarios ranging in cost and complexity. The simplest one builds new housing on the flat part of the site, while the other two are cut into the hillside, requiring different levels of terracing and engineering.

New housing types include one-bedroom flats and a series of two- and three-bedroom townhouses in small clusters and long rows. These additions are brought to the edge of the site, connecting the development with the streets around it.

The existing housing is still structurally sound, although it has been neglected over time. Simple fixes, such as differentiating between front and back entrances and adding covered walkways and porch columns, enhance livability and create a neighborhood feel.

“All three of our scenarios are trying to rebuild the neighborhood through renovation of existing housing that connects better with new housing units and the surrounding neighborhoods,” Luoni said. “Hopefully, we can create a blended neighborhood where we don’t sense compartmentalization between incomes.”

The design center teamed with the U of A Resiliency Center to tackle stormwater management for the hillside complex.

The downhill flow of water, which currently creates erosion and flooding in some units, is absorbed, slowed and spread out through a number of basins, basins and bioswales and an underground pipe. Pocket landscapes create diversity and contribute to a sense of place.

“Again, there’s more pushback on design proposals than in a typical studio,” Luoni said. “It’s not just about economics or the fire chief, federal housing rules about what you can do, in addition to parameters from other governing authorities. Students have to align their design ambitions with stakeholder interests and regulations.”

As in the Pine Bluff project, students were asked to produce new housing units to fit the neighborhood as a whole.

“The brief is that we’re still solving for pattern, while solving for unit designs that will have to reproduce themselves,” Luoni said. “We’re solving for the whole spectrum – from a room to a building to a collection of buildings to a neighborhood to a district.”

The Willow Heights Housing Plan won the 2018 Unique Contribution to Planning Award from the Arkansas chapter of the American Planning Association and was showcased at their annual conference in September. In addition, an exhibition of the project models were displayed at the Fayetteville Public Library in summer 2018. This studio also won a 2018-19 Housing Design Education Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture/american Institute of Architects, an award that recognizes the importance of good education in housing design.

This model generates financial returns that the Fayetteville Housing Authority can put back into the development, Luoni said. “Not only can public entities make money because they have valuable assets, but the public sector can manage those assets through a process known as value capture to subsidize the public interest they have,” he said. “Everyone can thrive.”

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The Bob and Sunny Evans Tree House was a collaboration that included the design firm Modus Studio, Tres Fromme of 3 FROMME Design and Tanner Weeks with Ecological Design Group.

Tree House Invites Learning and Adventure

Text Bettina Lehovec
Photography Sherre Freeman
The Bob and Sunny Evans Tree House opened within the Evans Children’s Adventure Garden on June 30, 2018, with a grand opening celebration held on Oct. 30. The garden is an outreach center of the Fay Jones School.

Designed by Modus Studio in Fayetteville, the tree house seems to float in a small group of white oak and pine, its five levels depicting the strata of tree life. Each level is devoted to a distinct perspective – from roots to trunk and branches to foliage and flowers to fruit.

Interpretive learning elements in the form of sculpture and art encourage children to explore these concepts in a visual and tactile way. A pebble mosaic in the root plaza traces a network of roots from the base of the tree house to a nearby pond, for example. A bronze cardinal on the second level demonstrates seed dispersal in a way that is both memorable and fun.

“We wanted to create a place for children to experience and engage nature,” said Becca Ohman, garden director and school alumna. “The vision was to combine interactive learning elements and architecture and the forest – all three components working together to tell the story of the woodland.”

A garden design advisory board made up of garden staff, garden members and Fay Jones School faculty worked with Josh Siebert of Modus Studio on the design, former key players were Trés Fromme, founder of J. Fromme design, and Tanner Weeks, principal at the Ecological Design Group.

The visioning process began in 2006, when the Evans Children’s Adventure Garden first opened. Former U of A Chancellor David Gearhart and Bob Byers, the garden’s former director, joined the Evanses for those early conversations. Peter MacKeith, dean of the Fay Jones School, added an emphasis on dendrology – the study of trees and other woody plants - when he joined the school in 2014. The estate of Bob and Sunny Evans made the lead gift, with the help of several other major donors and nearly 350 smaller donors, said Bob Bledsoe, executive director of the garden.

The Treehouse Gang, a self-organized group of garden members, raised $143,000 toward the effort.

“It’s been a joint effort – a number of large donors and a whole lot of small donors have helped to make this possible,” Bledsoe said.

Designing the Tree House

Designers experimented with many versions of the tree house types before they settled on their final design, said Siebert, a Modus Studio partner and lead designer and a school alumnus.

The final form arose organically, taking inspiration from the small group of trees in the center of the children’s garden, he said. A preexisting elevated walkway circles the tree house and leads to the entrance 13 feet off the ground.

“We responded to all the natural forces of the site, some vertical as well as some organically shaped, and how that would respond to the site itself,” Siebert said. “Ninety-degree angles and very planar elements didn’t make sense here. The building started to wrap in, much like the bridge, responding to the serpentine form.”

The tree house rises to a height of 28 feet, with five levels including the root plaza beneath. Built of steel, the chrysalis-like structure is cradled by a screen of thermalized yellow pine ribs, their handcrafted design representing the branching of the forest’s different trees. Sections of translucent walls allow children bird’s-eye views of the forest.

Designers kept the advisory board’s initiating vision in mind, striving to create something mysterious, playful and unique, Siebert said.

“Our goal was to design a space that would bring kids back into the woods, away from the tablet or screen, and inspire them to lose themselves in the imagination of the place,” he said. Designers also considered the changing seasons and the many perspectives from which the tree house would be seen.

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Engaging Children in Learning

Tres Fromme led the design team in developing a narrative strategy to guide visitor experience and in planning the sculptures and landscape elements to support that story, he said. Fromme specializes in master planning, garden design, children’s and family gardens, and seasonal displays.

The team decided to focus on several iconic elements of the Ouachita Mountains woodland rather than the forest as a whole. They chose three canopy trees – white pine, hackberry and white oak - and two understory trees – redbud and flowering dogwood - to tell the story of the lifecycle of trees.

That story unfolds as children climb up in the tree house, exploring concepts such as root structure, leaf types, seed dispersal and animal life.

“It was easy to use the logical spatial architecture of the tree house, because Modus had done such a wonderful job abstracting and responding to the forest with their architecture,” Fromme said. “We wanted to really emphasize that, and emphasize the journey up through the canopy, with these interpretive themes.”

The team decided against traditional signage in favor of interactive learning elements children could explore for themselves, Fromme said.

“To Garvan’s credit, they really wanted beautiful sculptures and landscape elements to be the touchstone to the narrative, rather than signs or flip books,” he said. “They wanted to really focus on using beauty as a way of making the tree house more engaging, and then to share these various concepts about the forest.”

Key words throughout the project were activation and engagement, Fromme said. The pebble mosaic beneath the tree house allows children to run and trace the root system with their feet, for example.

A series of bark books on the first level invites children to feel the textures of different trees and the various grains of cut sections of lumber. Large-scale replicas of seedpods, pinecones and nuts serve as seats, as well as objects to spin and bounce upon. A whirligig sculpture with dogwood flowers and flying insects illustrates the concept of pollination.

“This is how the Gothic cathedrals operated, in the sense that art was decorative but also narrative. In an era when people couldn’t read, people looked at stained glass and learned the stories of the Bible,” Fromme said. “There’s a great tradition of architecture and landscape and art working seamlessly together to tell a specific story.”

The focus on interactive learning is part of a growing trend toward education in sightseeing, Bledsoe said.

“Education has always been part of our mission, but will become an even greater emphasis in the years to come,” he said. “We’re teaching people about wood and the role of trees – the role of the forest – in the ecology and economy of Arkansas.

“We slip the educational component in while kids are having fun – wading in the pond, climbing through the tree house, exploring the interactive exhibits,” Bledsoe said. “We’re teaching them about the out-of-doors and the role of nature in their lives.”
Pin Up provides the breadth of the latest work being produced at the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design, spanning architecture, landscape architecture and interior design.
02 ARCH 3016
Fall 2017: Design 5
Student: Miller Matlock
Instructor: Emily Baker
Space for a single reader within a library perimeter.

03 LARC 2346
Spring 2018: Design 4
Students: Todd Harris (top) & Joey Barr (bottom)
Instructor: Carl Smith
Working with biological engineering students, the class created a new urban park for a future downtown Fishtail, Montana.

04 ARCH 3026
Spring 2018: Design 6
Students: Reinman, Sawusch (bottom) & Miller Matlock (top)
Instructors: Emily Baker, Marlon Blackwell, David Buege & Chuck Rotolo
Dar al-Islam Mosque: A new mosque in historic downtown Savannah, Georgia employing clay-fired brick as a primary building material. Matlock was the recipient of the 2018 ACME Brick Award.

05 IDES 3805
Fall 2017: Design 5
Students: Hunter McDannell (bottom) & Logan Rubke (top)
Instructors: Jennifer Webb & Torrey Tracy
Shoe Company Headquarters: Brand, Style, Space. McDannell's project was runner-up (second) for the national Gensler Brinkman 2018 Scholarship.

06 ARCH 4016
Fall 2017: Comprehensive Design Studio
Students: David Swofford (left) & David Sweere (right)
Instructors: Tahar Messadi, Alixaceen, Jeffrey Quanza & Jonathan Bodekins

07 LARC 5396
Fall 2017: Design 9
Student: Anna Gwaltney
Instructor: Kimball Erdman

08 LARC 5396
Fall 2017: Design 9
Students: Alexander Holyfield & Addison Warren
Instructor: Kimball Erdman
Cultural Landscape Manifested through Rehabilitation and Interpretation. Examining two master plan approaches for Pea Ridge National Military Park - one that maintains the historic Mission 66 character while improving access and interpretation of under-utilized resources, and a second that explores a comprehensive redesign to improve visitor experience while minimizing automobiles in the park.
The city of Bentonville faces a problem: Housing does not reflect the current workforce.

The same amenities that have made the city a popular work and cultural destination have raised property values to the point where a single-family home is unattainable for most people.

There is a shortage of market-rate housing for young professionals and other mid-income workers - the very people the city needs to staff its growing corporate and arts scene needs.

A spring 2018 studio tackled this problem, designing mid-income, multi-family housing on one of four possible sites in Bentonville. Students worked to maximize density and keep housing affordable while integrating their developments with the surrounding neighborhoods.

"A good housing project is one that reaches out to the community and understands the place in which it’s being built," said Anne Fougeron, principal of Fougeron Architecture in San Francisco. "So that it’s not just an island unto itself, but thinks about the influence it could have and how it could integrate itself into the existing fabric."

Fougeron and Kent Macdonald, of California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, both served as the Housing Northwest Arkansas Visiting Professors. They co-taught the studio with Carl Matthews, head of the Department of Interior Design, and Alison Turner, clinical assistant professor in architecture.

The Remaking Housing, Remaking the City studio was a key part of Housing Northwest Arkansas, a program launched by the Fay Jones School in December 2017. The initiative included the advanced spring studio, a regional symposium on housing and an invited professional design competition, all held in spring 2018 (see p. 6).

Housing Northwest Arkansas was supported by a $250,000 grant from the Walton Family Foundation. 2018 (see p. 6). Housing Northwest Arkansas was supported by a $250,000 grant from the Walton Family Foundation. An invited professional design competition, all held in spring 2018 (see p. 6).

The final design projects reflected the complexity of the factors at play, as well as the variety of the target market, Matthews said.

"One successful project hit all three of the markets: an urban edge with apartments above retail or commercial spaces, another edge facing the Thaden School with townhouses and live-work units, and a third edge with duplexes and family-style housing facing the existing family neighborhood," he said.

Another project, located near Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, targeted the young, creative market through innovative landscape design. Inspired by the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, the design featured bright colors, geometric patterns and a sense of playfulness.

The Razorback Regional Greenway, which connects 36 miles of Northwest Arkansas with shared-use trails, was a key component for several other designs. One project featured a bicycle shop on the trail, and another a coffee shop at the top of a sloping green space, inviting the public into the common space.

"They made a public space in the center of the project – a slice through the site, a public way that has landscaped steps and landscaping and places that people could sit and enjoy the space, looking down at the greenway and people watching," Turner said.

"That was one of the more successful moments."
“Why do you like that?” architect John Ronan asked a student about the wall she’d designed, using both rough and smooth-faced stone.

“What can you learn from that that will inform your work going forward? Find out what you like and why you like it – so that everything is as thoughtful as that wall.”

Ronan, the 2018 John G. Williams Distinguished Visiting Professor in Architecture, teamed with Frank Jacobus, associate professor of architecture in the Fay Jones School, to lead the studio. Their goal was to explore the interrelationship between a building and the city surrounding it and the transitional spaces between interior and exterior realms.

“The studio was set up to foreground the issue of the urban public realm and how that might be extended from the street into a building,” Ronan said. “The vehicle we used to explore that was a writers museum in Chicago.”

The project was loosely based on the American Writers Museum, which opened in the Printers Row neighborhood of Chicago in May 2017. The museum features interactive exhibits and programming to celebrate the work of American authors from Louisa May Alcott to John Greenleaf Whittier. It was inspired by the Dublin Writers Museum in Ireland.

Students were charged with designing their own writers museum in Chicago, with program elements that included exhibition space, gallery, library, performance or event space, cafe, education space, and office and support spaces.

Eleven architecture and four interior design students took part in the spring 2018 studio. The semester began with an exploration of atmosphere in literature and design. Students were asked to choose a text that described a space and create a drawing and a model that conveyed the emotional or atmospheric qualities evoked.

“The purpose of the exercise was to understand how people describe spaces in writing and to imagine how we might represent a space, and its atmosphere, in ways that are beyond the dry descriptions often used by architects,” Ronan said. “Design is not just about the size and the function of the space, but the character of it. How does it feel when you walk in?”

Students visited the American Writers Museum during a field trip to Chicago, drawing inspiration for their own designs. They also toured the Poetry Foundation headquarters, a project of John Ronan Architects and the recipient of the 2012 AIA Honor Award for Architecture, along with other architecture and design sites.

For their own projects, students worked with one of two sites chosen near the existing museum – a site that would prompt a more horizontal approach and another that would prompt a vertical one.

“Special attention was given to the layers or gradations of public-private, inside-outside use and space,” Jacobus said. “We worked with the students to think about spaces that are not overtly exterior or overtly interior.”

Students began their projects with a conceptual overview and then zoomed in to explore one or two spaces within the building in detail. They then zoomed out back, incorporating their newfound understanding in the project as a whole.

“This approach helped students understand the connections between materials and the larger project,” Jacobus said. “They’ve thought through the details. They understand why they’ve approached the design in this way. And now, as they zoom out, they can take that confidence into the larger project.”

The final projects reflected the alignment between architectural vision and execution that the professors hoped to see.

One student created an interior environment that felt like a microcosm of the urban realm, Jacobus said. An interior court allowed open views through multiple levels and spaces, revealing the pulsating action of inhabitants.

Another project invited visitors to penetrate the seemingly solid walls through fissures, entering spaces that were simultaneously inside and outside the building. Those fissures acted as way finders, moving people up and through the building - something like a modern cave.

“We wanted students to find a comprehensive vision, a single idea that drives all the design decisions that have to be made throughout a project,” Jacobus said.

“As a designer, you’re always having to confront the ‘next thing’ coming up. How do I resolve the window or how do I resolve this next thing?” he said. “If you don’t have an overarching idea, then every time you confront a new situation you’re basically starting from scratch.”
“How do you adapt to change over time?” Students used some common terms in design and planning circles, Billig said. “It’s about envisioning a static end.”

“Too often, neither of those is true, and the result after 10 or 20 or 30 or 40 years is these hybrid landscapes that have adapted, and might have a lot of resiliency, but are not the pure restorations people have envisioned.”

Students worked in groups of three to develop frameworks or toolkits to consider the impact of various strategies on the multiple scenarios. One group focused on slowing the flow of water through the river channel in a specific neighborhood, while also weaving in aspects of place making and access.

Another group used the logic of nodes and access points drawn from a metaphor for Latino urbanism – to promote community engagement, and designed a series of installations or interventions for urban greening.

A third group focused on economic development and housing, striving to combat gentrification in one neighborhood along the river corridor.

“The project was a planning exercise as much as design,” Billig said. “Regardless of what system or systems students chose to prioritize, they needed to think about scenario planning and adaptation over time.”

The studio’s emphasis on advocacy in design amplified a focus for the school’s landscape architecture department. On their visit to Los Angeles, students met with a variety of people working in the intersection of public space and advocacy – artists, community organizers and leaders in the nonprofit sector, such as Kjer.

“We opened up the studio so that these other systems – the community, the ecology of the LA River – also fit into the project,” Kjer said. “From an advocacy perspective, it’s really important that students are thinking about what community engagement looks like and how that is critical for designing public places and spaces. Every group included some element of the people piece, which sometimes can be left out.”

Students also learned how to design for a non-local project, a reality they will face in their working lives, Billig said. “How do you design for communities and neighborhoods when you don’t live there? How do you do that in an authentic way?”

Public lands in particular are subject to unanticipated changes in management, environmental conditions and community engagement. Landscape architects must design for varied levels of maintenance across time to ensure systems that will adapt and continue to thrive.

“Nine third- and fourth-year students in a spring 2018 landscape architecture studio tackled the complexities of urban design along the historic Los Angeles River, a public space in the midst of massive revitalization projects. Students explored issues of advocacy, community engagement and adaptive design under the direction of Tori Kjer, the Garvan Visiting Professor in Landscape Architecture and also program director for the Trust for Public Land in Los Angeles, and Noah Billig, assistant professor of landscape architecture in the Fay Jones School.

The Trust for Public Lands is a national nonprofit working to ensure that urban Americans have access to open space through designing and building parks, protecting land, helping develop funding streams and engaging in policy work and advocacy. The Los Angeles River was once the lifeblood of the city, aiding settlement, transportation and industry. Channelized and encased in concrete in the early 1900s, the river has been neglected over time. A number of stakeholders are coming together to revitalize the river corridor, working toward environmental restoration, recreational use and economic development for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Students were charged with creating a master plan for some portion of the river that considered three scenarios – no maintenance, grass-roots/community maintenance and full management and maintenance. Students also were asked to consider the impact of these variables across time – predicting probable outcomes for the three scenarios in five, 15 and 30 years.

“We wanted to get away from one-space design and think about the bigger systems – the community, the natural systems and the impact of public use,” Kjer said. “In really dense environments like Los Angeles, there are a lot of forces at play that will influence how your design looks over time.”

The studio built on Joan Hirschman Woodward’s seminal work in designing adaptive ecological systems, Billig said. Woodward, who was Kjer’s professor at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, attended the final presentations as a reviewer.

“Joan was talking about resiliency before resiliency became a common term in design and planning circles,” Billig said. “How do you adapt to change over time?”

Students used some of Woodward’s strategies for restoration ecology in their own designs, such as “stitching” the landscape with seeds to ensure ongoing plant propagation.

“In restoration work, we assume that there will be maintenance, or that the system won’t need maintenance,” Billig said. “Too often, neither of those is true, and the result after 10 or 20 or 30 or 40 years is these hybrid landscapes that have adapted, and might have a lot of resiliency, but are not the pure restorations people have envisioned.”

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Designing for urban landscapes requires more than envisioning a static end.

Text Bettina Lehovec

ReView: Winter 2018/Spring 2019
Students in a spring 2018 studio explored the innovative use of regional materials and new timber technologies for the design of campus student housing.

“We looked at engineered wood, and we looked specifically at southern yellow pine, because that is the wood that is really prevalent in Arkansas,” said Thomas Robinson, the USDA Forest Service Wood Innovation Grant Visiting Professor.

The studio asked students to think beyond design to the question of supply chain.

Whether they chose an image of white sands or a thatched roof in Mexico, the challenge for students became how to translate the aesthetic experience into their final designs for the student-housing complex.

“We wanted to connect students to their own motivations relative to being in architecture and design,” Robinson said. “You can use that motivation as a lever to create buildings that have meaning to you personally, and that you might be able to communicate to others.”

Sixteen fourth- and fifth-year architecture students took part in the studio, which included field trips to the Arkansas forest and to Portland.

A background analysis of the forest economy in Arkansas led to a day trip to the Ozark National Forest near Fort Smith. Students visited the West Fraser processing plant in Mansfield, following the transformation of raw wood into finished lumber. They also studied transportation, logistics and sustainability, with an eye toward the potential for new products.

The students also traveled to Oregon for five days, where they visited Robinson’s Portland office and took a road trip to sites further afield. A highlight was the Mount Angel Abbey Library in Saint Benedict, designed in the 1960s by the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto.

For the final project, students worked individually to design a student-housing complex on a small wedge of land at the corner of Lafayette and Gregg streets in Fayetteville. Project requirements stipulated six units, each consisting of a three-story 12-plex organized around a single staircase. The units were aggregated separately or divided by firewalls, and a community space served the whole.

In this work by Haruya Yamamoto.

Professors purposely kept the parameters simple. “We wanted to illustrate what can be made right now with engineered timber products in Arkansas, with a focus on materials and the existing supply chain,” Boelkins said.

Students’ projects reflected the aesthetic work they’d engaged in at the start of the semester. One student captured the feel of a Japanese temple garden with the sculptural quality of the buildings and their overall composition on the site.

Another student, inspired by the dappled light coming through a grove of trees, stacked mass timber bars at various angles, creating intensely varied outdoor spaces with constantly changing light conditions. A third student brought the natural part of the site to the street edge, softening the design and complementing the beauty of the buildings themselves.

“We asked students to distill it down: What’s important about housing? How can their designs maintain a level of interest and inspiration within these prosaic parameters?” Robinson said.

### MASS TIMBER STUDENT HOUSING

The studio challenged students to use glulam in more visible ways, as well as explore new possibilities for CLT and other mass timber technologies. The long-term goal is to encourage the growth of the mass timber industry in the wood-rich state.

If you show people what’s possible, that usually leads to more investment in the supply chain,” Robinson said.

Robinson co-taught the studio with Jonathan Boelkins, clinical assistant professor in the Fay Jones School.

The University of Arkansas is a leader in the emerging field of mass timber design and construction, with one project completed on campus in 2018 and another under construction. The off-campus, High-Density Annex for University Libraries was the first building constructed with CLT in Arkansas. The Stadium Drive Residence Halls will be the first university student housing facility to use CLT in Arkansas.

The pine forests of south Arkansas produce mainly dimension lumber used in light-frame construction, he said. If some of that wood were used to produce mass timber material such as cross-laminated timber (or CLT), it would impact the economy of the state in positive ways.

CLT and other mass timber technologies allow designers to capitalize on wood’s innate structural advantages, reinforcing its strength and improving its economy through engineering. Mass timber functions as the primary load-bearing material in a building, replacing or augmenting steel or concrete.

“You have all this potential, if you can actually harness it,” said Robinson, who is principal at Lever Architecture in Portland, Oregon. The firm is pioneering the use of CLT in the United States, with innovative buildings along the West Coast.

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Yet the material must be imported from other parts of the world, as there is no production facility for CLT in the state. Arkansas does have a glue-laminated timber (or glulam) production plant, which manufactures an engineered wood material similar to CLT but smaller in scale.

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Robinson and Boelkins asked students to start the semester with a personal study. They were to pic a space important to them in terms of inspiration for architecture and design, and re-create the feel in a sketch and simple model built from reconstituted pine two-by-fours.

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Shaping Spaces and Communities Through Design

Fay Jones School alumnæ discuss their careers in interior design and landscape architecture

Text Michelle Parks
Photo Courtesy of River+Lime

A condo in the PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn, in Lake Tahoe.
Margaret Selzer remembers looking through the house plans in magazines her dad kept around their house in Cortez, a small town in southwest Colorado. She was just a dreamer, but seeing those home designs sparked her interest in the industry and the profession. Combined with her passion for art, “I felt like interior design was a great blend of two interests that I had from a young age.”

She also recalls career day in fourth grade, when she picked two speakers to listen to—a design professional and a professional clown. She remains grateful that she chose the design route.

Her dad was transferred to Arkansas for work when she was in high school, and she looked at the University of Arkansas while visiting him. The Ozarks weren’t quite the Rocky Mountains, but she loved the area’s beauty and enrolled in the university’s interior design program. The summer of her junior year, she studied abroad with “Semester at Sea” and traveled to Greece, Spain, Ireland, Norway, Russia, Poland, Belgium and Croatia. That trip provided an opportunity “to go to different countries and have my eyes opened to what else is out there,” she said. “I love to travel, and I love how travel influences and inspires us in design.”

During college, she did an internship at a small interior design firm in Boston, Massachusetts. So, when she graduated in 2008, she aimed to work for a larger multidisciplinary firm, and she found that with OZ Architecture. The Colorado-based firm worked with a wide variety of project types and had a strong focus on interiors.

Selzer stayed there for eight years—fortunately, even surviving some layoffs during the economic downturn of the late 2000s. Once the economy started to recover, she considered her future plans in magazines her dad kept around their house in Cortez, a small town in southwest Colorado.

School alumna who interned there during college and then went to work full time after graduating in 2017. Because the firm is small, they work collaboratively on projects together, and Chavez is “getting to dig in a little deeper at an earlier point in her career than what I was exposed to,” Selzer said.

When Selzer was studying to be an interior designer in college, she didn’t consider how the profession might also allow her to become a business owner and entrepreneur. Now, she’s found great satisfaction in that aspect.

“That’s what I love about design, that you really get to know people on a different, more personal level,” she said. “I think as that translates to being a business owner, I’m doing business development and going out and meeting people and understanding our market.”

At River+Lime, the team focuses on hospitality projects with some residential work, mostly in mountain resort locations. These include a multi-residential project in Telluride, Colorado, a luxury dude ranch in Big Sky, Montana, and a boutique hotel in Lake Tahoe—as well as a single-family residence in Denver.

Because Selzer grew up skiing in Telluride, the Transfer Telluride project was especially fun and felt familiar to her. This entailed the new construction of 12 mountain residences in the heart of downtown Telluride.

The Lake Tahoe project includes a boutique hotel and residential component because it combines the firm’s areas of practice into one project. Called the Plumpjack Squaw Valley Inn, this is a $100 million new construction hotel-condo project.

Another project, Uley’s Lake Lodge, is the new construction of a ski-in, ski-out mountain lodge with for sale residential flats above, located in Moonlight Basin, Montana.

Selzer particularly enjoyed working with the clients for a recent renovation of a single-family home in Beaver Creek, Colorado. The couple are from the Czech Republic, and they have a young child. They possess a European contemporary aesthetic that’s different from many residential designs in the region. This was a full interior renovation of a ski-in, ski-out residential condominium called Greystone.

“We were so excited with how that turned out because it was a little bit different than how we would typically approach most projects,” she said. The project was recently published in Mountain Living magazine.

While most of their resort projects are in the mountains of the west, she’d like to venture into additional resort markets as well across the country and internationally. As her firm moves forward and grows, she still plans to keep her team fairly small.

It took Selzer a few years to realize that, because she’s the boss, “there are no rules, and there’s no script. What’s been great is being able to create a company with the culture that I want, that reflects my personal values,” she said.

One of those values is the importance of traveling and experiencing other cultures. Earlier this year, Selzer spent two weeks in India, visiting Jaipur Rugs and seeing how the workers make hand-knotted rugs. The company has provided an opportunity for women in rural villages to create businesses for themselves.

“For me, I love to find and partner with companies that provide opportunities for underserved areas,” she said. “I feel like they’re doing great things for their communities, and I like to support them.”

With her own company, she can be hands on and selective in those sorts of ways. And she can educate and encourage her clients about such options for materials for their projects.

Last year, River+Lime partnered with an organization in Denver called Joshua Station, which provides transitional housing for the homeless community. The firm redesigns one of the rooms for a family. This service to the community is important to Selzer.

“We know that homes are for everyone. So, we love finding organizations where we can help create a home for people who might be struggling to have one,” she said.

Selzer enjoys partnering with clients on their projects, as she gets to know them and understand their needs. Then she blends the technical and creative sides of her work to find the solutions that will make their spaces feel better and improve their daily lives.

“I love having this blank canvas at the very beginning, and the potential of how you can take it,” she said. “It’s just our nature to go into a space and see beyond what it currently is to what it can be. But you learn with clients that not everyone is able to have...
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that vision up front. It’s always fun working through the process with each client.”

Many people are surprised to learn that interior designers are involved with projects from the beginning, working with architects on space planning and coordinating with other project consultants, such as structural engineers. They don’t just swoop in at the end to handle details like paint colors, furniture and lighting. They are on the project team for the entire design process.

“We interface with all disciplines - and it’s important to, because we see things differently,” she said. “So, I think when we’re working with the architects and with the engineers upfront, it’s just such a better, more cohesive project in the end.”

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uring her junior year of high school, Leah Hales (nee Glover) had to decide a college major. Her parents insisted that she determine her degree focus prior to graduation. She marked her interests in a U of A catalog of degree majors and tried to determine what she could make a career of. She enjoyed being outside and designing gardens and outdoor spaces, so she chose landscape architecture. She was also inspired by her grandmother and great-grandmother, who had a love of flowers and gardens.

Once she was in design school, she learned the practical realities of construction and how that influences good design.

“I think that Arkansas gave me a good foundation of the skills that it takes to be a good landscape architect and project manager, but also to really understand how to build something. To me, that’s one of the most critical things that we can do,” she said.

When Hales graduated from the U of A in 1994, she wanted to work in the private sector for a firm that focused on landscape architecture as its priority. Memphis would have been the closest city for that, but she and her husband, Chris, chose to move to Dallas. He was a Walmart assistant store manager then, and that was a good place professionally for them both to relocate.

Hales started at Talley Associates, an award-winning firm owned by alumnus Coy Talley. She was there for more than two years before joining SWA Group, an international firm headquartered in Sausalito, California, with more offices in California, as well as Texas, New York and Shanghai.

Now in the Dallas office for 20 years, Hales works alongside Chuck McDaniel, who founded the Dallas studio 35 years ago. A partner in the firm, Hales manages a team of about 14 designers. Mentoring young designers is one of the most rewarding parts of her work. She hopes to see their office continue to grow and have an even bigger outreach.

Even 25 years into her career, Hales is still surprised by the vastness of the profession. Landscape architects do everything from environmental design and rehabilitation to large-scale master planning to detailed site design - which is her focus. She considers her ability to see details from concept through implementation as one of her gifts - a gift that isn’t possible without a fundamental understanding of constructability.

Many people don’t understand that landscape architects design everything outside the building. Designers help determine where the buildings sit on the site and how they are oriented to take advantage of sunlight, views, wind protection and other elements. They also determine how people move through the space and experience the site. “Landscape architects act as the ‘ambassador for the site,’” Hales said.

For Hales, she begins a project by first developing an understanding of the site - analyzing the existing topography, understanding the grading and watersheds, and assessing the existing habitats on the site. Once that’s complete, then the planning starts for the buildings, parking and trails – “but you’re basing it all on the site itself.”

“So, you’re really taking the context of the site and being sensitive to it, and then trying to get all the programmatic elements that are required by the client,” she said. “We spend a lot of time just placing the buildings, moving and rotating them to make sure they are working with the site and not destroying it, but also capturing the best views, and making sure rainwater is able to move around the buildings without making major impacts on the natural environment.”

Hales enjoys the design process, and creating great spaces for people is the driving factor.

“I love problem solving, and I love to challenge myself to make the most out of my client’s space and budget,” she said.

The majority of her work at SWA is hospitality design, which often means large-scale resort projects. Because of this, she’s been able to travel around the world. Her first trip out of the country was to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, for a project. Her projects since have taken her all over the globe, and she even spent a year working at the SWA studio in Shanghai.

One of Hales’ most renowned projects is the Tucker’s Point Club in Bermuda. The resort reused the existing shell of a 1920s hotel. Hales worked with the site to situate new buildings on the steep terrain. Her scope included the design for two resort pools and decks, the spa gardens, multiple lawns, and the overall landscape and hardscape design for the entire property. Careful attention was paid to grading because of the karst formations on the property.

On most projects, landscape architects would specify plants from a variety of sources. However, plants can’t be imported to Bermuda, so the designers went to people’s yards and offered to buy their best trees. They even started an on-site nursery for all the shrubs and groundcover. Because there’s no fresh water on site, rainwater from rooftops is captured in cisterns for drinking water and other uses.

“Everything you used, you either had to grow it or find it on the island,” she said. “You’re working with a lot of environmental factors that you don’t necessarily work with on a daily basis. Working in those kinds of constraints was challenging yet fulfilling, because it turned out to be a really beautiful project.”

Another favorite project was the Mukul resort in the rain forests of Nicaragua. Her work often provides a chance to collaborate with other world-class designers. The Mukul resort was done in collaboration with the Dallas-based architecture firms HKS and FAB Studios and the Dallas-based interior design practice Paul Duesing Partners. The 17-room resort opened in 2013 and is spread across 1,670 acres of white sand and coastal forests.

To design this project, Hales traveled there and determined where the buildings should go to provide nice views of the ocean while being sensitive to the site. In this sensitive ecosystem, plants were grown on-site nurseries and rainwater was collected.

Sometimes, the travel yields insight that goes beyond design needs. “I think with traveling, you really get a sense of other cultures and an honest look at poverty,” she said. “It’s such a wonderful learning opportunity. It really opens your eyes up to the world around you.”

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Luxury resorts often have a unique relationship with the
surrounding community, she said, and it can be challenging to find the right balance. Hales seeks projects that also have an explicit public benefit. “I’m a big proponent for equality in design. I feel very strongly about creating spaces for all people that are equal in quality and the design effort.”

One such project in Fort Worth was a homeless resource center, True Worth Place, that her team designed pro bono. “We gave it the same design aesthetic that we would for any of our projects,” she said. “Sometimes when you create places for people that are really nice aesthetically, it brings up their motivation and the way they feel on a daily basis. It’s an important part of what we do, giving back to other people.”

Hales has continuously worked to evolve and improve her local community. One example in Fort Worth is A Tasteful Place, an award-winning addition to the acclaimed Dallas Arboretum. The 3.5-acre, potager garden, pavilion and kitchen was inspired by the winning addition to the acclaimed Dallas Arboretum. The 3.5-acre, potager garden, pavilion and kitchen was inspired by the winning addition to the acclaimed Dallas Arboretum. A Tasteful Place, an award-winning addition to the acclaimed Dallas Arboretum. The 3.5-acre, potager garden, pavilion and kitchen was inspired by the winning addition to the acclaimed Dallas Arboretum.

In the mid-1970s, Barbara Yates (B.S.B.A. ’70) worked as a young professional in the former First Pyramid Building in downtown Little Rock. Its character and history fascinated her. Built in 1907 for the Southern Trust Company, it’s the oldest high-rise building and was the first steel beam construction in the state. Its architect, George R. Mann, also designed the Arkansas State Capitol building and many government buildings, hotels and commercial buildings in the state in the early 1900s.

Back then, Yates was an accountant with E.L. Gaut & Co. on the ninth floor of the 11-story building, located at 221 W. Second St. It was a premier office space that, over the years, has housed many law firms and accounting firms.

Several years ago, she and her husband and business partner, James Freeman, were looking for a downtown property to own—one that would have condominiums. They purchased the building in 2005, by then called Pyramid Place. It has been continually operational since it opened.

They removed the asbestos and then slowly remodeled it over the next few years. As downtown developed, they chose to do a mixed-use development, with residential, retail and office spaces. They also made it a historic preservation project and did a “green” restoration that complied with LEED standards, though it’s not certified.

The building already qualified for the National Register of Historic Places, so they went through that official process in 2011. In a previous ownership, a historic preservation easement was granted on two facades of the building, meaning those couldn’t be altered without permission. Yates applied for a federal tax credit through the National Park Service (NPS) and complied with their standards.

“Properly restoring a building such as that costs a great deal more than it would to build the building from the ground up,” she said.

The paperwork for the tax credit is complex, and Yates is proud that their final report was approved the first time.

“Scott was very creative in his ability to lay out the residential spaces in such a way that maximized the footprint,” she said. Much of that was factoring in the existing architectural features and structural elements—“and working around those to make everything flow.”

Every residential unit has a unique design and layout. Due to a concern for fireproofing the original skyscraper, about a foot of steel and concrete was placed between each floor, which now provides a good sound barrier. All of those new residential units were refitted with appropriate plumbing and electricity systems.

“We effectively built 21 houses inside an existing structure. And it takes a lot of talent to design on the fly when they run into something they didn’t know was going to be there. Scott was a good problem solver,” she said.

Creighton Ralls, who received his Executive M.B.A. from the U of A in 2009, served as project manager during the renovation. In addition to the residential units on the eighth through 11th floors, the first floor now features an office supply store and 2Twenty1, a coffee, wine and beer bar. The second floor houses art galleries and working artists’ studios. Half of the third floor also has artist studios, with the rest of the floors through the seventh providing office space to mostly small tenants—law firms, tech companies and others.

Building residents have access to a rooftop deck, with a hot tub, outdoor kitchen, grill and southern and eastern views. Recovered space in the basement made room for tenant storage, a gym, a wine cellar and a refrigerator filled with wine. This building was important to Yates, so she made sure it survived. She hopes this encourages others to take similar actions when they can.

“It mattered to me as something that I could do and leave as my stamp on something for posterity,” she said. “I think that history needs to be preserved, but I don’t think that all old buildings need to be preserved. Not every building can be or should be saved. But I think anything like that, is the oldest something in Arkansas, should be preserved.”

And, a building like this isn’t suited for everyone. “You either want to be in a historic building—with its warts and wrinkles and all the aging things that it has—or you don’t,” she said.
Anthony Timberlands has a rich tradition and heritage, with south Arkansas roots that reach back 112 years in lumber manufacturing. A recent gift to the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design is an investment in innovation within the timber industry in Arkansas and the region, and aims to ensure its future success.

The original Anthony Mills were primitive mobile entities located near pockets of easily accessible timber. When the nearby timber was depleted, the mill moved. The first mill was operated by Garland Anthony in 1907 located on a railroad near Bearden, Arkansas. This mill moved to several locations over the next 10 to 12 years.

The four Anthony brothers soon formed Anthony Brothers Lumber Company in the 1920s in the family’s home community of Hopeville, in Calhoun County, Arkansas. Brothers Will, Oliver, Garland and Frank all had ownership before Frank and Will branched out to other locations with mills of their own. Will went to the Murfressboro area, Frank went to Union County, and Garland spent a lifetime establishing partnerships in many mills located in the Arkansas-Louisiana-Texas region, with Bearden as their base.

During the decades that followed, Garland and Oliver were succeeded by Garland’s son, Ted, who passed away unexpectedly in 1961, and subsequently by Ted’s son, John Ed, and John Ed’s son, Steven.

In 1974, Anthony Timberlands was formed by John Ed as a management company for all the mills from the central Bearden headquarters. It is a privately held, family company spanning seven generations that now operates two pine sawmills, three hardwood sawmills, a hardwood flooring plant, a wood-treating facility and an engineered, laminated and treated hardwood mat facility and supporting satellites—all in various locations in southern Arkansas. The company prides itself on challenging each generation to leave a better forest and a better company than when they arrived. The original 75,000 acres that the family had acquired in the early years has now grown to more than 200,000.

Now, John Ed feels it is only natural that Anthony Timberlands partners with the University of Arkansas on wood innovation design and product diversification, as the university is already a national leader in the design and construction of mass timber buildings on campus—the Stadium Drive Residence Halls and the University Libraries high-density annex.

“Considering the importance of the forest industry in Arkansas, our flagship university should be a leader in high-density annex. The work done through the Anthony Timberlands Center will also benefit employment and investments in southern Arkansas, where the timber industry thrives, and bring new attention to an area that has suffered economic decline over the years. Nearly 19 million of the 34 million acres that make up Arkansas are classified as forestland. More than 43,000 Arkansans work in the forest industry, and Anthony Timberlands has more than 1,080 employees in its mills, with logging contractors, trucking, security and manufacturing jobs, Anthony said.

Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design Innovation, Industry Future Take Shape With Anthony Timberlands Center

Dean Peter MacKeith (at left) with Isabel and John Ed Anthony in Little Rock in November 2018 just after presenting them with their Dean’s Medals. The distinction is awarded annually in recognition of a recipient’s significant contributions to the architecture and design culture of the state of Arkansas, and to students and their education at the Fay Jones School. Thanks to a $7.5 million Campaign Arkansas gift in 2018 from Anthony Timberlands, the Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation will take shape in the coming years. It will serve as the home to the Fay Jones School’s graduate program in timber and wood and as the epicenter for the school’s multiple timber and wood initiatives. It will also house the existing design-build program and digital fabrication laboratory, as well as a new applied research center with a focus in wood design and innovation. Long-term plans call for an Arkansas Chair in Timber and Wood Innovation and Design to also be housed in the facility.

“Coming to know the entire Anthony family—has been a transformative experience for me,” said Peter MacKeith, dean of the school. “Their deep knowledge of the Arkansas forests is rooted in the lives of their forebears and in the communities of south Arkansas. They can speak to the virtues of the native loblolly and shortleaf pine species, as well as the hardwoods that thrive in the lowlands, but have a perspective that is environmental, economic and social. ”

“The planned Anthony Timberlands Center is currently in pre-programming stages, with identification of architecture, engineering and construction services envisioned for the coming summer,” MacKeith added. Cross-laminated timber products, which Anthony calls “a product of the future,” will bring unique opportunities for the Anthony Timberlands Center, including the possibility of being a part of a developing market. Cross-laminated timber, also called CLT, is an increasingly accepted alternative to concrete, masonry and steel construction. CLT is a prefabricated wood panel that is made from dimensional lumber planks that are stacked, glued and laminated in perpendicular layers under heavy pressure. The panels are cut according to the builder’s specifications and then shipped to the building site, where they are assembled. “It’s a given that this will be a successful endeavor because of the merit of these renewable and environmentally friendly components,” Anthony said. “We would like our university to be at the forefront of this move. Breaking into a major market is a big task, but with CLT and other concepts, years of construction can be reduced to mere months.”

The work done through the Anthony Timberlands Center will also benefit employment and investments in southern Arkansas, where the timber industry thrives, and bring new attention to an area that has suffered economic decline over the years. Nearly 19 million of the 34 million acres that make up Arkansas are classified as forestland. More than 43,000 Arkansans work in the forest industry, and Anthony Timberlands has more than 1,080 employees in its mills, with logging contractors, trucking, security and manufacturing jobs, Anthony said.

A 2018 gift to the Fay Jones School for the Anthony Timberlands Center is a tribute to the timberland people of south Arkansas who nurture and protect those forests.

Innovation, Industry Future Take Shape With Anthony Timberlands Center
Tony Patterson (B.Arch. ’00) received both an Honor Award for Architecture and an Honor Award for Interior Design for the renovation of Ellis Hall on the Missouri State University campus in Springfield, Missouri. Patterson is with Patterhn Ives, LLC in St. Louis, Missouri. The awards jury included Roy Decker, principal and co-founder of Duvall Decker Architects in Jackson, Mississippi, who served as external jury member; Fay Jones School faculty members Kimberley Furlong, jury chair and assistant professor in interior design, Jessica Colangelo, assistant professor in architecture, and Windy Gay, instructor in interior design; and school alumni Victor Mirontschuk, president and founder of EDI, and Patty Opitz, senior associate at Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects.
Designs for interior, outdoor, residential, educational, office, commercial, medical, historic, religious, recreational, culinary and public urban spaces were among 52 projects vying for recognition in the 2018 Fay Jones Alumni Design Awards competition – which saw the most entries to date.

Tony Patterson (B.Arch. '00)
Project Title: Ellis Hall Renovation
Honor Award for Architecture and Honor Award for Interior Design

Unfrothed for 50 years, the renovation of Missouri State University’s School of Music facility includes a pedagogically tuned environment with two signature recital halls, acoustic upgrades, a performance courtyard that mends outreach to the greater university campus, and thoughtful features that resonate with its modern framework and historic context.

“This project is a fine example of a sensitive and rigorous renovation,” the jury said. “It breathes new life into an existing building, proving that, if thoughtfully done, interior and exterior renovations can give new and valuable life to often unappreciated mid-century modern structures.”

Patterson is with Patterhn Ives, LLC in St. Louis.

Jason Radcliff (B.L.A. '98)
Project Title: Fareground
Honor Award for Landscape Architecture

Fareground is the reimaging of a dormant Austin, Texas, office plaza into a modern, inviting and active downtown hub for professionals, residents and visitors. The plaza utilizes a dramatic botanical feature, literally creates clouds from water collected from the building’s air conditioning condensation and creates a powerful visual beacon.

“There is a sense of presence, a human presence,” the jury said. “The siting and landscape buffer give a sense of privacy from the outside world.”

Radcliff is with dwg. in Austin.

Jason Jackson (B.Arch. '06)
Project Title: Patient Simulation Center of Healthcare Improvement and Development

This three-story design ties together the exterior and interiors reinforces the architectural solution. The use of industrial materials and detailing on the exterior and interiors reinforces the company’s industrial character while the planes in which the materials are combined to create an interesting strategic placement of glass and detailing creates a cohesive seamless workflow and an innovative collaborative design. Exteriors reinforce the company’s industrial character while color highlights areas of relief.

Jackson is with brg3s architects in Fayetteville.

Coy Talley (B.L.A '84)
Project Title: Preston Hollow Residence
Merit Award for Landscape Architecture

This residence in Dallas, Texas, is quietly nestled within a landscape of native grasses and a grove of existing trees, which allows for a slow unfolding of space upon entering the site. Where expansive areas of transparency face the public side of the property, the team took advantage of sloping grades to elevate the house from roadways below – giving ample privacy from a sight line perspective. The site incorporates a delicate balance of ordered versus organic expression.

“The siting and landscape buffer give the home privacy from the outside world,” the jury said. “The drive along the long, naturally landscaped entry motor court creates a sense of anticipation.”

Talley is with Talley Associates in Dallas.
Eureka Springs captures and emphasizes the economy of regional vernacular forms. The secluded Ozark mountain residence in the economy of regional vernacular forms.

Honorable Mention for Architecture:

The Sutcliffe House (B.Arch. ‘15) and Seth Spradlin (B.Arch. ‘02),

Seth Spradlin (B.Arch. ‘02), Tim Maddox

Rayonier Corporate Headquarters

Honorable Mention for Architecture

The project on the U of A - Fort Smith campus was designed to be an outreach to the community, placing focus on the craft of art inside and out. It encourages the community, visitors and passersby to embrace an opportunity to introduce more art into their lives. Transparency was used throughout the new building to celebrate the process of creating art as being non-linear and sometimes chaotic.

Inviting, welcoming, community interaction, art awareness and art appreciation were challenges in the design of this building,” the jury said. “The architecture accomplished all of these through a strong building facade, playful entry landscape, transparent interiors and careful organization of the plan and functionality.”

Bock is with WER Architects/Planners in Little Rock.

Project Title:

Windgate Art and Design Building

Honorable Mention for Architecture

This project in Wildlight, Florida, distills Rayonier’s story into a physical, site-sensitive narrative reflecting the area’s watershed, drawing primarily on early utilitarian Rayonier timber sawmills and regional agricultural buildings that express the virtues of simplicity. The architecture enhances the company's philosophy of building relationships that foster innovation through collaboration.

“The use of strong geometric forms, along with the strategic use of steel, glass and wood, combine to create a strong piece of architecture,” the jury said. “The detailing is masterful.”

The design team is with Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects in Little Rock.

Project Title:

Little Rock Technology Park

Honorable Mention for Interior Design

The Little Rock Technology Park is a tech-based business incubator for entrepreneurs and researchers, derived from two 1920s buildings renovated into one 42,000-square-foot office complex along Main Street. The building features open co-working space for use on individual projects.

“Old meets new in a fun, creative and stimulating environment,” the jury said. “The creation of playful interiors, open spaces, common lobby/events and communal spaces helps encourage collaboration with young budding entrepreneurs.”

The design team is with Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson, Inc. Architects in Little Rock.

Project Title:

Sushi Kappo

Honorable Mention for Interior Design

This project in Boston, Massachusetts, establishes a connection between two distinct environments - the “clinical clean” sushi lab, where food is prepared, and the “beachy” atmosphere of the dining area - through the use of wood, stone, ceramic tile and metal. The diagonal counter is formally linked to the exterior seating, creating a sense of connection between interior and exterior spaces. Inspired by the pattern in sushi mats, the wood screen is modulated in short segments that wrap around the dining area.

“Love the use of materials and subtle installation methods to convey waves and Japanese traditions,” the jury said. “Minimalism, clean lines and designed down to the smallest detail describe this interiors project.”

Rukamathu is with rukamathu.smith LLC in Somerville, Massachusetts.
For Opitz and her classmates some nights before they all returned to studio.

Opitz was in a sorority and soon learned the rigors of design school. Over time, she got more serious and disciplined in her studio work. “Because you did have to put your head and hand to the paper and learn to focus and manage your time,” she said.

After graduation in 2004, she wanted to move back to Little Rock and work in a small firm. She did both, landing at Polk Stanley Rowland Curzon Porter Architects. Along with its Fayetteville office, the firm had about 12 to 15 people. She’s been there ever since, and they have grown together as that firm merged with The Wilcox Group and became Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects, now with about 50 people on staff.

“Everybody still kind of has their little pockets that they focus on, so it still feels like a small firm at times,” she said. “You kind of find your niche, and it works.”

Early on, she worked on residential projects with Rodney Purham, their residential architect who draws everything by hand. Residential projects are special to her because of their personal nature.

“The client is so much more emotionally involved,” she said. “And I love that aspect of it because it allows for a more personal connection that’s really hard to come by when you’re working on a commercial project.”

An early project for Opitz was working on a bank CEO’s personal home, Chateau St. Cloud, which was inspired by several historical French homes and was intended to feature artwork that he and his wife had collected. With its multi-level floor plan already designed, Opitz and Purham worked alongside the contractor and fabricator on all the details over eight years, creating customized features such as limestone surrounds and keystones, door hardware, dormers and even downsputs.

“It was a big design challenge to do that,” she said. From that relationship, she started working on new headquarters for that bank, Bank OZK Headquarters, in Little Rock. The firm had done several of the bank’s branches around the state.

This headquarters project, expected to be complete in 2020, features two primary office volumes that are linked by a five-story atrium and bridged by a sweeping roof. The building’s profile mimics the surrounding rolling hills and mountains. Most of the parking is tucked under the building, which puts the outdoor focus on the green spaces and sculpted, artistic landscape.

In her career, Opitz has discovered that the design profession involves much more than design. “There’s also the business side and the complex process as a project comes to life, as architects work with engineers, clients, consultants and others to realize the design,” she said.

“We’re the liaison between so many different aspects of the project,” she said. “We’re having to juggle and coordinate between different parties and make sure that the process runs smoothly.”

A favorite project for Opitz is the Mosaic Church. This is a multiethnic, nondominational church that broke off from a larger Little Rock church, whose leadership purchased an old Kmart building in one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods. A program in the church provides free food, employment help and health care screenings to the neighborhood.

“They decided to just really be an anchor within the community,” she said. “Even though it had a low budget, it had a very high-spirited and energetic client. He had a vision and a mission, and that budget didn’t really stop him from moving forward.”

The first phase of the project was finished around 2015, and that took the space from a big open box and portioned it into a big worship center, an office space and a secure children’s area. The next phase will bring meeting spaces, a community coffee shop and a more dynamic entrance.

“I think we as architects have a social responsibility to design not just for the profits or the productivity that are in our clients’ interests but for the community and the environment that it sits in,” Opitz said. “It allows us to connect with so many different groups within our community. With design, you can make a community way more livable again, and it enhances everybody’s daily life.”

Opitz is surprised but proud to learn she’d received this AIA recognition. “It’s thrilled that you and others in the state are being noticed on this national stage – for the range of work they do as professional designers and community leaders. There’s giving back to your community and just being a part of your community and being an active citizen – and being able to use architecture to do that,” she said.

Though she’s always been a bit shy, volunteering with the Junior League of Little Rock helped push Opitz out of her own shell and allowed her to get to know the community better. While still timid at times, she has stepped up to serve within professional organizations in leadership positions, including the AIA Arkansas board, the Architecture and Design Network and with StudioMain. Being part of that diverse Junior League membership also helped her learn to deal with various personalities, which serves her well when working with owners and others in her day job.

She and her husband, Jonathan, have a 5-year-old daughter, and he works as a principal at AMR Architects in Little Rock. He received a 2017 AIA Young Architects Award (among 14 nationally). The couple work diligently to coordinate schedules and support each other in their careers and at home. Every Sunday, they sit down with a calendar and figure out their week, and they split household duties.

“It’s hard work. It’s freaking hard work,” she said. Working in a male-dominated profession is an ongoing challenge for her. It’s rare to see a woman become partner in a firm, for instance. But the state’s AIA chapter formed a diversity committee and a Women in Architecture group to help bring more equity to the profession. “I think the more we keep talking about it, the better it will be,” she said.

As part of her timidity, Opitz used to think she had to wait and be recognized for her efforts. But she has learned to speak up and have more of a voice, and she reminds herself that she has the same education as the men in the room.

“I’m still really learning to do that. It’s hard for me, but I have to push myself to do it,” she said. “It’s a constant reminder every day just to focus on what my work is and not focus on my gender, and hopefully everyone else at that meeting that I’m sitting at will do the same thing.”

She is the first female in Arkansas to receive this national honor.
He finds meaning in the ability of design to impact communities.

Text: Michelle Parks

Jason Jackson moved around a lot in his youth, spending many years in southern California, living in low-income neighborhoods. His parents were sick and on disability, and his family made homes out of abandoned churches and trailers—“wherever we could live is where we lived.” He’s been more willing to share his early experiences in recent years, partly because he understands that those helped shape him as a person and inform his work as an architect.

Jackson, now lead design architect and partner at bg/js architects in Memphis, is among 22 architects from across the country to be recognized in the 2019 AIA Young Architects Award program. The award recognizes emerging talent among professional architects. Specifically, it “honors individuals who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the architecture profession early in their careers.”

Things started to settle down for Jackson when he, his two sisters and his parents moved in with his grandmother in Mountain Home. Until then, his education had been nontraditional and sporadic, with some church schools and homeschooling. In seventh grade, he started his formal education in Arkansas.

“Not having the formal education in my younger years made me really appreciate school as I got older,” he said. As he caught up, he gravitated toward art and math—“not having the formal education in my younger years made it so much easier to catch up when you focused.”

Jackson applied to TRO Jung|Branen. The Boston-based firm was looking for a lead designer in the Memphis office, but he wasn’t yet licensed and had just three years of experience. During the interview process, he entered a competition to do a mixed-use development reusing shipping containers—“to have more work to show them. He got the job in 2009 and remained amidst all the layoffs in the recession, as the firm went from about 50 to around 20.

“Often, we talk about talent and people’s design abilities, but even in college, it was always just about hard work,” he said. Around 2011, the six senior partners came together and purchased the local branch of the firm, transforming it into bg/js architects—he joined from the initials of its last name.

The office also worked on community-oriented projects and with nonprofits. With bg/js architects, they diversified project types, took on several smaller projects, and focused on community impact.

One project, Hotel Indigo, was a dilapidated downtown building—“a seven-story parking garage with a three-story Holiday Inn plopped on top in 1963. The boutique hotel’s parent company, Atlanta-based InterContinental Hotels Group, wants each property to be unique to the history and character of its location, providing an authentic experience. “They seek out designers and concepts that tell the story of that area,” he said. “We had to go through a pretty elaborate process of how that neighborhood story then comes out in the architecture.” That included a detailed mapping of culturally significant places and the history in a one-mile radius.

They got the building on the National Register of Historic Places and received a tax credit. Its historical significance was the use of the pre-stressed concrete structural T-beam, developed by the Chinese-born engineer Tung-Yen Lin. This beam, called a “Lin Tee,” spanned a longer distance and supported more weight than previously possible.

“We look for projects that are unique and challenging and different, so this was right up our alley,” Jackson said. “This was an opportunity to help revitalize an important part of downtown.”

Designers couldn’t alter the hotel layout much as they created a contemporary design. They cleaned up systems, organizing sprinklers and pipes to maximize ceiling heights, and used light, color and proportions to make spaces feel larger. The original check-in area was separate from the elevators, which were located outside. The renovation created a new grand, enclosed lobby that contains those elevators and keeps historic aspects of the space.

With another project, the Shelby County Health Department, the director had specific ideas for creating a space that promoted a healthy lifestyle for its staff and its clients. A grand staircase welcomes visitors and offers a place to congregate, while open offices wrap around the building and provide abundant natural light.

In his career, he’s come to understand how design can bring people together and strengthen communities—and how it can be used as a divisive tool to perpetuate isolationism, racism and segregation. “When you’re in school, I think you think about architecture as this kind of pure artistic form and expression, but it absolutely can be a political tool.”

In some of his work in Memphis, he’s seen communities bind together to improve. “Take the Memphis Slim Collaboratory, which is Jackson’s favorite project to date. Located in Soulsville across from the Stax Museum, this small project was driven by the community and helped fuel revitalization. It was the childhood home of the musician Memphis Slim. It was too dilapidated to be renovated, so they took it apart and saved all the framing and brick that they could reuse. They rebuilt the house to its original form, on a better foundation. They kept the steel skeleton, using the reclaimed materials and new materials such as cedar fencing and corrugated metal. They extended the original front porch to create a small stage for neighbors to play music. Now, anyone in the area can come in and record their own music or stories.”

“It’s about that community impact, that lasting impact—the power of architecture to change people and places for the better,” Jackson said.

The community trust built through this project has led to other low-cost solutions to connect the neighborhood—including activating empty lots with benches and planters, and turning the empty lot next to the house into an outdoor music venue with reclaimed church pews.

After he did a TEDx Memphis talk, Jackson was invited to be part of Memphis 3.0, a comprehensive city master plan that utilizes local firms to design, implement and maintain the long-term plan.

For Jackson, design allows him to be part of something bigger than himself, and to work with others to achieve that. “I can’t imagine that I would enjoy architecture as much if it wasn’t something I got to share with everyone else.”

This national AIA recognition has encouraged and inspired him.

“It reaffirms my commitment to set the best example I can for future architects in Memphis and embrace change and pursue architecture with conviction and rigor,” he said. “It validates that I’m on the right path, but there’s still a lot more to do.”
ALUMNI NEWS—

'50s

Bob Laser (B.Arch. ’50), Joseph Wilkinson (B.Arch. ’50), Vernon Reed (B.Arch. ’58) and Jack See (B.Arch. ’58) were recognized as Golden Graduates in fall 2018 by the Arkansas Alumni Association (see p. 13). These are graduates from 50 or more years ago, who are automatically members of the association’s Golden Tower Alumni Society.

'60s

John Mott (B.Arch. ’60) is director of preservation for John Miller Associates Preservation, a division of MTF Architecture in Arlington, Virginia. He is director of the Historic Preservation Studio and its staff of preservation architects, materials conservators and architectural historians. He also serves as project manager of selected projects. A recent project was the Warne Ballroom Restoration for the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C. The historic ballroom in the former residence of Richard Townsend was designed by Carrere & Hastings and constructed in 1901, with interior decorating by the firm Allard & Sons. It was featured in the April 1901 issue of Architectural Record. The Cosmos Club, a prominent Washington private club, acquired the house in 1950. The effects of age had deteriorated the finishes in the ballroom, with its profusion of gild and painted ornamentation, plaster and woodwork, overdoor paintings, an elaborate coffered ceiling with a central cove, walls divided into arched bays for windows, doorways and mirrored panels and oak parquet floor. Restoration efforts aimed to conserve as much historic fabric as possible while preserving the historic character of the room as it was from 1901-1915. The type and condition of the original finishes were determined through paint analysis, historical research and physical investigation. Work done over a yearlong process included ornamental plaster repair, painting, gilding restoration, floor refinishing, restoration of oil paintings and murals, restoration of historic light fixtures and mechanical systems upgrades. The project has won several awards, including the AIA Virginia Historic Preservation Merit Award, the AIA DC chapter Merit Award for Historic Preservation and the District of Columbia Preservation League Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation.

Ken Shireman (B.Arch. ’63), Paul Jones (B.Arch. ’66), Allen Mullins (B.Arch. ’66) and Brooks Jackson (B.Arch. ’68) were recognized as Golden Graduates in fall 2018 by the Arkansas Alumni Association (see p. 13). These are graduates from 50 or more years ago, who are automatically members of the association’s Golden Tower Alumni Society.

Joe Stanley (B.Arch. ’69) is architect emeritus and founding principal of Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects, a firm with offices in both Fayetteville and Little Rock. Stanley has managed the design and construction of scores of projects, including public libraries, college buildings, schools, churches and private homes.

Joe Stanley

The chapter bestows, for superior leadership and service to the state and the chapter. He has also been inducted into the Arkansas Construction Hall of Fame and presented with a Career Distinguished Service Award by the Fay Jones School. In 2012, Stanley helped found studioMAIN, an all-volunteer organization of design professionals working to create a high-quality built environment in Central Arkansas. He remains actively involved in its mission.

Restoration finishes are completed

The Warne Ballroom, Cosmos Club. Photos by Robert Benson Photography

'70s

John William Allegretti (B.Arch. ’71), FAIA, is owner and architect with Allegretti Architects in St. Joseph, Michigan, where he works with all phases of the business but primarily design. His design work has garnered more than 60 AIA and other local, state and national design awards, including a 2012 “Special Tribute” by the Michigan 96th Legislature. He received a LEED Platinum Home designation from the U.S. Green Building Council in 2010. A recent project was a new, 2,912-square-foot, three-story home on an 809-square-foot footprint in Lake Township, Michigan. The Swiss Family Robinson-style retreat is connected by a curving stair on the lake-facing side and a two-level screened-in porch with concrete piers further extending the dune. Natural lake breezes under the forest canopy, along with a closed-loop geothermal heating system, controls the indoor climate. Low-maintenance cement board and sustainable timber surround a concrete and steel interior. Forest Stewardship Council certified wood, urea-formaldehyde free medium density fiberboard, cantilevered stairs made from recycled 1850 blacksmith shop timber and other LEED for Homes-driven elements make this a seminal LEED Platinum home. The project received a Merit Award in the 2012 Fay Jones Alumni Design Awards competition held by the Fay Jones School, along with a 2012 AIA Michigan Honor Award and a Detroit Home Design Award.

Jeffrey A. Scherer (B.Arch. ’71) is founding emeritus principal with Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. Architects (now MSR Design) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He co-founded the firm in 1981 and retired in 1997. For more than 40 years, his architectural interest and personal passion was the design and presentation of the public library and its role in education. He still consults with MSR Design on business matters and projects that he began.

New Buffalo, Michigan, built on a north-facing Lake Michigan dune face. Embracing a dune topography helped inform the configuration of the home’s lakeside shape, while creating an efficient tower home plan. Placing 25 percent of the house below grade improved heat loss and gain. Passive south and southeast facing windows collect winter BTUs, while uphill deciduous vegetation provides solar summer shading. Other features include an originally designed geothermal system, LED lighting, substantially harvested local products, naturally irrigated landscaping and locally sourced materials. The project received a 2016 Southwest Michigan AIA Merit Award and a 2016 Detroit Home Design Award. A third project was a three-story home on an 895-square-foot footprint in Lake Township, Michigan. The Swiss Family Robinson-style retreat is connected by a curving stair on the lake-facing side and a two-level screened-in porch on concrete piers further extending the dune. Natural lake breezes under the forest canopy, along with a closed-loop geothermal heating system, controls the indoor climate. Low-maintenance cement board and sustainable timber surround a concrete and steel interior. Forest Stewardship Council certified wood, urea-formaldehyde free medium density fiberboard, cantilevered stairs made from recycled 1850 blacksmith shop timber and other LEED for Homes-driven elements make this a seminal LEED Platinum home. The project received a Merit Award in the 2012 Fay Jones Alumni Design Awards competition held by the Fay Jones School, along with a 2012 AIA Michigan Honor Award and a Detroit Home Design Award.

Wisdom of Elder Woman: #4

Jeffrey A. Scherer

New Buffalo residence. Photo by John Allegretti

Lake Township residence. Photo by Jim Yoshom

Saint Joseph residence. Photo by John Allegretti

Cleaning and restoration of the tondos

New Buffalo residence. Photo by John Allegretti

Restoration finishes are completed

The Warne Ballroom, Cosmos Club. Photos by Robert Benson Photography

Sant Joseph residence. Photo by John Allegretti

Lake Township residence. Photo by Jim Yoshom

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ALUMNI NEWS—

(Anthony Bourdain’s Last Dream) “Anthony Bourdain’s Last Dream” was established to support personal growth and the renewal of the MSR design community through travel. Participants meet each year and are asked to write a one-page essay. Since his retirement, he paints full time. He studied figurative painting in Florence, Italy, in 2016. He gives away his work for free, asking only that recipients make a donation to a charity of their choice. This process enables him to continually help communities while allowing him to continue to explore drawing and painting. His artwork can be seen at: www.schererworks.com.

Victor Mirontschuk (B.Arch. ’74) received a 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This distinction is awarded annually in recognition of an alumnus or alumna for significant contributions to the architecture and design culture locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Mirontschuk founded EDI International in 1976, which has offices in New York, Texas and California. He serves as its president, chief operating officer and chairman of the board.

James Jackson Galloway Architects, which they founded in 1997 in Austin, Texas. Their firm has been acquired by FGM Architects, headquartered in Oak Brook, Illinois. The two architecture firms share core cultural values as well as practice areas that focus on enhancing the environments where people live, learn, worship, work, play and gather. These include schools, police and fire stations, recreation centers, city halls and worship facilities. JGA will maintain its current office in Austin. The merged firm will conduct business as Jackson Galloway FGM Architects. Jackson and Galloway began working together as aspiring architects in the Fay Jones School. Fay Jones was their fifth-year studio professor, and Jackson’s first job out of college was with Jones in his Fayetteville firm. Thorne/Chapman Landscape Architects (see p. 13) serves as landscape architects for the 500 “Thinking Hands” and “Preserve Arkansas.”

James M. Parker (B.F.A. ’74, B.Arch. ’76) practices law and architecture at his firm in Enterprise, Alabama. His architectural work is primarily modifying existing buildings for new occupancies such as restaurants and child care centers. His legal work is in general law, with an emphasis on family law.

William T. Eubanks (B.L.A. ’83) is an associate professor and director of the interior design program at Maryville University in St. Louis, Missouri. She was included among the Most Admired Educators for 2019 by DesignIntelligence. Maryville University’s interior design program is listed by DesignIntelligence in “Top Ranked Interior Design Schools in 12 Focus Areas.” Charles McKinney (B.Arch. ’81) received a 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This distinction is awarded annually in recognition of an alumnus or alumna for significant contributions to the architecture and design culture locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. McKinney spent 34 years as principal urban designer for New York City Parks and Recreation and now serves as a senior consultant to Biederman Redevelopment Ventures in New York and started the firm Practical Visionary. McKinney serves on the school’s Campaign Arkansas Steering Committee.

Mark Weaver (B.Arch. ’82), FAIA, received a 2018 Distinguished Service Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This distinction is awarded annually in recognition of a recipient’s significant contributions to the students and resources of the Fay Jones School, the university and the community. Weaver is principal and lead designer for HBG Design, the firm based in Memphis, Tennessee, and he rotated off of his career, 12 of which were spent serving on the board as a trustee and/or vice president. A recent project was the Mount Pleasant Town Hall in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, an all-new project built in three phases on the site of a previous town hall. The new structure features a predominantly glass rotunda for city council meetings, symbolizing transparency in government. A tree-framed vista connects the rotunda to the street, creating a large formal park area where civic events can take place. Local materials such as tabby paving, bluestone and brick were combined with indigenous plants—such as live oaks, red oak, turkey oak, bald cypress and palmetto—traditional plants such as crape myrtle and azalea—and less familiar plants—such as horsetail reed and switch grass—to frame and shape spaces and views.

The use of innovative stormwater techniques, such as bioswales, provides an example of an innovative project. The newly elected people who visit the town hall. Parking areas incorporate existing grand trees and introduce more diversity to the urban forest, with more than a dozen species used throughout the design. A bus stop connected to the park area includes a (relocated) covered pavilion, benches, trash and recycling containers and a custom swing under a trellis.

Latham & Watkins LLP. Courtesy of Nestor Santa-Cruz Ganster. An award-winning design director in Gensler’s Washington, D.C. office, Santa-Cruz specializes in interior design projects for law firms and professional services firms, as well as hospitality, residential and technology clients. He is currently working on projects located in the continental United States, the Middle East and Europe. A recent project was a complete renovation of the 250,000-square-foot Washington, D.C. office for the international law firm Alston & Watkins. The project received a 2018 AIA DC chapter Award of Excellence in Interior Architecture.

Another recent project was designing

Latham & Watkins LLP. Courtesy of Nestor Santa-Cruz Ganster, photo by Holkin Mason Photography.
Distinguished Service Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This distinction is awarded annually in recognition of a recipient’s significant contributions to the students and resources of the Fay Jones School, the university and the community. Talley became a founding principal of Talley Associates in Dallas, Texas, in 1993. Talley serves as co-chair of the school’s Campaign Arkansas Steering Committee as well as on its Dean’s Circle.

Jay Brizzolara (B.Arch. ’85) is a principal with WER Architects in the Little Rock office. A recent project was the renovation of the Heis Arc elementary and high school campuses, which included security upgrades for each campus, as well as a gym renovation and other miscellaneous improvements. Other current projects are the Active Learning Classroom on the first floor of the Ottenheimer Library on the University of Arkansas at Little Rock campus and a new pool and pool house project for Wildwood Place Park in Little Rock.

‘90s

Robert Linn (B.Arch. ’90) is a founding partner and principal with Moskov Linn Architects in Boston, Massachusetts. The firm was featured in a 2018 issue of Fayetteville Magazine’s Design Hall of Fame.

Mark Schnaerr (B.Arch. ’93) is a senior project manager with ANF Architects in Memphis, Tennessee, where he oversees projects for corporate clients.projects typically range in size from 1 million to 1,000 square feet, and they have included offices for clients such as eBay, PayPal, Northwestern Mutual and Takeda Pharmaceuticals. A recent project was the interior architecture for the Christian Brothers University campus. This new building replaced a circa 1939 building that couldn’t be reasonably adapted. The 40,000-square-foot research lab is the first step and design pivot point in the planned transformation of campus buildings from traditional to modern design. The idea was to morph the exterior from formal public side to a transparent, beckoning entrance facing the campus interior. A full-height, three-story glass curtain wall with an illuminated light well above existing toilet rooms. The project, which opened in September 2018, received the Best New Public Art Award in the Friends of Downtown’s 2018 Best of Downtown Awards. Schaad was featured in the November 2018 issue of Architectural Record. Another recent project was the interior architecture for the Northwestern Mutual Headquarters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The project consists of a new, two-block-long, 32-story addition to a historic 1914 Northwestern Mutual Headquarters, and it knits together three existing buildings into one cohesive campus. The 1.2 million-square-foot project includes a training center, multipurpose room, lecture hall, identity center, fitness center, large dining facility, executive conference center and 26 floors of office space. The LEED Gold building was featured in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in August 2017. Salisbury is an active member of the Chicago Construction Specifications Institute and serves on the CSI Rebuilding Together committee in partnership with Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago. Working with other organizations, members volunteer to raise money and renovate a different Chicago home each spring.

Mrinalini Rajagopalan (B.Arch. ’96) received a 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This distinction is awarded annually in recognition of a recipient’s significant contributions to the architecture and design culture locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Rajagopalan also holds a Master of Design in Critical, Curatorial and Curatorial Practice (University of Chicago Press, 2016). She is an associate professor of art history and director of graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She is an associate professor in the History of Art and Architecture department and director of graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She received a 2018 Alice Davis Hitchcock Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians for Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi (University of Chicago Press, 2016). Lindsay [Case] Wilson (B.S.H.E.S. ’85), RID, LEED AP +, is president and interiors manager at Corgan. She was named President at Corgan in 2018 and is the first female and first interior designer in the role of the firm’s 80-year history. She leads the firm’s culture and brand development as well as the firm’s marketing and public relations efforts.
Interiors Studio across the 10 U.S. offices, working closely with clients big and small, and, most recently, expanding the practice into the Atlanta and Los Angeles markets. Providing the design leadership and vision from her studio, she partners with her clients such as Fossil, Toyota, Neiman Marcus, Southwest Airlines and State Farm to understand how their workplace can best reflect their culture, challenge conventional thinking and transform their business. She was a 2018 International Interior Design Association Leadership Award of Excellence Honoree, and she received a 2013 Women in Business award from the Dallas Business Journal. A recent project was the Toyota North America Headquarters in Plano, Texas. She served as the interiors principal in charge for this 2.1 million-square-foot project that connected more than 4,000 associates in a campus comprised of 15 buildings – including office, fitness, healthcare and dining amenities – and facilities for training, community events, and research and development. The LEED Platinum design amplifies the “One Toyota” vision, encouraging discovery and collaboration while establishing a sustainable, unified identity for its occupants at this new north Texas location.

Prioritizing connectedness and movement, the campus situates 90 percent of the office space in direct daylight with outdoor views, balances a 50/50 ratio of shared and owned work areas, and carves approachable spaces into the expansive campus. This project won a 2018 CoreNet Black White & Blue Award for Workplace Strategy – New Construction and a 2018 ENR Texas and Louisiana Best Office/Retail/Mixed-Use Development Project: Merit Award. It also was winner of the D CEO, “Community Impact Deal of the Year” Award and a 2018 Urban Land Institute Impact Award, North Texas Chapter. It is the largest corporate office on-site solar installation among non-university companies in the state of Texas. Another recent project was the Mannington Commercial Customer Experience Center in Atlanta, Georgia. This new 12,815-square-foot showroom captures the company’s brand values through a beautiful and functional design that prioritizes the customer experience and how they engage with the brand. The concept embodies the inherent warmth of Mannington with touchless technology of Southern hospitality throughout. Customers enter a living room-inspired space with a large fireplace, soft pillows, comfortable fabrics, unfussy furnishings and a coffee bar. Creating a deliberate nod to the product, the clean space and native materials, including the concrete floors, function as a canvas backdrop, while separation between rooms allows natural daylight to flow into the museum-like space.

00s

Matt Mihalevich (B.L.A. ’01), a professional landscape architect, has worked as Fayetteville Trails Coordinator for the past 11 years. He is responsible for all aspects of the development of the trail system, including planning, funding, design, property acquisition, construction management, maintenance and public outreach. Mihalevich also serves as chairman of the Northwest Arkansas Active Transportation Committee and assists with the ongoing development of trails and bikeways throughout the region. He was involved in the development of the 37-mile-long Razorback Regional Greenway, the backbone trail connecting Northwest Arkansas from south Fayetteville to Bella Vista. Most recently, he has overseen the completion of the three-mile-long Cato Springs Trail extending the Razorback Regional Greenway southward to connect to Kessler Mountain Regional Park. It runs from the Town Branch Trail starting at Greathouse Park and continues southwest along the Cato Springs Branch to the regional park. The trail is a 12-foot-wide concrete shared-use path. It features the first trail bridge over a divided highway in Fayetteville, crossing over the Fullbright Expressway as well as two streams. A precast concrete tunnel, 12 feet wide and 16 feet high, was installed under Razorback Road, allowing trail users to safely and comfortably pass under the busy road. The trail was designed by the Fayetteville office of Garver, LLC and was made possible through support from the Walton Family Foundation.

Katie (Finnegan) Mihalevich (B.Arch. ’02) earned her architecture license in 2007. She is a licensed real estate agent with Coldwell Banker Harris McHaney & Faucette in Northwest Arkansas, where she uses her architectural background to help buyers and sellers meet their real estate goals. She also collaborates with her husband, Matt Mihalevich (B.L.A. ’01), on small design/build improvements to properties they own. She earned a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist designation in 2018 and is completing educational hours to become a licensed real estate broker in the state. She won the Rookie of the Year award from Coldwell Banker Harris McHaney & Faucette in 2016. She received the Amerihart Award from the Northwest Arkansas Board of Realtors for closing more than $3.8 million in sales in 2017, and she consistently receives five-star reviews from the clients she serves.

Chris Baribeau (B.Arch. ’03), Josh Siebert (B.Arch. ’02) and Jason Wright (B.Arch. ’04), partners at Modus Studio, received a 2018 Distinguished Young Alumni Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This is an annual distinction for an alumnus or alumna who has graduated in the last 15 years for significant contributions to the architecture and design culture locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The Modus-based firm was founded in 2008. Baribeau serves on the school’s Campaign Arkansas Steering Committee, and Siebert serves on the school’s Professional Advisory Board. Baribeau, Siebert and Wright were named 2018 Emerging Voices by the American Institute of Architects in Boston. The client’s goal for this 700-square-foot space was to engage the customer in every step of the process, from ordering to waiting to eating. The design concept revolved around establishing a connection between two distinct environments, the “Sushi Lab” where food is prepared and the “Beach” where customers eat. It received an Honorable Mention for Interior Design in the 2018 Fay Jones Alumni Design Awards competition held by the Fay Jones School (see p. 46) and a Boston Society from the University of Toronto in 2010. A current project is IQ Park, a 2-acre Toronto city park with a water feature, splash pad, playground, amphitheater, shade structure, boardwalk and open lawn areas. Another recent project is the Context West Urban Design Framework + Streetscape Plan for the city of Vaughan, Ontario. The master plan encompasses 420 acres and establishes the vision and design concepts for the development of a high-quality, sustainable and cohesive urban environment along two major corridors within the city. Mark Buan (B.Arch. ’03, cum laude) is director of special projects and on the faculty at Boston Architectural College in Boston, Massachusetts, where he provides administrative management, program management and curricular development specific to the School of Architecture’s professional practice course sequence. He also manages the school’s Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) program and serves as architect licensing advisor. Bukañatho, who teaches courses in fabrication, developed an online digital fabrication course being offered in spring 2019 in which students explore making through online communication and transfer of digital files, and outsourcing fabrication. He received a Master of Architecture from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design, with distinction, in 2013. A recent project was Sushi Kappo in Boston, Massachusetts, where he provides administrative outreach. Rukamathu, who earned a Master of Urban Design urban design. He received a Master of Architecture from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design, with distinction, in 2013. A recent project was Sushi Kappo in Boston, Massachusetts, where he provides administrative outreach.

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ReView: Winter 2018/Spring 2019

ALUMNI NEWS—

The original entry steps and ceramic tile terraces as High School National Historic Site focus on restoring elements that were still intact and were carefully completely renovated to combine new technologies. This award is given by the AIA to individuals who have shown exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the profession in an early stage of their architectural career (see p. 52).

ReView: Winter 2018/Spring 2019

Two other current projects at the Little Rock Central Register the National is listed on 2001 and that focusing on historic preservation. A recent project was a modern wedding chapel and event hall for Osage House in Cave Springs. The 9,000-square-foot project, designed to have timeless appeal, holds nearly 1,000 visitors in the main space and 299 in the chapel.

100s

Tatoo Gatero (B.Arch. ‘10) received a 2018 Distinguished Young Alumni Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This is an annual distinction for an alumnus or alumna who has graduated in the last 15 years for significant contributions to the architecture and design culture locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Gatero is the Builder Operations Director for Otkristudio in Nairobi, Kenya.

Belle Fleming (B.L.A. ’11) received a 2018 Distinguished Young Alumni Award from the Fay Jones School (see p. 13). This is an annual distinction for an alumnus or alumna who has graduated in the last 15 years for significant contributions to the architecture and design culture locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Fleming is a registered architect in Illinois.

 downloadable study space with the University of Memphis School of Architecture, he regularly attends design workshops, serves on final review juries and offers a professional voice on critiques and project development for students in all years of architecture education. He volunteers annually for Architecture Summer Camp, a joint initiative of the University of Memphis and AIA Memphis. He volunteers regularly throughout the Memphis community as a vocal advocate for the value of architecture. Following his community-driven design advocacy work with the Soulsville revisioning plan, he was invited to join the Memphis in a Box Project, a three-year project to create a 20-year master plan for the city. He is involved in a number of community organizations that promote architecture and the profession and serve as advocates for livable and sustainable communities. He is a member of the Memphis Heritage, the U.S. Green Building Council, the Memphis College of Arts and the Urban Land Institute.

Trinity Simons (B.Arch. ’04) is the executive director for the Mayors’ Institute on City Design in Washington, D.C., a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors. The institute helps transform communities through design by preparing mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities. Simons and her team provide technical assistance workshops in which mayors learn from varied experts – such as architects, urban planners, policymakers, artists, real estate developers, landscape architects, transportation engineers and housing specialists – how to tackle some of the most difficult design challenges facing their cities. She and her team were named a finalist for a 2018 Route 50 Navigator Award in the Allies category for “An Urban Design Boot Camp for City Leaders.” The annual award honors public and private initiatives that are helping local and state governments function more effectively throughout the United States.

Masoom Ellis (B.Arch. ’06) is an architect and project manager with WER Architects in Little Rock, focusing on historic preservation. A recent project was the Garland Elementary School Renovation, a 1924 elementary school that was closed in 2001 and that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 37,000-square-foot, two-story structure was completely renovated to combine new technologies and finishes with many of the original historical elements that were still intact and were carefully restored, such as wood trusses and lightheads. The school is scheduled to reopen for the 2019-2020 school year. Two other current projects at the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site focus on restoring the original entry steps and ceramic tile terraces as well as installing new windows on the front façade to replicate the original 1927 windows, based on historical drawings and photographs.

Patty Opitz (B.Arch. ’04), a senior associate architect at Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects in Little Rock, has been selected by the American Institute of Architects as a 2019 Young Architects Award recipient. This award is given by the AIA to individuals who have shown exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the profession in an early stage of their architectural career (see p. 52).

Memphis Slim Collaboratory. Photo by Ken West Photography

Memphis Slim Collaboratory is a 21st-century center for learning and design by preparing mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities. Simons and her team provide technical assistance workshops in which mayors learn from varied experts – such as architects, urban planners, policymakers, artists, real estate developers, landscape architects, transportation engineers and housing specialists – how to tackle some of the most difficult design challenges facing their cities. She and her team were named a finalist for a 2018 Route 50 Navigator Award in the Allies category for “An Urban Design Boot Camp for City Leaders.” The annual award honors public and private initiatives that are helping local and state governments function more effectively throughout the United States.

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Chris Baribeau included Josh Siebert Award from AIA Arkansas. The project team also designed standards. The project received a 2018 Merit Award from the AIA Arkansas Chapter. The restaurant project was Komodo, a 6,000-square-foot remodel of the former Mellow Mushroom restaurant space for the modern Asian restaurant in Rogers. The design twisted the concept of the private dining experience by placing the main “private” rooms in the center of the restaurant, rather than the perimeter. Telescopic glass doors and custom screen dividers, along with double-sided curtains, create multiple types of dining experiences. The layers of transparency provide privacy when needed but still allow the spaces to interact as a whole. Cook worked with an interior designer, Sarah Pennington, who did much of the work selecting furniture and fabrics, and also assisted with some installations throughout the project.

Another recent project was the remodel of an office building for Blew and Associates, a civil engineering and surveying firm, in Fayetteville. This included a remodel of a 10,704-square-foot space (formerly Ryan’s Steakhouse) with a second-floor addition of 5,857 square feet. The existing kitchen was removed, and the first floor was made into one large open work space. Stepping back, the second-floor exterior walls from the existing first-floor walls allowed the new structure to be placed without disturbing the old and created interest in an otherwise flat façade. The use of only three exterior scales. She obtained her architecture license in Arkansas in April 2018 and received a National Council of Architectural Registration Boards certificate in May 2018. She serves on the council’s Re-Thinking Tank committee for recently licensed architects in 2019. A recent project was the Graceland Chapel in the Woods in Memphis, Tennessee, a new addition to the Elvis Presley entertainment complex at Graceland. The 2,593-square-foot wedding chapel sits on a lightly wooded site, connected to the Graceland Guesthouse by a walking path. The design inspiration came from Elvis’ childhood home in Tupelo, Mississippi.

frames views out to the woods, with siding that wraps into the interior walls and connects the exterior and interior design elements. Large trusses in the main chapel space bring a touch of complexity, while simple details provide relief on the walls, ceilings, and floors. The study and living area are located off the main area. Both projects were designed in collaboration with Mark Weaver (B.Arch. ’82). Another recent project was the 4,427-square-foot Avision Young office, a project that required alterations to and renovation of a single tenant space in an east Memphis office building. The bright, modern office features both open collaboration spaces and enclosed offices. All offices and meeting rooms have varying amounts of visibility into and through the space. At the client’s request, designers used a green turf product on the long path in front of the individual offices to provide a space for putting golf balls.
Emily Baker presented a Digital Steel workshop and lectures at South Dakota State University in fall 2017. She received $50,000 to begin research at the University of Arkansas and a position in the school’s Build Lab to set up the Digital Steel Lab, which includes a CNC plasma table and other tools for manipulating steel. Her abstract “Spin-Va lence: Serious Play to Space Frame” was accepted into the International Association for Shell and Spatial Structures symposium, held in 2018 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. She is an architect and educator whose full-scale constructed experimentation informs her creative work and teaching. Baker (B.Arch. ’04) joined the Fay Jones School as an assistant professor of architecture in fall 2017. She previously taught at Tulane University. She received a Master of Architecture from Cranbrook Academy of Art.


Jessica Colangelo joined the Fay Jones School as an assistant professor of architecture in fall 2018. She is a designer and co-founder of the architecture and research practice Somewhere Studio. Her current work explores the intersection of architecture and culture through questioning current modes of architectural representation, urbanism and sustainability. She previously taught as an assistant professor at Texas Tech University and practiced architecture at Farivar, Kimball, Blackwell and Associates in California, Boston, Massachusetts, and Houston, Texas. She received a Master of Architecture from Princeton University, where she was awarded the Suzanne Kolari Underwood Thesis Prize, and a Bachelor of Architecture from Rice University, where she received the American Institute of Architects School Medal.

Jonathan Boelkins received a 2017 Honor Award in the Community Colleges category for his project “The Iconic and the Everyday: Creative Finland.” This project was exhibited at the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C. Photo by Aaron Kimberlin

Texas; Auburn University Rural Studio, in Newbern, Alabama; Florida International University, in Miami; University of North Carolina at Charlotte and American University in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. He also presented lectures for AIA Cleveland (Ohio); Archamazon in Miami, Florida; Brickworks International Speaker Series in Sydney, Brisbane, Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, Australia; and University of Miami; AIA National convention breaks in Orlando, Florida; CSI Memphis BUILD/IT Conference, in Memphis, Tennessee; Dallas Architecture Forum, in Dallas, Texas; and Adjoin: Masters of a Generation, in San Diego, California. He served on the design awards jury for AIA Cleveland (as chair) and AIA Santa Barbara, and he was a visiting critic for final design reviews at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in fall 2017.


Murphy Edman has demonstrated excellence through artistic vision and design, leadership and service to the state and chapter, and who is held in high regard by the profession and community at large. His Fayetteville-based firm, Marlon Blackwell Architects, received a 2018 National AIA Honor Award for Architecture for Vol Walker Hall and the Steven L. Anderson Design Center (see p. 8). This marked the first AIA Honor Award given to a U of A campus facility. His firm was ranked No. 2 among the Top 50 Firms in Design in 2017 by Architect Magazine. The 2013 renovation of a former exercise center for WelcomeHealth: Northwest Arkansas’ Free Health Center was featured in Design for Good: A New Era of Architecture for Everyone, published in 2017 by Island Press and written by John Cary with an introduction by Melinda Gates. The 280-page volume demonstrates the power of good design to enhance dignity and quality of life for people on the low end of the socio-economic spectrum. Construction was completed in 2017 on the Flyrite Chicken Prototype Restaurant in Austin, Texas, as well as the Lamplight School in Dallas, Texas, which included an innovation lab, a lab students building, the reconstruction of a barn, and campus improvements. His firm’s projects won two awards in the 2017 AIA Arkansas Design awards program. The Graphic House in Fayetteville received an Honor Award, and the Harvey Pediatric Clinic in Rogers received a Merit Award. The project team included alumni Spencer Curtis (B.Arch. ’14) and Stephen Revenga (B.Arch. ’13). Blackwell presented projects in Berlin, Germany; Miami, Florida; and Memphis, Tennessee, in 2017. He coauthored “Heart of the Park Architecture” with Jonathan Boelkins, a chapter published in Shelby Farms Park: Creating a City (Susan Schadt Press, 2017). With Tanzia Shafique, he coauthored “Contexts,” a chapter for New Essentialism: Material Architecture (ORO Editions, 2017). His work was featured in the “Figures and Types” exhibition at Middletown College in Vermont and in the “An Anatomy of Abstraction in a Landscape of Unholy Unions” exhibition in the Amarillo Art Museum in Texas. Blackwell was an invited lecturer at Middlebury College, in Middlebury Vermont; Texas Tech University, in Lubbock, Texas, in October 2017. He was an invited reviewer for fifth-year studio projects at Mississippi State University in December 2017.

Jessica Colangelo joined the Fay Jones School as an assistant professor of architecture in fall 2018. She is a designer and co-founder of the architecture and research practice Somewhere Studio. Her current work explores the intersection of architecture and culture through questioning current modes of architectural representation, urbanism and sustainability. She previously taught as an assistant professor at Texas Tech University and practiced architecture at Farivar, Kimball, Blackwell and Associates in California, Boston, Massachusetts, and Houston, Texas. She received a Master of Architecture from Princeton University, where she was awarded the Suzanne Kolari Underwood Thesis Prize, and a Bachelor of Architecture from Rice University, where she received the American Institute of Architects School Medal.

Kimball Edman received a 2017 Honor Award in the Community Colleges category for his project “The Iconic and the Everyday: Creative Finland.” This project was exhibited at the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C. Photo by Aaron Kimberlin


Kim Furlong and Tahar Messadi received a $5,000 grant from the U of A Teaching and Faculty Support Center for their proposal, “A Cluster Model of Education for Interdisciplinary Companies in Arkansas.” Along with Messadi, she presented “Collaborative Studio Re-Imagining Wood Design and Construction” at the Association for Collegiate Schools of Architecture’s Annual Conference in San Antonio in October 2017. “Wood Design Education: Looking Forward” at the Mass Timber Seminar at the University of Arkansas in December 2017, and “Innovation in Sustainable Wood Design through Interdisciplinary Collaboration” at the Environmental Designers Research Association National Conference in Oklahoma City in June 2018. Furlong worked with students who designed and constructed the second and third phases of the MatLab Exhibit System in fall 2017 and spring 2018. She served as the liaison between the Fay Jones School and the American Society of Interior Design South Central Chapter for the annual design summit held on the U of A campus in spring 2018.

Greg Herman presented a paper, “Fay Before Frank: Educating Architects at the Fay Jones School,” at the Southeastern Society of Architectural Historians National Conference in Lynchburg, Virginia, in October 2017. He received an $84,000 Chancellor’s Discovery Creativity, Innovation, and Collaboration Fund Grant, along with the University of Arkansas Tesserart Center for Visualization, to develop a website and related tools to make Fay Jones’ residential designs and accessible to the public. He worked as an investigator, along with Noah Billig, on a $20,000 contract looking at community values related to Hot Springs’ Historic District. He continued to serve as the director of the Fay and Gus Jones Design Center at the University of Arkansas. An essay by Amanda Slovensky titled “Designing 21st Century Commemorative Spaces: Lessons from the National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park,” in September 2017 in the Architecture and Design Network’s June Freeman Lecture Series. Her exhibition “Into the Woods” was selected for the 2018 International Garden Festival in Chatsworth, U.K., was on display in the Kunsthaus Zurich and ended in November 2018. Her paper “Toward a Future Agrarian Urbanism” was published in Places Journal in August 2017. Her paper “What Doesn’t Kill You,” which was co-authored with Thomas Oles, was published in JA+ Interdisciplinary Journal of Landscape Architecture in fall 2017. She served as a reviewer for Landscape Research Record and for the Journal of Educators in Landscape Architecture in 2017. With her professional partner and Eyre-Sandlin Architects, LLC, she did the design and restoration of Hanceville Farm, a 78-acre horse farm in Hanceville, Alabama. She also did the courtyard and 1-acre landscape design for a new residence, Shaw Residence, in Fayetteville, which was a collaboration with Marlon Blackwell Architects. She is now an associate professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin.

Peter MacKeith organized and moderated an informal discussion between U of A Chancellor Joseph Steinmetz and Juhani Pallasmaa, the Fay Jones Distinguished Visiting Professor. The discussion, titled “On Education and Collaboration,” took place in April 2018 in Vol Walker Hall. Jonathan Boelkins and MacKeith co-authored “The Iconic and the Everyday: Creative Finland in America,” which MacKeith presented at the Interior Design Educators Council annual meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, in March 2018. The exhibition “The Iconic and the Everyday: Creative Finland in America” was designed by Boelkins and MacKeith and was curated by MacKeith, and it was displayed at the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C., in 2017.

Marty Matlock, director of the University of Arkansas Resiliency Center in the Fay Jones School, received the 2018 Borlaug CAST Communication Award from the U.S. Council for Agricultural Science and Technology in April 2018. The Resiliency Center expands understanding of the resilience of agricultural and forestry systems that support economic and social prosperity for Arkansas and the world. The selection committee of the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology recognized Matlock for his abilities to synthesize complex issues into simple concepts that resonate with his target audience. At the Sustainable Agriculture Summit, Matlock also co-led a strategy session regarding resilience in food systems and vegetable supply chains. About 500 diverse stakeholders from across the food and agricultural supply chains attended the summit, held in November 2017 in Kansas City.(

Janet Foxman joined the Fay Jones School as a special publications editor in fall 2017. She is a poet and editor. Most recently, she worked as a senior production editor for Oxford University Press, a Bachelor of Arts in English and art history from Wellesley College and a Master of Arts in creative writing from Boston University. Her first collection of poems is “Disposable Camera,” published by University of Nebraska Press. She was a 2017-2018 Fulbright Scholar in the future home of the U.S. Marshals Museum. Luoni was a speaker and panelist for “How Design Thinking Improves Cities,” Civic I/0 at the SXSW Interactive Festival, South by SouthWest Conference in Austin, Texas. He was a resource team member for the Scenario Planning Workshop at the conference. He presented “Regional Introductions” at the Housing Northwest Arkansas Regional Symposium, hosted by the Safe and Stable Housing Alliance, on February 2018 (see p. 6). He was a speaker and panelist for “Design for the Public Realm” at the 2017 AIA Oklahoma Annual Design Conference in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He was the keynote speaker, presenting “Resilience and Drivers of Change: Wicked Problems,” at the 2017 AIA North Carolina Annual Design Conference in Wilmington. He served as a Housing Community for Resiliency Conference speaker at the 2017 NWA Regional Planning Commission. He was a jury chair and competition brief editor for the 2017-2018 Designing Healthy Places Student Competition for the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture and the National Endowment for the Arts. He was an external promotion reviewer at the University of Michigan and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

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A Office for Sustainability and U of A’s Resiliency Center, won a 2018 Green Good Design Award from the European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design. The project was also shortlisted for the 2017 Award for Future Projects Master Planning, both at the World Architecture Festival. The “Conway Urban Watershed Framework Plan,” a joint project with the U of A Office for Sustainability, won a 2018 Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design from The American Institute of Architects, as well as a 2017 LafargeHolcim Award from the LafargeHolcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction in Zurich, Switzerland. The “Greens Ferry Water Garden Master Plan,” a collaboration with Marlon Blackwell Architects and the Ecological Design Group, was shortlisted for the 2017 Award for Future Projects Master Planning at the World Architecture Festival, received a 2017 Citation Award from AIA Arkansas and received a 2017 Unique Contribution to Planning Award from the Arkansas chapter of the American Planning Association. Luoni and the center’s staff were commissioned by the Endeavor Foundation to prepare the Willow Heights Housing Liability Improvement Plan for the housing complex owned by the Fayetteville Housing Authority (see p. 16). The Willow Heights Housing Plan won a 2018 Unique Contribution to Planning Award from the Arkansas chapter of the American Planning Association. An exhibition of the project models and drawings was displayed at the Fayetteville Public Library in summer 2018. “Public Porches: Farmington, AR” won Third Place and “The Creative Corridor,” a collaboration with Marlon Blackwell Architects, received an Honorable Mention, both in the AIAA Biennial 50th Architecture, at the Amastudio Museum of Art in Texas. “Slow Street: A New Town Center for Mayflower, Arkansas” received a 2017 Honor Award for Planning and Analysis from the Arkansas chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Luoni and the center’s staff also did research and design work for the New Beginnings Homeless Transition Village, a transitional housing community in Fayetteville for unsheltered homeless singles lacking access to affordable housing and formal...
Andrew Saunders, associate professor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, noticed that his students were struggling to grasp Baroque architecture, and he needed a teaching tool to help them learn.

As he considered possible solutions, he developed an idea and a grant proposal. Saunders wanted to use laser scanning technology to scan Italian Baroque churches. By using a laser scanner, he would use his entire budget, so Saunders reached out to FARO, a company that makes the LIDAR scanners. They offered to train him to use the scanners and let him borrow one for a month in Italy. After receiving the grant in 2015, Saunders, a 1998 graduate of the Fay Jones School, immediately reached out to Dante Vitali, professor and director of the U of A Rome Center, with a list of about 30 churches he’d like to scan in Turin and Rome.

“One of the layers you don’t usually see is the connections that have to be made in order to get permission to go into these,” Saunders said. “It’s not something you just accomplish with Italians via email.”

However, Saunders had a solid network of individuals he’d met and worked with on previous trips to Rome. Those contacts came through, and he was able to scan about 20 canonical Baroque spaces, which were all included in the “Baroque Topologies” exhibition that was displayed in Vol Walker Hall in fall 2018. He also gave a public lecture about the project as part of the school’s fall lecture series.

Saunders scanned churches from specific Baroque architects Francesco Borromini, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Girolamo and Carlo Rainaldi, Pietro da Cortona, Guiseppe Guarino and Bernardo Vittone. After scanning the churches, he faced another challenge in processing the data. Each scan produced millions and millions of points of data, called point clouds. Saunders and his research assistants, Ariel Cooke-Zamora and Kurt Nelson, worked with Autodesk to process the data and compile it into meshes, which they turned into digital models. Each computation took three or four days to process.

“They’re about 50 gigs each, so they’re like digital anvils,” Saunders said.

One of the governing principles of “Baroque Topologies” is to show the churches in new ways. The pieces in the exhibition allow people to see the interior of the churches from an exterior point of view.

“We want to dematerialize these and show them in ways they’ve never been seen before, not try to recreate the experience of going into them,” Saunders said.

Historically, when people have analyzed Baroque architecture, they’ve focused on geometry and abstracted the designs down to lines or compositions. However, that method leaves out figuration, layers and light—the very things that differentiate Baroque architecture. Saunders said this method is a better way to see and represent spaces because it puts the architects on a more equal plane.

Although the project focuses on Baroque architecture, Saunders said it’s also about representation and how to use the technology.

“How do we work with it as designers, as architects?” Saunders said. “Not just using the survey as a verification or measurement tool, but how do we really understand it representationally?”

He said the exhibition format is one of the best ways to see the work, because it allows people to connect with and inhabit the drawings.

The project, which had dozens of collaborators over the course of several years, came about in part through Saunders’ time at the U of A Rome Center and the connections he made there. Saunders said his experiences as an architecture student helped propel him to where he is today—a tenure-track professor in the midst of this massive digital project.

One of the biggest influences came when he took a course co-taught by Mark Blackwell and Peter Eisenman. He later worked as a teaching assistant for Eisenman and was offered a position at his firm, Eisenman Architects. There, he did a lot of early pioneering digital work, which gave him a different skillset that afforded him agility within the field.

Saunders said going to Rome was another huge influence, and it allowed him to forge those connections with Vitali. Years later, while he was teaching a studio in Italy for second-year undergraduate students at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, he reconnected with Vitali, who introduced him to the publisher Palombi Editori. Editori was interested in the work Saunders was doing analyzing the Baroque churches with his students, which set the stage for “Baroque Topologies.”

Saunders said one of the benefits of working with Baroque architecture is that it captures the interest of so many different people beyond just architects and designers.

Now, Saunders is looking to share the research and make it available on a broader scale. His book Baroque Topologies was published by Editori and is now available online.
Get our new FAY View email newsletter. Send your current email to Michelle Parks: mparks17@uark.edu