The Practical Imagination: Design Thinking and the Other 50%

No. 28 A Publication of the University of Virginia School of Architecture Summer 2014
Irene DeShong Professor in Design and Health, co-directed by Tim Beatley and Reuben Rainey, and the Community Design and Research Initiative. To manage the growing formalized research culture, I appointed the School’s first associate dean for research, Phoebe Crisman, who was succeeded by Louis Nelson last year.

**International Engagement**

Recognizing the global reach of our graduates, in 2011 I appointed the first Weedon Professor in Asian Architecture, Shiqiao Li. He now leads summer programs in China following decades of leadership by Yunsheng Huang. Pankaj Vir Gupta, BS/Arch ’93, who lectured and shared his exhibit — Gondola — with us in 2011, has been named the Harry S. Shure Visiting Professor and will help establish a summer study program in India. The School’s work in “Africa in Diaspora,” including the Caribbean and the southern United States along with the African continent, continues to grow as participating faculty members learn from the cultural production of this important population. The Veneto has been a crucial and longstanding source of inspiration for the School. Cammy Brothers, the Mario di Valmarana Chair, has worked hard to re-establish a semester-long program in Venice following a long hiatus. With Louis Nelson’s leadership, the A-School has formalized its approach to the Semester at Sea program, to be used for longitu-

dinal research by our faculty. Here in Charlottesville, meanwhile, we have made a series of international hires, including faculty members from Spain, South Korea, Austria, and Canada.

**The Practical Imagination**

Finally, my last issue of Colonnade is devoted to showcasing the work of our faculty, students, and alumni in their utilization of design thinking and innovation. I hope you enjoy learning more about their inspiring work on the following pages.

Five years ago, during my hiring interview, I observed that leading a prominent school such as ours is a relay race, not a sprint. No single person can ever take full credit for our many collective successes. It has been my privilege to lead our faculty, staff, and students, and to represent our global network of alumni, friends, family, and donors. With great pride and good wishes, I now pass the baton.

Sincerely,

Kim Tanzer FAIA, DPACSA
Dean and Edward E. Elson Professor of Architecture

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**Letter from the Dean**

As I write, the academic year is coming to a close along with my term as dean of the School of Architecture. The past five years have been productive and exciting, and I leave my post proud of all we have accomplished together.

Those of you who read Colonnade have had a front-
row seat as we advanced the agenda we set for the School. When my tenure as dean began, I identified several overarching goals that I hoped would position the A-School to lead the environmental design professions in the new millennium. These goals included: a focus on interdisciplinary, team-driven research; our now-approved Ph.D. in the constructed environment; a renewed and expanded emphasis on international engagement; and a new approach to aligning School efforts with Thomas Jefferson’s work that leading a prominent school such as ours is a relay race, not a sprint. No single person can ever take full credit for our many collective successes. It has been my privilege to lead our faculty, staff, and students, and to represent our global network of alumni, friends, family, and donors. With great pride and good wishes, I now pass the baton.

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**Sincerely,**

Kim Tanzer FAIA, DPACSA
Dean and Edward E. Elson Professor of Architecture
Crowdsourcing Colonnade

For this year’s Colonnade magazine, the School sent a questionnaire to 45 alumni with a wide range of careers, backgrounds, degrees, and experiences — asking them how they go about solving problems, which faculty member inspired them to think creatively, and how their design thinking education from the School of Architecture has helped them succeed in their current jobs and everyday life. We extended a similar survey to the A-School community in an email sent in February 2014. Everyone was asked to submit three words, which you will find throughout this issue:

Describe yourself with an adjective
Describe your work with a verb
Describe your A-School experience/education in a word

Thanks to all the participants — alumni, faculty, students, staff, family, and friends — for sharing your memories, updates, advice, and hopes for the future of the A-School.
An Introduction to the Other 50%

Kim Tanzer FAIA, DPACSA
Dean and Edward E. Elson Professor of Architecture

When I began meeting graduates of the A-School five years ago, it quickly became apparent that we have an extraordinarily accomplished, committed, and connected alumni base. It also became clear that not all of our alumni’s careers are linear extensions of their academic training. This is not surprising — over our lifetimes, our interests change and the economy challenges us to move in different directions. More importantly, however, as this Colonnade issue seeks to make clear, an A-School education is excellent preparation for many pursuits beyond traditional design and planning professions.

The fact that design education leads to many careers is not unique to our time or to the University of Virginia. A commonly cited national statistic indicates that 50% of the people who graduate from architecture schools do not go into professional practice. As dean, I quickly began referring to this cohort as “the other 50%,” to formally recognize these alumni’s choices and celebrate their equally admirable successes on behalf of the A-School.

Design Is the New Black

Several years before I came to U.Va., I served as president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), where I helped champion the importance of design thinking and advocated that schools of architecture should take a leadership role in this important national dialogue. I made this case in my February 2008 ACSA President’s Column, excerpted below:

Design is the foundation of our method of inquiry — we must understand it better, improve it, and disseminate it effectively to our students, within the academy, and throughout society. . . . I have seen many circumstances align to position our discipline well within our universities and to society: . . . In short, science, engineering, business, fine arts, and the popular media have recently, and very publicly, embraced design. How is the discipline of architecture participating in this cognitive realignment?

Most of us would agree that design is the center of our schools’ cultures, and that we have been teaching and practicing design, as currently understood, for decades if not centuries. But, speaking for a moment of individual institutions, is yours promoting your expertise to colleagues across campus and within your community? Does this larger community know what you do? Do they solicit your help to design your campus, to learn how to teach studios, or to participate in grants? . . .

When I started architecture school, there were discussions of the “black box,” referring to the computer and to the fact that we understood its input and its output, but not how it processed information. The black box served as a visual metaphor for the magical but invisible process of turning information into zeros and ones and returning them in a different form.

Looking back, and recalling that this was the waning of the first phase of design methods research, I wonder if the black box wasn’t a form of collective projection. Did we know then, or do we know now, how design works? Since the first wave of design research, other disciplines have developed tools that might prove helpful to us. . . .

We will need to understand the mechanics of design thinking well, and communicate them clearly, to capitalize on the fortuitous position in which we find ourselves. . . .

I suggest that if members of our discipline remain content to enjoy this powerful mode of action individually, and to share it only with our disciplinary peers, we will miss a once in a lifetime opportunity to place architecture and design at the center of society’s concerns.

A Jeffersonian “Riff” on Design Thinking: Toward a Curriculum in the Practical Imagination

Combining my own passion and sense of urgency for promoting design thinking with the evidence of its effectiveness in so many A-School alumni, I set about shaping a proposal that would resonate with the larger U.Va. community. As it so often the case, Mr. Jefferson’s legacy pointed the way. During a visit to Monticello, I saw a comparison between the way Francis Bacon and Thomas Jefferson organized knowledge. Their tripartite divisions became the basis for my argument, which I presented to the University leadership and the A-School community in a 2010 white paper. Quoting directly from that paper:

Francis Bacon, the 17th-century philosopher, divided knowledge into three parts: Memory, Reason, and Imagination. Thomas Jefferson, following Mr. Bacon’s work, divided his own library into three sections, which he titled History, Philosophy, and Fine Arts. . . Mr. Jefferson’s library formed the foundation for the Library of Congress. Due to the persuasive power of Mr. Bacon’s work, and that of his contemporary Rene Descartes, much of the intellectual effort of the last three hundred years has been devoted to the pursuit of reason . . . focused on determining the cause of that which exists.
6 An Introduction to the Other 50% Colonnade

An Introduction to the Other 50% Colonnade

Left to atrophy in this quest for certainty has been the important role of imagination — that which has long been considered the "other 50%." Indeed, the fine arts, including architecture and oratory along with theater, painting, dance, and music, too often have been characterized as the self-expression of individual geniuses, only appreciated by connoisseurs. This proposal seeks to resuscitate the important third branch of Mr. Bacon's and Mr. Jefferson's organization of the world's knowledge, through the creation of a curriculum in practical imagination.

Imagination can be generally defined as (1) the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality; (2) creative ability, the ability to confront and deal with a problem, the thinking or active mind; or (3) a creation of the mind or a fanciful or empty assumption (www.merriam-webster.com). In current times, imagination is too often aligned with the third definition. . . . But the first definition, suggesting the ability to envision the future, or to make connections between unlikely things, holds underexplored promise. It is this use of the term imagination that suggests new avenues for interdisciplinary teaching and research at the University of Virginia.

The phrase "practical imagination" is a catchphrase, or purposefully mixed metaphor. . . . While imagination is often viewed as impractical, the practical is too often unimaginative. The (proposed) Curriculum in Practical Imagination seeks to celebrate the paradox and, in so doing, find a way to move past the regrettable dichotomy that often splits art from science, leaving both impoverished. The phrase "practical imagination" is a catachresis, or purposefully mixed metaphor. . . . While imagination is often viewed as impractical, the practical is too often unimaginative. The (proposed) Curriculum in Practical Imagination seeks to celebrate the paradox and, in so doing, find a way to move past the regrettable dichotomy that often splits art from science, leaving both impoverished. The phrase "practical imagination" is a catachresis, or purposefully mixed metaphor. . . . While imagination is often viewed as impractical, the practical is too often unimaginative. The (proposed) Curriculum in Practical Imagination seeks to celebrate the paradox and, in so doing, find a way to move past the regrettable dichotomy that often splits art from science, leaving both impoverished. The phrase "practical imagination" is a catachresis, or purposefully mixed metaphor. . . . While imagination is often viewed as impractical, the practical is too often unimaginative. The (proposed) Curriculum in Practical Imagination seeks to celebrate the paradox and, in so doing, find a way to move past the regrettable dichotomy that often splits art from science, leaving both impoverished. The phrase "practical imagination" is a catachresis, or purposefully mixed metaphor.
For the past five years, I have been teaching design thinking in the School of Architecture as a component of the arts administration (ARAD) program. Advancing the belief that the most valuable citizen is the creative thinker, this fruitful pairing provides new opportunities for engaged learning while illustrating artistic problem solving using real-world experiences.

ARAD is an interdisciplinary, naturally collaborative field that combines the tools of community building (education, development, outreach, voluntarism, public policy, and partnerships) with the tools of business (management, marketing, financial accounting, operations, and negotiation) to facilitate human creativity and develop vibrant, creative cultures. The field functions at the metaphorical crossroads of the creative process and its audience or marketplace.

Design thinking is an interdisciplinary and collaborative process at a crossroads of its own, combining the core human value of empathy (and empathy’s essential tool of mindfulness) with the breadth and openness derived by employing studio or laboratory techniques of discovery from various domains. The important technique of abductive reasoning (“leaps of logic”) reveals core issues or underlying roots of circumstances and involves a process of idea creation common to the arts and to design practice. This process leads to prototypes, iteration, further prototypes, and eventually an outcome.

The A-School’s ARAD and design thinking programs are, to our knowledge, unique nationally. Since the School’s founding in 2011, both have been under the umbrella of the School’s curriculum in practical imagination, whose strength lies in the weaving together of ideas and approaches. The signature of the curriculum is a spring course series called The Arts in Context. With a different context each year, the series demonstrates the arts’ intermingling with seemingly disparate fields such as arts and medicine, arts and public policy, etc. Students learn with U.Va. faculty members from across Grounds, and from visiting lecturers in the arts and other guests.

Commonalities between design thinking and ARAD include the following:
- Both are interdisciplinary by nature
- Both require a wide-open mind, of which creative artists can be prime exemplars
- Both engage theory and practice as well as aesthetics and practical results
- Both utilize temporary communities, as with an architect’s design-build team or the cast for a stage or screen production
- Both apply in for-profit and nonprofit contexts

These attributes have many parallels in architectural practice. Creative people like architects are purposeful changemakers and often disrupters. Innovators like design thinkers often go their own way and consequently need a supportive community to succeed. Arts administrators offer the skills of creating such a community on others’ behalf.

Today, examples abound of an emerging sharing economy in which goods and services are obtained in ways that are no longer subject to market forces. Including both nonprofit and for-profit contexts in our ARAD and design thinking courses prepares students for a future economy whose contours are still emerging.

The New Architectural Design Thinking Concentration: A Broader Call to Design

—Anselmo Canfora

Associate Professor, Department of Architecture; Director, Architectural Design Thinking Concentration

As we approach the U.Va. School of Architecture’s centennial, its students, staff, faculty, and administrators are focused on the challenges we face as an increasingly interconnected and globalized society in the 21st century. The School’s new B.S. in architectural studies with a design thinking concentration enables our students to study open, complex problems in critical ways, with the goal of proposing relevant solutions valuable to the public. A design thinking approach involves the synthesis of analytical methods and creative insights to drive toward centered solutions: It leverages our capacities to imagine potential scenarios from “novel standpoints” and, in turn, frame critical relationships connecting working principles through iterative tests.

Ken Robinson, an internationally acclaimed professor emeritus of arts education at the University of Warwick, defines creativity as “the imaginative process with outcomes in the public world.” Aligned with this notion is our own fundamental pedagogical objective: enabling the expansion of students’ creative capacities to serve the public good.

The School’s diverse work across all four departments demonstrates the spirit of “collaboration, multiple perspectives, and coordinated action”1 central to design thinking, and the new concentration expands on existing interdisciplinary connections. The design thinking track also reaches beyond the School by developing and building on partnerships across Grounds.

Components of the Design Thinking Curriculum

The design thinking curriculum is structured such that students take first- and second-year courses in common with those in the preprofessional concentration. They also share important coursework in the third and fourth years, including architectural history and visualization electives. However, in these last two years, students also explore intellectually broad topics, including entrepreneurship and economics, leadership and community engagement, and global sustainability.

The new concentration features a sequence of four design thinking studios beginning the fall term of the third year, culminating in an Independent Research Design Studio in the spring of the fourth year. These studios focus on complex, systemic design investigations — ranging from large-scale, informal settlements to vulnerabilities of coastal ecosystems, to human habitation of remote sites affected by climate change. The design of objects at the human scale or smaller will also be considered (e.g., sensing technologies to control environmental and life-safety systems for populations “aging in place”).

Important to the new concentration is the requirement of a minor in or outside the A-School. This component reinforces an integrative approach between the humanities and the sciences, and allows for wide-ranging explorations of architectural design applications. It also enables students to further design their own education and create new paths to career goals.

A Compelling Option

The new design thinking concentration offers a compelling option for combining disciplinary research methods in service of co-creation, co-experimentation, and co-production of innovative solutions. Renowned designer Bruce Mau challenges us to “jump the fences and cross the fields [that have historically bound] complex, evolutionary processes.” Foundational first- and second-year courses prepare A-School students to meet this challenge and work closely with peers in business, commerce, education, engineering, medicine, and the environmental and social sciences. In the process, our students benefit from a broader set of perspectives as they learn to identify and propose problem-solving strategies. At the same time, students are taught the core competencies and creative expressions essential to a comprehensive architectural education.

It is inspiring that, almost 100 years after the A-School’s founding, the administration, my colleagues on the faculty, and the staff continue to reflect on how to better teach design — and apply it in diverse and constructive ways. Although the challenges we face today are complex and numerous, I am optimistic that we can address these challenges successfully through collaborative acts of design.


Ken Robinson, Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative (Oakland: CreateSpace, 2003), 119.


George Sampson

Lecturer, Arts Administration, University of Virginia
Historical Inquiry as Design Problem
—Sheila Crane
Associate Professor, Department of Architectural History

Define
The conventional time frame, scholarly rigor, and open-ended nature of architectural history, and theory might appear anathema to design thinking. This may seem to be the case, in part, given the frequency with which design thinking is tied to entrepreneurialism, innovation, and applied solutions — not to mention the expanding realm of what we might call “design-ish thinking”, popularized by the ubiquitous 18-minute TED talk.

However, when considered as modes of investigation dedicated to questions about the meaning and significance of constructed environments, history and theory have much to contribute to design thinking. Even in my introductory courses, I want students to appreciate history as a field of contestation — one marked by debate, creative thinking, diverse methods of inquiry, and the intellectual challenges of understanding cultural differences in historical perspective.

Apply
While the above concerns overly animate my graduate seminars, they are also integrated into the architectural history survey course required of all first-year A-School students. In this class, for their final assignment, students are asked to approach historical inquiry, at least in part, as a design problem. Students choose an issue, site, or problem in the history of architecture and then explore it through focused research and a mock exhibition. An introductory essay outlining the student-curator’s argument is accompanied by a proposed selection of artifacts and diverse media organized within the available space of the Elmaleh Gallery in Campbell Hall.

Although writing is central to the work of historians and theorists, exhibitions provide opportunities to test ideas; reach broader audiences; and construct dynamic linkages across diverse artifacts, film, publications, material artifacts, and, of course, myriad types of digital media. Since it is generally impossible to bring buildings and landscapes into the gallery, architectural exhibitions present special challenges that allow opportunities for inventive solutions. While introducing students to the critical potentials of historical research, this final project of our department’s survey course encourages the articulation of an argument conceptualized spatially and in relation to the viewer’s imagined movements through the gallery.

Design, Cities, and Nature
—Tim Beatley
Teresa Heinz Professor of Sustainable Communities, Chair, Department of Urban and Environmental Planning

Define
A key goal of design thinking for me is to stretch our collective imaginations to view our communities in more biologically inclusive ways. Much of my work focuses on a better understanding and celebration of the biodiversity all around us, especially in the unlikely, interstitial spaces of cities — places we normally would not think of as very natural (or nature-full). For me, design thinking begins in imagining how we might shift our collective mental maps so we see the world in which we live and work as profoundly co-inhabited spaces, not as sterile and separate spaces. We can’t readily see much of the nature in urban areas, and for the most part, we don’t look for it.

Apply
I often apply my design thinking skills by seeking to creatively uncover and display this oft-unseen nature around us, optimistic that, once fully divulged, citizens (and students) will enjoy and actively deepen their connections to the world. This premise provided the basis for a new Cities + Nature course that I offered this spring semester. The outcome: a semester-long uncovering of nearby nature.

Earl J. Mark
Associate Professor, Department of Architecture

Q: Can you describe your creative process?
A: “There is no formulaic way of describing it. My undergraduate degree in math relates to the quantitative basis and invisible geometrical order of shapes found in nature and architecture. The brevity and elegance of a mathematical proof has a parallel to simplicity of lines and discovering essential forms in design. Spatial and numerical properties in music, for someone studying at a young age in a family of accomplished musicians, may explain why some architectural compositions appear to resonate. A sense of good proportion and rigorous geometry may also come from elsewhere — as my grandfather learned when creating wood joinery, or in the accumulated experience of a master boat-maker setting out curves to loft a fair surface for carpel planking a hull.

“This explains why wood-boat builders and sailmakers are integral to my Maine Coast Design Studio. They apprentice for years to learn traditions. Yet, they frequently improvise with materials and forms to realize a precise fit to the purpose and spatial limits. Although they may practice skills established long ago, it seems their discovery process is constantly renewed, such as in experiments with making a mold. Driven by curiosity and excitement, building from personal experience sets the conditions for more individually attuned, informed, and creative processes. And gaining a mastery of evolving tools used in design leads, through persistent effort, to those “aha!” moments, which occur not within a vacuum, but as an open-minded response to experimentation and to accidents of time and place.”

(Excerpt from an interview with Stephen L. Grotz, BSArch ’16)
William H. Lucy
Lawrence Lewis, Jr. Chair, Department of Urban and Environmental Planning

Q: What is in your creative “toolbox”?  
A: The absence of [things in my toolbox] may be helpful. With nothing in your toolbox, you have to think.

Q: What advice would you give to graduating students?  
A: Get some experience, and don’t be overly committed to your first and second efforts. This includes our first and second careers. Keep your bags packed.  

(Excerpt from an interview with Frankie Krawczel, BUEP ’14)
Design for Healing
—Reuben Rainey
Professor Emeritus, Department of Landscape Architecture

Define
Design is the giving of form to values. In its broadest sense, design thinking is a sensibility, a way of being in the world. It occurs when one must catalyze values in a wide variety of contexts. As a synthesis of creative and analytical perspectives, it is a cyclical process with many feedback loops. The key elements of design thinking differ depending on context, only one of which is a studio-like setting.

Apply
In my Healing Spaces seminar, we explore the application of design thinking to the creation of patient-centered medical facilities. The health-care environment is highly complex, fraught with stress for patients, their loved ones, and their caregivers. Such an environment demands close attention to both clinical functions and the application of proven design features for reducing stress. One must tread carefully, especially when experimenting, keeping in mind that design in a health-care context is conducted with teams of professionals and specialists, and often with patients and their family members.

The students in this seminar represent all four A-School disciplines, plus other areas, including environmental science, engineering, nursing, and psychology. A major feature of the seminar is a series of quick, schematic designs done in teams. I encourage hand-drawing and exploration by diagramming. I suggest students prepare for the exercises by doing whatever helps them achieve a calm, focused mind (e.g., a quiet walk in the woods, listening to music, or mindfulness meditation).

At the beginning of a project in the seminar, we set goals, with the overarching aim being the creation of design work that relieves stress and fosters healing. “Healing” is understood to encompass the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of a patient’s experience. We read and discuss research about design features found to be effective in reducing stress and promoting well-being.

Several exercises, including the design of a staff lounge and a rooftop garden for oncology outpatient, are structured to resemble real-life situations. Actual medical staff and patients, as well as medical students and researchers, were involved in the design and development of these spaces. The exercises are designed to foster empathy and understanding among the students.

Some of the design features emphasized in the seminar include:

- **Nature Meditation:** Encouraging nature-based activities to promote relaxation and stress reduction
- **Calm, Focused Mind:** Practices like meditation and mindfulness to achieve a calming state
- **Healing Spaces:** Designing spaces that foster healing and well-being

As students in the Healing Spaces class field trip to the U.Va. Medical Center, they gain insight into the practical aspects of design thinking in real-world settings.

Shi Qiao Li
Weedon Professor in Asian Architecture,
Departments of Architecture and Architectural History

Q: How do you pursue an idea? How do you mind-map — that is, what is your first approach to a problem?
A: There’s really no system, but more of an approach to understanding the problem through its prominent features. Each time the process is a little bit different. Sometimes it is more technical, sometimes more philosophical or historical, depending on the question. The primary goal . . . is to get hold of vital information about the formative aspects of the problem. It’s an empirical approach.

Q: How do you find inspiration?
A: The word “inspiration,” by definition, comes from sources that are not systematically available. Like creators, artists, writers — you don’t know where your inspiration will come from. I do know how you can get it, though: by increasing the intensity of thought, through data, speculation, history, and interactions. Once you achieve that density of ideas, there is chemistry, and more ideas are formed.

(Excerpt from an interview with Peiwei Zhang, BSArch ’14)
Arts, Culture, and Design

Student Wins Complex Magazine’s “Next Sneaker Design Star” Competition

In November 2013, Oliver Vranesh, a second-year master’s in architecture student, won the “Next Sneaker Design Star” contest held by Complex Magazine, a men’s lifestyle magazine. The publication challenged up-and-coming shoe designers to create an original sneaker design. Complex readers selected Vranesh’s design from three finalists in an online ballot. His reward: a weeklong apprenticeship at the Reebok World Headquarters in Canton, Mass.

Vranesh, who is from Falls Church City, Va., entered the contest to refresh his product-designing skills. Before coming to U.Va., he received his undergraduate degree in industrial design from the Pratt School of Art and Design in Brooklyn, N.Y. He also worked for several design firms before deciding to cultivate skills specifically in space design.

After participating in the School’s Vicenza Program, “where I had been drawing buildings all summer,” Vranesh decided to reconnect with his inner designer. He included elements inspired by the work of architect Carlos Scarpa in the shoe, including the structure of the midsole and a “Scarpa-esque stair motif” running through the outsole of the sneaker.

Comparing his experience in architecture to product design, Vranesh said: “A lot of the skills can transfer easily, but there’s so much more to learn in architecture. Things like drawing and model-making helped with the contest a lot, and expectations have been a lot harder at U.Va.”

“I get design inspiration from everything,” Vranesh continued. “Function, art, architecture, culture, history, cartoons, video games, nature . . . if something fascinates me, I’ll find some way to incorporate that into a design.”

Adapted from a UVA Today story by Lauren Jones

“When I first started, I thought it was only the computer design skills that translated from architecture school to fashion, but over time I have come to appreciate the phases of design thinking that are integral to the process of creating a new line — starting with, “What hole do we need to fill in womenswear as a company?” to “What customers are we not reaching?” and “How can we design for that customer?” I have realized how integral conceptual thinking is to innovation in fashion, and I learned to think that way through Peter Waldman’s Lessons of the Lawn course and through the analysis of architectural history with Richard Guy Wilson.”

—Marion Hickman Meythaler, BAH ’06
Senior Designer, Womenswear, Ralph Lauren
Jared Goss, BAH ’88

As associate curator of the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, Jared Goss, BAH ’88, was one of two curators responsible for the museum’s collection of modern design and architecture. That role entailed the research of, care for, display of, and additions to the post-1900 collections of design and architecture — mainly from Europe, America, and Asia. Further responsibilities included the proposal and mounting of installations and exhibitions, publication of articles and research, and fundraising and outreach (including teaching and lecturing). He is currently writing a book on French art deco.

“Connoisseurship is a disappearing skill that today’s students can benefit from. It is important to fully understand not only the fact that everything new is built on the work of those who came before you, but also to actually understand the story — to know one’s place in the evolution of design history. Further, the most eco-friendly type of design involves creatively reusing old things, rather than making them anew. The ability to see the modern in the old is fundamental.”

Deanna VanBuren, BSArch ’94

Deanna VanBuren, BSArch ’94, is the founder and design director of FOURM design studio, a firm in Oakland, Calif., that strives to create a more seamless collaboration among art, architecture, and construction. Her studio has been able to adapt the design process to create new environments for the video game industry, and to envision and design new spaces for alternative justice systems. FOURM design studio believes in the power of engaging with not only clients but also other designers, artists, musicians, and craftsmen to generate architecture and environments that nourish the communities they engage.

“I have been using my A-School education to democratize design by creating toolkits to engage and facilitate community design workshops with a wide range of stakeholder groups.”

Becca McCharen, BSArch ’06

Becca McCharen, BSArch ’06, is the CEO of Chromat, which she founded in New York City in 2010. She designs architectural swimwear, women’s wear, and accessories as structural experiments for the human body. McCharen designed custom pieces for Beyonce’s “Mrs. Carter Show World Tour” and Super Bowl XLVII halftime show in 2013, as well as fashion-forward garments worn by Madonna, Nicki Minaj, Kelly Rowland, and Jessica Chastain. McCharen was recently recognized in the Forbes 30 under 30 list of “people who are reinventing the world in 2014.”

“Each time we design a new collection, we approach the body in the same way an architect would approach a building site. We notice context lines, build-off joints, and intersections, and we investigate materials. Sandra Iliescu taught me how to see the world as a series of lines, arcs, dots, and fields. Lucia Phinney bestowed a love of joints, intersections, scaffolding, and nontraditional materials. Kevin Everson (in the art department) taught me to be fearless and create things with no rules.”

“It seems that problems go unsolved because people have gotten used to them and don’t recognize something can be changed about the system.”

—Claire Dunnington, BSArch ’11
Assistant Product Manager, OXO
The state of the seas is dire. As the global population increases — and with it, the wealth of burgeoning economies worldwide — fish consumption has doubled in the past half-century. To meet the rising demand, the vast majority of fish species have been taken to or beyond their natural regenerative capacities. This situation has sounded alarms — and prompted action — in the fields of conservation and education.

In the fall of 2010, Doug Dickerson, MArch ’12, and I were enrolled in Sustainable Communities, a class taught by Tim Beatley that reimagined how societies might live and build in the environment. Covering topics ranging from cooperatives to city form, Professor Beatley introduced us to the concept of a community-supported fishery (CSF). CSFs are a variation on the more common community-supported agriculture (CSA) program, which provides a guaranteed market to small-scale fishermen. With our concern for sustainable food systems and an interest in entrepreneurship, we asked whether Charlottesville would be a good candidate for a CSF. Although it is an inland city, Charlottesville is by no means isolated from the oceans.

Beginning in Professor Beatley’s class, Doug and I developed C’ville CSF, a program that seeks to support local fishermen and provide healthy, well-sourced fish to Charlottesville residents while not further endangering threatened species. We chose to team with a cooperative of fish farmers in southern Virginia who raise freshwater fish in a highly responsible manner, without the common pitfalls of fish farming. In addition to being close to Charlottesville, these farmers offer only species and methods designated as Best Choices by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, an important seafood certifier.

We developed marketing campaigns, created share options, and facilitated the program. We met one of the farmers at the Charlottesville City Market every two weeks to distribute pre-ordered fish to customers. In effect, we helped the farmers expand into an untapped market and provided advance payment to help them meet their yearly expenses. Local residents, in return, were able to buy healthy fish in a highly transparent and open manner.

C’ville CSF operated at the Charlottesville City Market until 2013 and is now transitioning to a student-run group at U.Va. This group — an interdisciplinary effort involving business, design, and ecology students — will continue to advocate for the health of the environment and local fishermen and farmers.

“To me, the real underlying value of an education in design thinking is that it provides the user with a simple framework to break problems down to their components and then solve them. Maybe they get solved in a linear fashion, or perhaps more comprehensively. In either case, you have an unusual and highly valued skillset that is geared toward solving problems. These skills can be translated and applied to the medical, technology, finance, and other professional fields with remarkable ease and effect.”

—Bill Mott, BSArch ’82, Darden ’91
Managing Director, Berkeley Point Capital
Amy Gardner, BSArch/Col '92

Amy Gardner, BSArch/Col '92, is the owner of SCARPA, a boutique shoe and accessory store in Charlottesville. As the proprietor of a small retail business, she handles everything from merchandise buying, human resources, operations, and sales to branding, marketing/advertising, creating a vision, and implementing growth strategies.

“I use design thinking and my architecture degree every day at SCARPA. The fastest way I’ve found to jumpstart an idea is to mind-map it. Write the question or goal in the middle of the page, with all parts that might relate to it flowing out from it. Right now, for example, I’m toying with the idea of expanding the store’s physical footprint. From that statement, I would literally draw out each area affected by a bigger space: Does it affect staffing levels? What are the changes to operating expenses? How much more inventory do I need to carry to fill the space? How much extra do I need to do in sales in order to make an expansion profitable? Each of these questions will be the center of the next round of questions, generating their own maps. Then I decide the priority of answering the questions and start filling in the proverbial blanks. Also, like the A-School student I once was, I find that drawing answers helps me think more freely.”

Stephan Dobolezal, BCP ’78, Law ’82

Managing Director, VantagePoint Capital Partners

“I invest in companies that use technology to make more efficient use of resources. My job as an investor combines a critical design principle — the ability to recognize a disruptive and transformative business or technology for what it can become — with a very human principle: the ability to recognize a CEO or a team who can take that concept to the pinnacle of its possibilities.

“I have worked with some of the most creative and driven CEOs of our time, including the founding teams at companies like Microsoft, Apple, Cisco, Genentech, and Tesla, and my lasting impression is that each of these teams, and their CEOs in particular, can be described as taking a transformative design concept: carrying that concept forward undeterred by conventional wisdom, difficult of obtaining financial support, and naysayers on all sides; and doing so in a way that (1) convinced a core group of supporters around them of the design brilliance and possibilities of that concept, (2) worked in harmony with and based upon a deep understanding of the core principles of the science involved, (3) selectively battled with but also partnered with key resources around them, (4) insisted on being involved in the most minute details of product design, and (5) remained constantly engaged in what I refer to as an ‘open-source’ discussion about any and all choices to be made.

“I believe the A-School teaches us to work in teams, think transformatively in terms of concepts that go further than just stretching the imagination, to link the conceptual with the science, to expose these concepts and designs to a jury of peers, and to see it through to a final product. Almost always, that type of thinking goes beyond words and involves linking notions best captured in a sketch or computer model, with an ultimate verbal articulation that captures the imagination of others. This is where the A-School excels.”

Matthew Richardson, BUEP ’81, Darden ’85

Global Head of Architecture and Construction, Hilton Worldwide

“One of the great challenges growing every day is the mass movement of people in the developing world, including forced migration, voluntary migration, and tourism. The world has never seen people move on this scale before. Design thinking can help find innovative approaches to manage the downside of this movement (and the resources it will require) and maximize the upside.”

Elizabeth Heider, BSArch ’79

Chief Sustainability Officer, Skanska USA

“We recently signed a master agreement with a global bank to monetize the energy savings of energy retrofits through a new type of investment vehicle. The concept is elegant, but it hadn’t been executed before. We were making up something new with a brilliant client and multiple players who don’t typically work together. We needed to integrate processes and technology in creative ways under a new form of contract that incentivizes collaboration and appropriately allocates risk and rewards. It was a design problem for something other than a building. Someone had to be fearless or crazy enough to think it possible, bring exceptional people together across multiple reporting streams, nurture the idea, build confidence with the client, and navigate political and contractual waters. Design thinking isn’t the province of the architectural profession; it is a survival skill for the 21st century.”

Elizabeth Kneller, MArch ’13, and Parker Sutton, MArch ’13

Designing for Deconstruction, by Elizabeth Kneller, MArch ’13, and Parker Sutton, MArch ’13, optimizes CNC manufacturing efficiency to create a passive building envelope.

“With a flash of inspiration, two A-School professors come to mind. The first is Michael Bednar, who taught my introductory design studio. I still enjoy thinking about how to use a 1 foot–by–2–foot piece of cardboard to make a bridge 3 feet long that will hold a brick. The second is Robin Dripps, who taught my fourth-year studio and brought a perspective that I didn’t always get, so I was constantly challenged to come at a problem from different angles.”

Mary Ryan McCarthy, BSArch ’75

Senior Managing Director, Hines

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—Mary Ryan McCarthy, BSArch ’75

Senior Managing Director, Hines
Communications and Media

A-School Student Teams Win Hearst Business Media + OpenGrounds Innovation Challenge

In November 2013, OpenGrounds and Hearst Business Media awarded two School of Architecture student teams with first- and third-place prizes for presenting the most innovative ideas to build a healthier society. The Challenge asked students from across the University to imagine new approaches to helping people make better choices about their health as well as to lowering health-care costs.

The first-place prize of $15,000 went to “TruFood,” an app that would provide detailed information about food at the point-of-sale, proposed by Kathleen Lavelle, Isabel Preciado, Enrique Cavelier, and Asher McGlothlin, a team of third- and fourth-year students from the A-School. The judges emphasized the potential social impact of this app, which provides a simplified, single score summarizing net nutritional value at the point of decision, thereby helping people to make better choices about the foods they purchase.

The third-place prize of $3,000 went to Megan Watson, Sydna Mundy, Todd Stovall, and Chris Wallace, also third- and fourth-year undergraduates in the Architecture School, for their concept, “MyPlace,” which would provide holistic rankings of the health of a community based on nine factors.

Rich Malloch, president and group head of Hearst Business Media, said: “These students brought their best ideas and most creative thinking. It is our hope that these awards will encourage their pursuit of solutions to real-world challenges, such as those facing our health-care system, as they embark upon their careers.”

Ninety-three students on 71 teams competed for the prize money. Drawn from eight schools and 36 departments, participants ranged from first-year to postdoctoral students. Their ideas were reviewed by judges from both U.Va. and Hearst, including business-development leaders and health-care professionals.

Adapted from a UVA Today story by Lindsey Hepler

“The Internet is architecture. A website’s landing page is a foyer; every link is a doorway to another room, each room with a specific function. It can be ugly and work poorly, or it can be a place of wonder; the difference is purely a product of good design. Visual literacy is not measured on the SAT; it’s not an AP course. We are taught how to read and write; to organize letters into words, words into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, and paragraphs into essays. But rarely are we taught to communicate in ways that delight and inspire. Even something as simple as the ability to design a page of information visually — using contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity — should be as mandatory as basic writing classes. There are ten thousand jobs that require design thinking; architecture is merely one of them. Let’s educate broadly to prepare kids for the jobs of the future.”

—Tom Darbyshire, BSArch ’82
Executive Vice President and Executive Creative Director, BBDO New York
Lindsay Bierman, MArch ‘93
Chancellor-Elect UNC School of the Arts

Lindsay Bierman, MArch ‘93, is the editor-in-chief of Southern Living, the country’s eighth-largest monthly-paid magazine, which includes five regional and three tablet editions, and reaches 18 million consumers. Bierman drives the editorial vision, direction, and content for the magazine. He also leads the strategic development of the Southern Living multimedia brand, ensuring that the digital enterprises, 12-plus annual special editions, books, live events, and hundreds of licensed products — including home goods, plants, a signature hotel collection, and branded residential communities — reflect its core mission and values.

“The ubiquity of digital media has shortened the world’s attention span by distracting and numbing us with an endless stream of sound bites, fast clips, and cheap eye candy. Design thinking demands our deep, undivided attention and leads to more complex and subtle forms of perception. It expands and enriches our experience of nature and beauty. I can’t think of a more vital and rewarding skill to sustain us now or in the future.”

Owen Hannay, BSArch ‘85

Owen Hannay, BSArch ’85, is the founder and CEO of Slingshot, a 19-year-old, full-service marketing and advertising firm focused on making an impact for clients, employees, and the community at large. Hannay is also the founder and CEO of Five Smooth Stones, a 13-year-old historic redevelopment firm that has purchased and repurposed almost 500,000 square feet of derelict or underutilized historic space in Dallas, Texas.

“When I have an idea, I first like to see if I can write it down — visualize it — in such a way that it makes sense. If I can’t, then either I won’t be able to communicate it well to someone else, or I need to think it through some more. If I can write it down, it is time to find someone else who can shoot holes in it.”

Jen Siomacco, BSArch ‘08
Web Interaction Designer, CFA Institute

“I design online interactions for CFA Institute’s customers and internal staff members. Architecture and interaction design are both about how people inhabit the space they are in; the only difference is one is a physical space and the other is a digital space. My first step is to determine who my primary audience is and what their needs and goals are. Then I have to determine how the feature I’m designing fits within the larger ecosystem of our website or our overall brand and customer experience. Next, I have to consider the physical constraints of the users. Depending on their device, location, connection speed, and browser, users may have any number of different experiences while interacting with the same feature. Finally, I am often responsible for detailing technical solutions to an audience that has no technical background. The experiences of an architecture charette and design review taught me how to take very complex ideas and break them down into small, digestible components in order to explain an idea clearly and with confidence.

“I am currently working on a project to design an online registration process for one of my company’s exam programs. My teammates and I did initial research to ensure we understood who the users are who will register, and where registration fits in with their overall customer journey. We mapped out all of the thoughts and actions that might lead a user to decide to register, and we also mapped out what the user’s experience will be like before completion of the exam program. Understanding this entire customer journey helped us make more informed decisions about the registration process itself.”

“Designers are in high demand in the tech industry right now, and that will continue. There will be opportunities for design and systems thinkers in software design, wearable tech, flexible screens, advances in 3D printing, and more. Encouraging architecture students to explore the integration of new technology in their projects and offering courses in computer science will help them transition into these and similar roles in the future.”

—Alli Dryer, MArch ‘07
Designer, Twitter
Civic Duty and Saving the World

Designing a Bike-Friendly University
By Jake Fox, MLA ’13, and David Tucker, MArch ’15

The seeds of BIKE U.Va. took root in the fall of 2012 after the University’s Green Initiatives Funding Tomorrow (G.I.F.T.) Grant Committee gave us a small grant to find ways to empower and encourage cycling on the University’s Grounds. We are avid cyclists ourselves, and it was in our brief moments between studio reviews that we formed the precursor to BIKE U.Va., Velotelier — a conflation of the French words “velo” and “atelier,” roughly translating to “bike workshop.”

Velotelier hosted several monthly maintenance workshops, led group rides through Charlottesville, and screened the cycling film Quicksilver in the stairwell of the South Addition of Campbell Hall. When we won second prize in U.Va.’s 2013 Student Sustainability Project Competition, word began to spread. The University’s Transportation Demand Management Professional Jonathan Monceaux took note of our efforts and sought ways to formalize and provide more resources. Ultimately, this led to the creation of BIKE U.Va., a partnership between Velotelier and the University’s Department of Parking and Transportation.

BIKE U.Va.’s mission expands on the work of Velotelier. We continue to host bi-monthly workshops across Grounds, and using our design skills, we have created and published a series of simple bike repair manuals, designed posters for BIKE U.Va. events, and, most recently, finished a mobile workstation. This station is a urban furniture piece that can be towed behind a bike, giving workshop participants a flexible surface on which to work.

Our design education helped us find a link between our passion for cycling, community service, and the agency we all have to shape our world into a more sustainable and resilient place. The League of American Bicyclists recently gave U.Va. a Bronze Award for being a “Bicycle Friendly University,” thanks in part to the efforts of BIKE U.Va. and the many other ways the University is encouraging and creating a better environment for cycling.

“Over a year and a half, I had the opportunity to help lead two California state interagency working groups through a process of developing and implementing statewide green building and clean transportation policies enacted by California’s governor that are amongst the most far-reaching in the nation in terms of emissions reduction, renewable energy, and water use. My background in design thinking helped me navigate the interplay of community groups, businesses, and government organizations throughout this process and gave me the skills to take a holistic approach in working with stakeholders to design public policy. Current and future students can continue to be leaders in this domain by maintaining both a curiosity and a sense of urgency about how to improve the public realm.”

— Randall Winston, MArch ’11
Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff of California Governor Jerry Brown
Toan Nguyen, BSArch ’92, Darden ’94

Toan Nguyen, BSArch ’92, Darden ’94, is the CEO of C’ville Central, a benefit corporation that aims to alleviate poverty in Charlottesville by providing employment opportunities to the underserved. C’ville Central’s mission is to connect people who need jobs to those who need their services, and connect small-business owners with larger institutions in the area, like the University, to keep the local economy thriving. The idea for such an organization grew out of the Community Investment Collaboration (CIC), a program started by Nguyen and several dozen Charlottesville leaders. CIC trains community members who have the drive but not the means to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. As a social entrepreneur himself, Nguyen noticed that although job training and education are important, they are not enough to get graduates of the CIC program a job. Thus, C’ville Central was born. This spring, Nguyen was visiting 20 U.S. cities in two months to learn how communities across the United States. We have moved from inspiration to ideation and now to implementation. My colleagues and I at Enterprise Community Partners are using a similar approach to tackle other issues, such as senior housing, eco-districts, net-zero housing, culturally appropriate design, and housing for the chronically homeless. The communities, issues, climates, and people may differ, but in every case, a design thinking approach allows us to bring fresh, creative, catalytic research, development, and on-the-ground results.

“The A-School expanded my vision of the world and fostered in me a desire to enrich human life through planning and design. The personal attention of the faculty and the rigorous exercises of the program gave me the tools to become a change agent in town planning, land conservation, and historic preservation. I thank Professor Bill Lucy for teaching me to think about planning comprehensively — for adding coursework in structure and stratigraphy, economic analysis, and public speaking.”

—Kat Imhoff, BUEP ’80, MUEP ’86
President and CEO, The Montpelier Foundation

Katie Swenson, MArch ’00
Vice President of Design, Enterprise Community Partners

“I advocate for design excellence in community development by recruiting and resourcing talent, expertise, and ambition to create sustainable, equitable, connected communities. I use design thinking all day, every day. For example, in 2000 we knew there was a housing crisis on tribal lands. We partnered a young architect with a tribal housing authority to understand the needs and opportunities. She helped design and build 40 beautiful, sustainable homes on the reservation. But even more, she listened to local leaders and worked with the community to deeply understand how to start to develop an approach. We partnered a second architect with another tribal group — again listening, learning, testing ideas, building prototypes, and delivering short-term results in the form of beautiful, lasting buildings. With our third architectural fellow, we have developed the Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative initiative, which seeks to provide design collaboration and expertise to all 562 Native American tribes in the United States. We have moved from inspiration to ideation and now to implementation. (My colleagues and I at Enterprise Community Partners) are using a similar approach to tackle other issues, such as senior housing, eco-districts, net-zero housing, culturally appropriate design, and housing for the chronically homeless. The communities, issues, climates, and people may differ, but in every case, a design thinking approach allows us to bring fresh, creative, catalytic research, development, and on-the-ground results.”

Toan Nguyen, MAH ’00

Jen Masengarb, MAH ’00, who also earned an historic preservation certificate at the A-School, is the director of interpretation and research at the Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF). She is responsible for defining the annual focus of CAF’s education programs and initiatives, including developing methods for sharing content across the organization as well as creating engagement strategies that inspire adult and youth audiences to see their built environment differently. Masengarb co-authored The Architecture Handbook: A Student Guide to Understanding Buildings, published in 2007 as the first high school architecture textbook in the country. She is also the lead creator of CAF’s DiscoverDesign.org — a digital learning tool connecting teens, teachers, and architects across the country for project-based learning in architecture.

“The deep scholarship and design inquiry techniques I received from my architectural history courses, combined with the boots-on-the-ground, public engagement, and interpretation strategies I learned in the preservation program, have equipped me with the skills to succeed in an organization such as CAF, which is dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters.”

Images (left) Students walk down Route 23 in Charlottesville during the 2014 All-School Workshop, “29 After the Sprawl.”

Images (top) Detail of a Vortex model.

Images (right) Detail of a Vortex model.
Environmental Design

Time Over Crisis
By Megan Suau, MArch ’13
Lecturer, Department of Architecture

Time Over Crisis was the first in a sequence of studios exploring design thinking as a paradigm within the School of Architecture. Offered during the fall of 2013, the studio used the physical, economic, and temporal limitations of an extreme crisis scenario to develop a critical perspective toward the built environment as a source for innovative problem solving. The crisis investigated was the exodus of 2 million Syrians during the country’s ongoing civil war. The course specifically considered the refugee camp of Zaatari, Jordan, currently the second-largest refugee camp in the world, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Students were required to engage in the subtleties and sensitivities of the camp while developing a critical attitude and ultimate proposal regarding a focused problem. Through the studio, students developed rigorous technical and research skills. They were also encouraged to investigate nontraditional, firsthand accounts of the refugee experience through interviews, blogs, and social media outlets. Each student tackled a problem identified by the UNHCR — including local food supply, political relationships with the host nation, treatment of fresh and waste water, international funding opportunities, and adaptable shelters — while creating a collective research compendium. This spring, their research and designed outcomes were compiled into the first of a series of design thinking publications that will be used in the School as a guide for continued discourse.

“I had the opportunity and privilege to be a part of the final review for Megan Suau’s Time Over Crisis design thinking studio, in which the undergraduate students presented their projects for solving some of the challenges with refugee camps. The work was some of the best I have ever seen in terms of the identification of the problems and creative solutions. Some of my favorites were the solutions for the need for cellphone charging, education, and artificial light. I came back to my colleagues at Hartman-Cox touting the work of this studio and raising awareness of the issues. The potential impact of the design thinking approach on world health, town planning, and infrastructure is only beginning to be explored, and I am thrilled to see A-School students applying their education to broader matters. These students are the future.”

—Mary Kay Lanzillotta, BSArch ’85
Partner, Hartman-Cox Architects
Steven Bingler, BArch ’72
Founder and CEO, Concordia

“As founder and CEO, my job is to provide vision and leadership toward our one-word name and mission statement: concordia, which means ‘harmony among people and things.’ There is a real, increasing need for what I call ‘emergence thinking,’ which focuses on more authentically democratic, community-based engagement practices. Because of U.Va.’s unique connection to Mr. Jefferson, the School of Architecture is well positioned to serve as a leader in this innovative and expansive work. Projects include many forms of environmental sustainability as well as pre-disaster preparation (resiliency), and disaster recovery.”

Betsy Rupp del Monte, BSArch ’78
Principal, Transform Global; Lecturer in Sustainability and Development, Southern Methodist University

“Taking a group of disparate and often contradictory requirements, and finding the thread that can connect and even make something wonderful out of them, is a skill I exercise daily. It is required for creating a built project or a scholastic program, or just for bringing a group of people together.”

Paul King, BSArch ’78, MArch ’82
Lead Designer and Principal, EYP

“For me, multiple things contributed to a sense of self-confidence in design and leadership. These include the immersion in a studio environment, where one’s colleagues become mentors; the jury review, where one learns to present ideas both graphically and verbally, and learns the value of articulateness; and the study of architectural history and theory, in which one learns that good design contains not only form and beauty, but also intentional meaning.”

Mike Evans, BArch ’72
Design Principal, Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas + Company

“My official title is design principal; however, ‘architect’ was the only title I ever wanted, and that is what my business card says. I use design thinking every day. Just today, I helped to expand our project team’s perception of a problem a client has asked us to solve — urging them to go beyond the physical facilities for design solutions and to delve into the client organizational structure and policies. Thinking beyond the problem you are given allows a broader range of optional solutions.”

Olle Lundberg, MArch ’79
Design Principal, Lundberg Design

“At the A-School, Jim Tuley taught me how to think about building. Robin Dripps taught me how to think about design, and Robert Vickery set me on the road to become an architect. I’ve learned to look at the world differently from others — to see beauty where most don’t see at all. Recently, we made this amazing light fixture out of a completely rusted, abandoned ship’s buoy. In a new setting, with a new purpose, the old buoy became an incredibly beautiful sculpture.”

“To me, design thinking is characterized by understanding systems, relationships, and outcomes. One aspect of professional practice that I have found exciting is how every project is really an ecosystem: a dynamic and fluid interrelationship among a site, a group of communities, and a set of issues. Because of this, projects tend to extend far beyond their defined scope, creating a balancing act between inspiration/ideation and implementation. Several A-School professors’ work and guidance continue to inspire me. The community of professors and students who work symbiotically to tackle multidisciplinary issues is one wonderful and unique aspect of the A-School.”

—Lauren Hackney, BSArch ’05, MLA/MArch ’11
Designer, CMG Landscape Architecture
Jumping Fences

A Conversation with Thomas Woltz, Michael Bills, and Dean Kim Tanzer

Over the past decade and a half, Thomas L. Woltz, BArch ’90, MLA ’96, MLA ’97, and Michael Bills, Col ’78, have seen their business/client relationship turn to friendship. A model for true collaboration, their ideas have influenced each other as, together, they developed, honed, and implemented a master plan for transforming a 140-acre, former horse farm in western Albemarle County into a beautiful, ecologically sensitive home for the Bills family.

Over this period, Bills began his own investment business and raised four children with his wife, Sonjia Smith, Col ’79, Law ’82. Woltz, meanwhile, has risen from a new hire in what is now an internationally known landscape architecture firm, Nelson Byrd Woltz (NBW), to full owner. In 2013, Woltz was named Design Innovator of the Year by the Wall Street Journal Magazine. Just as Woltz has forever changed the Bills family, the family’s has dramatically shaped Woltz, NBW, and the Wall now internationally known landscape architecture firm, Nelson Byrd Woltz (NBW), to full owner. In 2013, Woltz was named Design Innovator of the Year by the Wall Street Journal Magazine. Just as Woltz has forever changed the Bills family, the Bills project has dramatically shaped Woltz, NBW, and the way landscape architecture is practiced around the world.

Thomas Woltz, Michael Bills, and Dean Kim Tanzer

MB: I traveled a lot, and I try to observe how terrains, and trees in particular, are similar to or different from my own work. Charlottesville is at the same latitude as some diverse places, including northern Iran and Afghanistan, so I’ve seen some of Thomas’s work in other places, too, and the consistent high quality, thoughtfulness, and beauty that his firm’s work brings are definitely distinctive. I feel fortunate to have worked with him.

MB: It took three years to find the property that would become our true home in Charlottesville, but we found Thomas within a year, through Warren Byrd [co-founder of NBW and an A-School alumnus and emeritus professor]. From those earliest conversations, Thomas and his firm were involved. We wanted a master plan reflective of both where we were — Charlottesville, Virginia — and who we were.

TW: As my first landscape project out of graduate school with Warren, it was very exciting to accompany him on those first site visits. In many ways, I took the situation for granted, assuming it was normal to be part of the initial discussions with general contractors, architects, and others. Now, all these years later, that pattern of assuming an early role in projects is standard for our firm.

KT: Tell us about the landscape project you have in common.

MB: I knew the house could be quiet and be a reached within a short portion of my lifetime, but the same could not be said if the land and trees were destroyed. Soon after we purchased, I started a clipping file so Thomas could see what resonated with me. Very quickly, I recognized in him a kindred spirit, someone whose creativity and talent could take the project to the utmost level while also reflecting my values. Some of my ideas he very viscerally indicated did not belong, while he found creative ways to make others work. That was the collaboration that turned into a project far beyond my expectations. We’ve revised and reworked, but the original plan remains largely intact, and it keeps getting better as we continue implementing.

TW: Ultimately, this project became the proving ground for some of the innovations for which NBW has come to be recognized. For instance, I consider Michael’s property the birthplace of the conservation agriculture studio concept. We have worked on roughly 25,000 acres of farmland domestically and abroad. Many of the ideas now standard to our projects, and to similar projects across the nation, had their first trial period here, such as restoration of forest and grassland ecosystems, ongoing monitoring of biodiversity, and working closely with conservation biologists to understand wildlife dynamics.

KT: The property has many interesting features, but a particularly intriguing one is the pinetum. Tell us about that.

MB: I consciously challenged Thomas to take risks. Allowing him to be experimental meant we ended up with things that had never been tried, benefiting both. One example was designing in anticipation of climate change, particularly with respect to plant selection.

KT: What personal impact does living on this landscape have on you, Michael?

MB: I'm constantly seeing whole new views of the property. So it’s a model for the ever-changing nature of the world. You have to be observant to notice this change. The landscape slows me down. It shows me it's worth slowing down.

MB: Immediately around us, several of our neighbors have hired Thomas. They’ve continued the warm-season grasses to create a forest-like buffer, creating a much larger wildlife corridor.

TW: That should inspire other designers and landowners to never underestimate the power of “small” initiatives. If other practitioners and property owners join in, these projects can add up to make a major positive impact on a region.

KT: What personal impact does living on this landscape have on you, Michael?

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KT: How have you learned from each other?

TW: This project has become a precedent I can show other clients as we envision a more sustainable activation of formerly agricultural lands. Through it, we’ve spread the word about a sustainable ecosystem approach to design.

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KT: Any final thoughts?

TW: I'm a long-term product of the A-School, including eight years of studying, 14 teaching part time, and many as an engaged alumus. The design thinking training here is incredibly valuable preparation for any profession. We’re taught to think across boundaries and to visualize space over time. The people in Michael’s profession with whom I’ve had the best relationships exhibit this kind of thinking. They don’t see the natural boundaries of their business and aren’t limited by the status quo. I’m excited that my field has this wonderful toolkit that applies to many other areas, and at NBW, we continue to seek innovative collaborations with other disciplines.

MB: Thomas helped create the home I want. But because it was a collaboration with someone I really respect, I’ve enjoyed the process vastly more than I anticipated. I think this is often the case: healthy, two-way collaboration is what turns a project into a truly successful experience.

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One day it dawned on me, “Why not create the 38th parallel [north] in Charlottesville?” You see this concept in our pinetum, which contains a collection of pine trees that grow at the same latitude in different parts of the world.

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KT: How is the property prompting new behaviors?

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2014 Thomas Jefferson Medalist in Architecture Toyo Ito

The winner of this year’s Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Architecture was Tokyo-based architect Toyo Ito. Ito visited Grounds for the Founder’s Day celebration, observed annually on or near the April 13 birthday of Thomas Jefferson. This year’s celebration was on April 10 and April 11, 2014, when Ito shared lessons learned from the inspiration of the natural world.

The medals, struck for the occasion, are the highest honors bestowed by the University of Virginia and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation — the independent, nonprofit organization that owns and operates Monticello. U.Va. President Teresa A. Sullivan and Leslie Greene Bowman, president and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, presented the awards at a ceremony in the Rotunda Dome Room. The recipients also were honored at a private dinner at Monticello.

After Ito, a world-renowned celebrity architect who combines conceptual innovation with superbly executed buildings, gave his lecture, students lined up to get his autograph. Such is the fame of this year’s Jefferson Foundation Medalist in Architecture. Hundreds gathered in the Old Cabell Hall Auditorium on April 11, 2014, to hear Ito describe the evolution of his style. He showed slides and short videos that revealed the organic structures and shapes characteristic of his designs — from his first house through his international commissions to the latest one still under construction. Ito also mentioned that he attended an architecture conference at U.Va. in 1982 and was impressed by the beautiful Grounds. Some of his designs have serpentine walls reminiscent of the Academical Village’s garden walls.

Six graduate students understood how privileged they were to have Ito join their studio course and critique their work during his visit.

“When our team was selected to present, I was nervous, yet excited,” Sarah Miller, MLA/MUEP ‘14, said. “It isn’t very often during an academic career that you’re able to engage with a celebrated architect who has pushed the customary limits of design.”

Ito suggested to one team that they make their buildings “serpentine,” and to another, “giraffe-like.” He “encouraged our reading of the existing conditions” and discussed “opportunities for investigating speed as a driver of our public space design,” she said.

“I found the theme of the studio very good and was impressed by the sincere and thought-provoking attitude of the students during the presentations,” Ito said.

“Although I could only give intuitive comments at that time, I believe that they will give more fruitful final presentations, and their work as a whole is very promising.”

Two teams in the class, each comprising three students, presented their designs, and Ito gave feedback to each team. The review took place in the newly revitalized Shure Studio in Campbell Hall, named for Michael A. Shure, Col ’60.

“My father’s favorite part of coming to the Architecture School was serving on juries and participating in reviews. He would do it whenever possible,” said Michael A. Shure Jr., Col ’88, the son of the Shure Studio’s namesake, whose family’s gift created the Shure Studio space in 2009. “That the studio that bears his name is now being used as a review space couldn’t be more appropriate. He would be thrilled, and my family and I are thrilled. To me, it felt as if the Founder’s Day celebration that began in the Shure Studio was poignant, since it marked the ‘re-founding’ of this space as a place of continued presentation and sharing of, of the spectacular work that gets done in Campbell Hall. We are touched, and my dad would be humbled.”

Students described the experience of Ito’s visit and critique as “amazing,” “inspiring,” and “precious.”

Ito’s commentary was thought-provoking and complimentary, Miller said. “I was particularly impressed with Mr. Ito’s immediate understanding of the project after a brief introduction, and his pointed advice for helping us drive our group project further.”

He “encouraged our reading of the existing conditions” and discussed “opportunities for investigating speed as a driver of our public space design,” she said.

Ito’s comments about his own work are often poetic and metaphorical. He spoke a mix of English and Japanese, assisted by a translator, but despite the language barrier, “had great communication with the students and a good sense of humor,” said Alex Ayala, MArch/MUEP ‘14, the course’s graduate teaching assistant.

“He visited Campbell Hall and his lecture at Old Cabell Hall reminded me why I decided to pursue this discipline,” Ayala said. “He showed the great joy and wisdom that one can get from design, and his work shows that architecture education never really stops — it can continue to evolve and take many shapes in our professional lives.”

Images (top left) Dean Kim Tanzer; 2014 Harry S. Shure Visiting Professor Pankaj Vir Gupta, BArch ’93; Toyo Ito; and Maki Matsubayashi, BArch ’97 (Ito’s interpreter). (top right) Dean Kim Tanzer; Toyo Ito; Ito’s interpreter, Maki Matsubayashi. (bottom right) Toyo Ito offers critique during student presentations.

Other images courtesy of Architecture School’s Teaching Assistant Program.
Exhibition Highlights

The Dean’s Gallery
Special thanks to the curator of the Dean’s Gallery for the past five years: Sandra Ilieescu, associate professor of art and architecture.

Urban Catalyst: Against Indifference
Fall 2013
Manuel Balo Esteve — Associate Professor, Department of Architecture

In so many cities today, public spaces seem almost indifferent to social life. Yet, as Manuel Balo shows us, this indifference is only superficial. Depicting scenes of public life on four continents, Balo’s exquisite drawings reveal a vibrant and often secret urban life unfolding before our eyes. In fact, life and some unusual communities are thriving in contemporary cities in surprising and vivid ways.

Bound to Resist — Drawing, Flexibility, and the Disclosure Structure
Spring 2014
Mark West — Founding Director, Centre for Architectural Structures and Technology, University of Manitoba

Lecturing in the Dean’s Gallery in March, Mark West described ways of drawing that suggest ways of building—not drawing as description or instruction but, rather, as an analogical thing, concerned more with material and action than with form itself. West presented the subjects of drawing (the making of illusions) and construction (a serious technical enterprise) together, in an effort to bust apart the notion that what we call “art” and “technology” are separated from each other across some kind of continuum, when, in actuality, these two ways of making may occupy the same space at the same time.

Elmaleh Gallery
Fire: Year Two of the India Initiative
August 12 – September 6, 2013
Peter Waldman — William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor, Department of Architecture; Director, India Program
Phoebe Crisman — Associate Professor, Department of Architecture

According to Vedic philosophy, fire is the most sacred of the five physical forces. Fire represents light, heat, and energy — manifest in architecture through spatial configurations and places of gathering, symbolism, materials, and apertures that regulate light and heat. During the spring 2013 India Research Seminar, students developed a knowledge base through readings, lectures, site investigations of several Indian cities, and an initial study of the Safdarjung Airport site in Delhi. Each student designed a speculative project for the site that systematically prepared plans, sections, and elevations at three distinct scales.

China: Memory Palace
September 9 – October 4, 2013
Shiqiao Li — Weedon Professor in Asian Architecture, Departments of Architecture and Architectural History; Director, U.Va. China Program

In 1596, the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci speculated on the possibility of using Chinese square words as mnemonic devices that may contribute to a “memory palace.” In 2013, participants in the School of Architecture’s summer workshop in Nanjing, China, took 15 Chinese square words and explored their potential as spatial mnemonic devices, resulting in 15 installations. This work was done in the context of a design for a Ricci library. In the past century, Chinese culture may have undergone the most extensive transformation since the Han dynasty, with architecture and the Chinese city expanding in both scale and speed at unprecedented rates. Amidst sweeping changes, which increasingly are marked by negligence and impatience, an important question to consider is how memory functions in the delicate act of sustaining stability and adapting to new conditions.

Biophilic Cities
October 7 – November 1, 2013
Tim Beatley — Teresa Heinz Professor of Sustainable Communities and Chair, Department of Urban and Environmental Planning
Carla Jones, Project Manager and Instructor, Department of Urban and Environmental Planning

Biophilic cities are cities that contain abundant nature. “Biophilic” refers to the fact that they care about, seek to protect, restore, and grow this nature; they also strive to foster deep connections and daily contact with the natural world. The Biophilic Cities Network — launched in October 2013 — connects leaders working on initiatives that increase the abundance of, quality of, and access to nature in their cities. This exhibit featured biophilic cities around the world, offering glimpses of each city’s urban nature through photographs, maps, and videos.

Harry Seidler: Architecture, Art, and Collaborative Design
November 8 – December 6, 2013
Curated by Vladimir Belogolovsky — Professor, Moscow Branch of the International Academy of Architecture; Founder, Intercontinental Curatorial Project
Presented by Esther Lorenz, Lecturer, Department of Architecture

Architecture, Art, and Collaborative Design is a traveling exhibition celebrating the 90th anniversary of the birth of Harry Seidler, the leading Australian architect of the 20th century. The exhibition traces Austrian-born Seidler and his key role in bringing Bauhaus principles to Australia as well as identifies his distinctive place and hand within and beyond modernist design methodology. The 15 featured projects — five houses and five towers in Sydney and five major commissions beyond Sydney — focus on Seidler’s lifelong creative collaborations. Funded by the Seidler Architectural Foundation, the exhibition was developed by the Intercontinental Curatorial Project with Penelope Seidler and Harry Seidler & Associates in Sydney.

Images (left) Detail of drawing by Mark West. (middle bottom) Detail from China: Memory Palace exhibit. (middle top) Detail of terrarium, Biophilic Cities exhibit. (middle) Urban Catalyst: Against Indifference exhibit, photo by Kirk Martini. (right) Harry Seidler: Architecture, Art, and Collaborative Design exhibit.
Exhibition Highlights Continued

Arctic Design Initiative

Reconstructing Wittgenstein: The Architecture of Ludwig Wittgenstein
March 28 – April 26, 2014
Curated by August Sarntz — Professor, Department of Architecture

Twentieth-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, together with architect Paul Engelmann, designed the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House, which Wittgenstein built for his sister Margaret. The architecture of the house (completed in 1926) is amazing, radical, and modern in the historical context of Vienna. In his architecture, Wittgenstein overcame traditional and conventional aspects, and implemented a radical and fundamental architectural structuralism, which defined a new interpretation of modernism. Wittgenstein’s radical interpretation was particularly evident in his interiors, where he used the collage as an expression of modern living. This traveling exhibition was organized and funded by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum in Washington. The exhibition included archival materials from the Stonborough family and the Archives of the City of Vienna as well as new photographs by Thomas Freiler and exhibition curator August Sarntz. Esther Lorenz, a lecturer in the Department of Architecture, is the chair of exhibitions at the School.

City of Blubber

February 17 – March 14, 2014

The City of Blubber visualized the waste produced by Hong Kong. The installation presented the city as a fatty tissue that swells according to consumption and economic, and ecological futures of the rapidly changing Arctic. The exhibition featured a snapshot of collective research produced in the past year involving colleagues and institutions (domestic and abroad) concerned with the Arctic, as well as students in architecture and landscape architecture from the A-School. The eclectic narratives of the presented work show that the Arctic is a dynamic, transnational, connected, and contested region. Reinforced by the fast rate of climate change and globalization, the region is rushing into a new, unprecedented era, whereby its environmental, political, economic, and cultural trajectories are unknown and must be tested.

Alumni Notes

Amadoce Bennett, BSArch ’04, MArch ’11, and Dan LaRossa, MArch ’11, won an international design competition sponsored by the nonprofit Building Trust International to create a solution for displaced communities that lack adequate building space for schools. Their 3-meter-by-5-meter moving school for migrant and refugee communities emphasizes natural light and air ventilation while preventing flooding. Three schools serving nearly 1,000 students have been built along the Thai- Burma border, with plans to build in Camboda and Sierra Leone in 2014.

Lindsay Bierman, MArch ’93, editor-in-chief of Southern Living, has been elected chancellor of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts by the Board of Governors of the 17-campus university system. Bierman will assume his new duties August 1 (see page 26).

Ben Chrisenger, BUED ’10, MUEP ’11, was selected to be in the inaugural cohort of the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s Emerging Leaders in Science and Society (ELISS) program.

First Endm, MArch ’07, received the prestigious Rome Prize and will be a fellow at the American Academy in Rome in the spring of 2015.

Baltimore Magazine named Julie Gabrielli, BSArch ’84, MArch ’88, the Best Home-Improvement Architect in its “2013 Best of Baltimore” issue. Her first novel, Nasrudin’s Key, will be published in the next year.

Reed Hilderbrand was named Firm of the Year at the 2014 American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Annual Meeting in Boston. Three of the firm’s principals are A-School alumni: John Grove, Col ’84, MLA ’97, was named 2013 Design Innovator of the Year by the Wall Street Journal Magazine, which ran a feature of Wolfe, profiling his design sensibility and NBW’s approach to integrating the complexities of human and ecological systems into landscape design. The School’s second annual Distinguished Alumni Award was given to W. Brown Morton III, BAH ’61, an international preservation consultant and architectural conservator, and a professor emeritus of the University of Mary Washington. Morton was the first student to receive a Bachelor of Architectural History at the A-School. He worked with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to stabilize the imperial city of Huit, Vietnam, and co-authored “The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation Projects.” Morton was presented the award at a special Dean’s Forum 25th Anniversary Celebration, held at Monticello and Montalto in September 2013.
The work of Dani Alexander, MLA '14, was presented at the Association of European Schools of Planning’s Sustainable Food Planning Conference in Montpellier, France, in October 2013; the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture’s (CELA) annual conference in Baltimore in March; and the annual conference of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), in New Orleans this May. She also received a student thesis research grant to support her thesis project.

Initiative reCOVER won a grant for its design of a secondary school in the El Pantanal community of Granada, Nicaragua. The design addresses issues of sustainable design practice through an asset-based approach, using a strategy that incorporates the use of local materials, passive energy design, and a kit of parts that is easily configured in a setting without advanced building technologies. Led by Associate Professor of Architecture Anselmo Canfora, the project team consists of Aaron Bridgers, MArch ’15, William Haynes, BSArch ’15, Rachel Himes, BSArch ’15, Alexandra Laccarino, BSArch ’15, and Nicole Zaccak, BSArch ’16.

The 2014 Sarah McArthur Nix Traveling Fellowships were awarded to Marcus Brooks, MArch/MLA ’15, Sarah Karpinski, MArch ’15, Marina Michael, BSArch ’11, MArch ’15, and Elizabeth O’Brien, MArch ’15.

The 2014 Howland Traveling Fellowship was awarded to Katherine Cannella, MLA ’14, for her proposal, “Prison Gardens and the Changing Landscape of Women’s Correctional Institutions.”

Fourth-year BSArch students Arisa Chentaphun, Ben Lawson, Ellison Turpin, and Austin Walker designed the set for the TEDxU.Va. conference held on Grounds in March 2014.

Sam Eldridge, BSArch ’16, received the inaugural Blair Philips Memorial Award. The award was started in 2013 by friends, classmates, and family members in memory of Blair Philips, BSArch 11; it is given on the basis of merit to two exceptionally deserving undergraduate students, one studying at the School of Architecture and another who is in the Academical Village People, a student a cappella group at U.Va. Fundraising is ongoing for this award, which will eventually be endowed.

Chenyi Huang, MAH ’14, received the U.Va. Graduate Historic Preservation Fellowship and a graduate student research grant from the U.Va. Center for International Studies.

Harriott Jameson, Col ’07, MLA/MUEP ’14, was named a finalist for the 2014 Olmsted Scholars Program, run by the Landscape Architecture Foundation, recognizes and supports landscape architecture students with exceptional leadership potential.

Jennifer Livingston, MLA ’15, presented her work at the CELA conference in Baltimore in March and the EDRA’s annual conference in New Orleans this May.

Tatiana Marquez, MUEP ’15, received a Fulbright Scholarship to complete her master’s degree in urban and environmental planning at the A-School.

Gwen McGinn, MLA ’14, was awarded the inaugural Albemarle Garden Club Grant, offered as part of the club’s commemoration of its 100th anniversary, for her research project, “An Idea About the Ground: Describing Tree Roots as Entities that Transform and Create Spaces that Surround Them.”

Gwen McGinn, MLA ’14, and Rae Vassar, MLA ’14, received one of three Arts and Environmental Action Student Scholarships awarded by OpenGrounds in 2013 for their project “The Infrastructural Wild.”

The 2014 Carlo Pelliccia Traveling Fellowships were awarded to Sarah Beth McKay, MArch ’15, and Lauren Nelson, BSArch ’11, MArch ’15.

Sarah Beth McKay, MArch ’15, Julia Triman, MArch ’14, and Clayton Williams, MArch ’14, each received a student thesis research grant to support their thesis projects.

Margaret Nersten, BSArch ’15, was named the 2014 Kyle Kaufman Award recipient.

Sangyoon Park, BSArch ’16, was appointed the School of Architecture’s sustainability coordinator this spring.

Kurt West, MArch ’14, won a 2014 Unbuilt Award from the Washington, D.C., chapter of the AIA for his project “Polyhut.”

Chenying Huang, MAH ’14, and Kim Cory, president of the Albemarle Garden Club.

Clayton Williams, MLA ’14, presenting his winning thesis research, “An Idea About the Ground: Describing Tree Roots as Entities that Transform and Create Spaces that Surround Them.”

Gwen McGinn, MLA ’14, and Rae Vassar, MLA ’14.
Facult y an d Staff Notes

Ghazal Abbasy-Asbagh received a Fulbright grant to travel to Panama. She collaborated with the Municipal- ity of Panama and several local universities to develop sustainable urban design guidelines. She traveled to Panama this spring to continue work on two pilot projects.

Ghazal Abbasy-Asbagh served as the faculty editor of Catalyst, produced by the School in partnership with ACTAR Publishers (in Barcelona). The publication was generated from a U.Va. research seminar titled Paper Matters, led by Abbasy, Iñaki Alday, Robin DiPeso, and Rebecca Cooper. Rebecca Hora, M.Arch ’13, Ryan Metcalf, M.Arch ’13, and Matthew Pinyan, M.Arch ’13, served as student editors.

Julie Bargmann and D.I.R.T. Studio received a 2014 Inform Award in Landscape Architecture, honoring Mid-Atlantic designers, for their work on the Urban Outfitters Headquarters at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Emeritus Professor of Architecture Michael Bednar’s Three Musketeers was selected for Charlottesville’s 2013 Art in Place public sculpture exhibition program. The piece, which is installed at the intersection of Jefferson Park Avenue and Stadium Road for one year, consists of three connected abstract figures made of steel plate, colored different shades of red. The sculpture abstractly represents characters from the 1844 French novel by Alexandre Dumas The Three Musketeers.

In April, Professor Emeritus Warren Boeschenstein was a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome, where he researched the roles educational institutions bring environmental and faith organizations together to consensus-building effort for the Virginia Department of Health. Stakeholders came together to discuss how to improve and increase private-sector participation in its on-site septic project. A final report was submitted to the 2014 General Assembly following the gathering. Tanya Denckla Cobb and the Institute for Environmental Negotiation led “Living Waters: An Interfaith Summit” in November 2013. The meeting, attended by 150 leaders, represented the first effort in Virginia to combine design with research in science, social science, and the humanities to develop strategies and proposals for the future of this northern territory.

Michael Lee’s new book, Technology and the Garden (co-edited with Kenneth L. Helphand), was available this spring from Harvard University Press.

Karen Van Lengen has been an Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) Fellow at U.Va. for two years (2012–14). With collaborators Worthy Martin, Troy Rogers and Jim Welty, she completed the first phase of Soundscape Architecture, an interactive website sponsoring the sounds of iconic building interi- ors. She presented this project at the 10th International Conference on Technology, Knowledge, and Society, in

of Architectural and “Material Occupations” (in Otherwise Occupied, the exhibition catalogue for a collaborative event at the Venice Biennale). Crane received two research grants for her current book project, Inventing Informativity, from the American Philosophical Association and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts. She also won an All-University Teaching Award in 2014.

Phoenix Rising: An Alternative History (Routledge, 2013) and co-authored Global Sustainability (Cognella, 2014) with McIntire School of Commerce Professor Mark White. She presented at the Architectural Humanities Research Association’s “Transgression” conference held in the United Kingdom in November. This spring, Crisman co-chaired “Reflective Practices in a Global Age” at the Association of Collegiate Schools in Architecture (ACSA) national conference and presented at the U.Va. Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures’ “Disabling Normalcy” symposium. Her Paradise Creek Nature Park Learning Lab received honorable mention for the 2013 Prize for Design Research and Scholarship from the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

As part of the Appalachian Prosperity Project, Frank Dukes and Christine Gyova, M.U.P.E. ’04, continue to lead the Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI), a pioneer- ing effort integrating water quality, entrepreneurship, and economic development in southwest Virginia. CRVI has received funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Blue Moon Fund to enhance the river with several public access points.

Facilitated by Frank Dukes, the University and Commu- nity Action for Racial Equity (UCARE) project continues to break new ground. Last September, U.Va. President Teresa Sullivan appointed the Presidential Commission on Slavery and the University, fulfilling a number of UCARE’s main goals. In November, UCARE organized a statewide conference on race history for Virginia universities, bringing together faculty, students, admin- istrators, staff, and community members for dialogue on slavery, its aftermath, and its persistent influence on Virginia campuses. An international, multyear stakeholder dialogue on reducing disease and death from tobacco use, facilitat- ed by Frank Dukes and Tanya Denckla Cobb, developed eight policy recommendations that were published with co-author Scott Ballin in October 2013 by the Food and Drug Law Institute Policy Forum.

Matthew Jull and Leena Cho received a 2014 Jefferson Trust Grant to support their Arctic Design Initiative to create a multidisciplinary Arctic research platform, com-
Lorenz and Shiqiao Li, was published in March 2014. It shows how instrumental the past has been in forming urban organizations, revealing hidden continuities between ancient Chinese city formations and current proposals, and links them to a broader context. The book documents indigenous practices and approach, it explores the idea of a cultural district already formed during the opening of Yale School of Management’s new Edward P. Evans Hall.

Waldman was appointed a program director of the School’s India Program, while Pankaj Vir Gupta, BSArch ’93, the 2014 Harry S. Shure Visiting Professor, was appointed in-country director of the initiative. Waldman will be featured in the Architectural League of New York’s Emerging Voices 30: Form, Idea, and Resonance at The Architectural League of Princeton Architectural Press, forthcoming. His essay “Hide and Seek: From Guernica to Delphi” will be published by the University of Texas at Austin Architecture Department and Design. Waldman also submitted for publication a book entitled Lessons of the Lawn: Dialogues between Citizens and Architects.

Cypress Walker and Kim Tanzer have collaborated with John Campbell, a founding member of the new U.Va. Contemplative Sciences Center, to establish a monthly weekly yoga class in Campbell Hall. This new initiative resulted in the first Spring SARC Yoga Workshop in March 2014. In 2013, University of Virginia Press published Richard Guy Wilson’s Public Nature: Sceney, History, and Park Design, a collection of essays given at a conference sponsored by the Architecture History and Landscape Architecture departments in 2008. The book is co-edited with Shaun Eying and Ethan Carr. Wilson again directed and taught at the Victorian Society of America’s Nineteenth Century Summer School in Newport, R.I., last June (and will again this June, as he has done since 1979).

Lester Yuan presented at the Arts Schools Network’s annual conference in New York City last October. As design director at Gensler, he has his firm recently completed the University of Houston Classroom and Business Building and were awarded the High School for Performing and Visual Arts in Houston as a new design project.
A Conversation with the AYAC Co-Chairs

Kyle Sturgeon, B.Arch ’05 (KS), Patrick Woods, B.Arch ’06 (PW), and Bernard Harkless, B.Arch ’07 (BH) co-chair the A-School Young Alumni Council (AYAC). Although they
live in different cities (Boston, San Francisco, and New York City, respectively), they recently reunited by phone to share about their current lives and work, A-School reflections, and AYAC activities. Excerpts from that conversation are below.

What is your current job or domain?

KS: I wear a couple hats. I direct studios and technology management at WORKac, a Boston-based architectural studio. I also run an architecture education program at the University of Virginia.

BH: My renovation project, a building built in the 1900s, will be occupied in the fall. I’ve also spent time on small projects, including an intervention at a school that has a vibrant studio culture.

PW: Every bit helps. The School needs our support to stay competitive — to keep our degrees powerful in the real world.

KS: Giving at even a low price point, and staying involved with other young alumni, keeps you tuned in and establishes a connection you will maintain for your entire life.

What problem are you solving for customers?

PW: We’re working on a website in which customers navigate a multi-step sign-up process. Thinking about how the user moves through this virtual space is akin to considering how a person moves through a physical space. Storytelling is a helpful way to think about the person’s interaction at each step.

KS: That’s right, it’s Patrick’s baby — it’s his fault!

BH: Except Patrick was first — he asked us to join when it started in fall 2010.

What’s the AYAC been up to this past year?

PW: We’ve significantly strengthened our core regions and added the Philadelphia region, now one of our most active groups. We also grew our brand. We want to be known as an organization that hosts interesting, relevant events through which alumni can reconnect with the School, former peers, and the architectural community.

BH: We also put more structure around our events. Now, each AYAC member is tasked with planning an event each year. Having more events per region increases the chance alumni can participate.

KS: Each region member gets to host an all-alumni service event and externship reception as well.

Any exciting plans for the coming year?

PW: We’re working to make ourselves and other AYAC members available to current students and recent graduates. We will continue to strengthen our regional groups, and we’re also looking for ways to better serve other young alumni who live outside our core regions.

KS: Although fundraising is not a primary function of the AYAC, all of you give financially to the School. Why?

PW: It means a lot to the School to get even $10 from a recent graduate. It says you value what the School gave you.

BH: Every bit helps. The School needs our support to stay competitive — to keep our degrees powerful in the real world.

KS: Giving at even a low price point, and staying involved with other young alumni, keeps you tuned in and establishes a connection you will maintain for your entire life.

Any final comments?

PW: Get involved! Come to AYAC events!

Interview By Jenny Abe

2014 Externship Sponsors

California

Esherick Hornby Dodge and Davis (EHD)
Griffin Enright Architects
MATESYS
Mia Lehrer + Associates
PWP Landscape Architecture
Robie Shires
Tom Leader Studio
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Georgia

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Shields, Dinges & Merritt (SDM)
Studio Gang Architects
Louisiana

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Eskevich + Durem & Ripple
Massachusetts

DesignArc Architects
Leers Weinzapfle Associates
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA)
NBBJ
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
Reed Hilderbrand
Salkida Architectural Services
Studio Lui Architects
Utile
Volk, the National Transportation Systems Center
New York

AECOM Architecture Research Office (ARO)
Balmer Associates
Bairie Ingels Group (BIG)
Diller Scofidio + Renfro
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Evanian Architects
Emilsky Osher Architect (EOA)
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Laura Neim Architects
LTL Architects
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Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA)
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SPG Architects
Thomas Piffler and Partners
Todd Williams Billie Tsien Architects (TWBTA)
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Duda|Parks Architects
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City of Norfolk Department of Planning and Community Development
D.I.R.T. Studio
Formwork Architecture
Gavel and Holmes Architecture
Harbury Evans Wright Valtias + Company
Hays + Ewing Design Studio
John Tunnell Associates
McKay Carson
Michael Vergason Landscape Architects
Richmond 2015
SIMW
VMDO Architects
Water Street Studio
Washington

ARC Architects
Gralnick + Guthrie
The Miller Hull Partnership
MVVA
NBBJ
Olson Kundig Architects
Washington D.C.

AECOM
Ayers Saint Gross
Brown Harvey Architects
Griffin Enright Architects
Hartman-Cox Architects
HOK
Landscape Architecture Bureau
Lehman Smith McCleish
National Building Museum
REI Architects
Robert M. Gurney Architects
SmithGroupJJR
Studio 27 Architecture

Extership Program Update

The U.Va. School of Architecture Externship Program is an annual program that allows current undergraduate and graduate students at any level and in any discipline — architectural history, architecture, landscape architecture, or urban and environmental planning — to explore a career interest in an experiential learning environment outside the classroom.

Students participating in the Externship Program spend one week with a sponsoring organization, where they gain a deeper understanding of the profession through hands-on experiences ranging from site visits and sitting in on client meetings to building models. Sponsoring organizations also benefit from this experience of working closely with current students. Hosting externs offers mentoring opportunities and a way of giving back to the School.

Interest in the Externship Program has grown significantly over the past few years, increasing from 80 student applicants in 2010 to 126 applicants this year. The 2013–2014 Externship Program placed 115 School of Architecture students with 104 sponsoring organizations in the United States and Canada. The School extends heartfelt thanks to all of these sponsors.

To learn how your firm can participate in the Externship Program next year, contact Betsy Roettger at bet@virginia.edu or 434.924.3125.
Profile in Giving

Dahne and Chip Morgan

Tracy P. Morgan, MLA ‘93, was a naturalist at heart. However, she not only reveled in the beauty of the natural world; she also had an extraordinary ability to accentuate and magnify that beauty for others. “Tracy was one-of-a-kind, with a limitless heart, and immeasurable amounts of both realized and unrealized creativity,” said Warren T. Byrd, Jr., MLA ’78, emeritus professor of landscape architecture and Morgan’s former adviser at the School of Architecture. Nearly four years after Morgan passed away in 2009, her parents, Dahne and Walter E. “Chip” Morgan, of Charlottesville, Va., have created a lasting tribute to her at the A-School: the Tracy Pendleton Morgan Memorial Fund in Landscape Architecture. The endowment will support a wide range of activities, such as annual awards, travel fellowships, workshops and lectures by visiting speakers, field trips, and other forums for experiential learning.

Dahne noted that she and Chip, along with other family members, previously created a Jefferson Scholarship at U.Va. in memory of their daughter Robin A. Morgan, Col ’85, who passed away in 1985. Dahne commented: “After consulting with several individuals, we decided that, for Tracy, we wanted to set up a very versatile fund. We figured the School knows what will serve students best at any given time. Plus, the open-ended aspect is one way it relates to Tracy’s heart and ours.”

“Tracy loved trees, so this was certainly fitting” said Chip, who has taken up natural history, geology, and botany in retirement. “Tracy taught me trees, and she, of course, learned them from Warren Byrd.”

Dahne added, “Tracy was the only of our children initially unsure about coming to U.Va., but as soon as she met Warren, that did it, and he became her mentor.” After graduating from the A-School, Tracy practiced landscape architecture with firms in Virginia and Maryland while pursuing other interests on the side; she also freelanced for a time.

“Tracy had a spirited sense of placefulness, a design sensibility that was as sensitive and nuanced as her beautiful drawings,” Byrd recalled. “She loved the qualities and aspects of our discipline that most define and challenge us every day — that is, how to strike that right balance between a deep love and affection for all living things, especially plants and animals, with the kind of human inter- vention that responsible design calls for.”

In a sense, Byrd’s and Tracy’s mentorship relationship has come full circle. Each fall, Chip, a retired ophthalmologist, accompanies Cole Burrell, a lecturer in landscape architecture, on class trips to the Blue Ridge Parkway. During the outings, which Byrd once led, Chip gives geology presentations to the students. Chip has also taught, and both he and Dahne have taken, courses through U.Va.’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

The Morgans have nurtured their children’s alma mater in myriad other ways. They are involved in the Miller Center, avid supporters of the men’s and women’s tennis teams, and former U.Va. Parents Committee members. Active members of the community, they spent a decade volunteering for the Wintergreen Nature Foundation — an organization in which Tracy was also involved.

“We value landscape architecture because its implementa- tion enhances the beauty of the world and connects outside space to inside space,” Dahne said. “Most importantly, the field promotes stewardship of the land — something close to Tracy’s heart and ours.”

By Jenny Abél

Profile in Giving

Katherine Willson-Ostberg

A member of the School of Architecture (SARC) Foundation Board, Katherine Willson-Ostberg, MArch ’86, and her husband, Preben Ostberg, of Palm Beach, Fla., are generous supporters of the School’s Veneto Programs. Two of their children have attended U.Va.: Kristen Ostberg, MLA ’12, and Christian Ostberg, McIntire ’15. Willson- Ostberg also holds a bachelor’s degree in art history from Emory University and a master’s degree in environmental design from Pratt Institute. Following are excerpts from a recent interview with her.

Tell us more about the “inherent value” you see in the Veneto Programs.

For one, no other school offers a program like it. Secondly, the lessons — the crossroads of East and West, the language of water and land, urban environment juxtaposed with landscape and Palladio’s villas — are valid starting points for many types of exercises. And hand drawing remains a central component, which I think gives the programs even higher recognizable value than before computer-generated design became the norm. Drawing causes you to see differently. I’ve heard many students return elated with discovering that side of themselves.

What else makes the A-School special or exceptional to you?

Nothing beats this environment. The forever wisdom of Jefferson — to always push and think — can be applied to anything, and that’s what the Architecture School does. Here, it’s not enough to be a “good designer.” You have to defend your thinking, back up your intentions. You’re expected to be literate in the historic or philosophical base points — to understand where things come from and where they are now, to determine where they should go in the future. That manner of thinking was inherent in every course I took at the A-School. It gave the program validity for whatever profession you pursued. I’m sure we feel this “other 50%” (see page 4). Also, the School’s size is just right: big enough for the proper synergy, but small enough so you have those casual encounters outside your usual area. And, of course, the quality of the faculty is remarkable.

Interview by Jenny Abél

To learn more about how to join the Veneto Society, contact Scott Kerr at skerr@virginia.edu or 434-924-7717.

The Venice Semester Abroad Program, reconstituted this past year, is an example of successful Board collabora- tion. Dean Tarzer put the leadership — namely, Cammy Brothers — behind our efforts, and that program is now fully subscribed. In fact, I recently told Preben there is more student interest than we can accommodate.

Profile in Giving

Katherine Willson-Ostberg, March ’86.

Katherine Willson-Ostberg, March ’86.

Katherine Willson-Ostberg, March ’86.
Letter from the Foundation Board President

From the introduction of the research themes to the School’s commitment to the civic realm to international initiatives to design and health, the last four issues of Colonnade have chronicled the impact Kim Tanzer has had on the School of Architecture during her tenure as dean. For me, this is an especially fitting final issue of Colonnade under her deanship. Its theme – the power of a design education – reflects her pride in all of the School’s alumni and her broad embrace of our wonderfully diverse community.

“Design thinking” has become quite the catchphrase lately and is being taught in business, engineering, and leadership schools, among others. I prefer Dean Tanzer’s reformulation: the practical imagination. Not only does this expression harken back to the University’s original architect, but, more importantly, it reminds us that a design education is intended to help us make a difference in the real world. It is not just an abstract concept.

Architecture schools in general, and ours in particular, have an important leadership role to play as those in other disciplines begin to realize the value of the practical imagination. For us, design is not a college elective or part of a problem-solving toolkit; it is a way of being and approaching the world around us — a very part of our DNA. We have a great deal to contribute, but we need to take our place at the proverbial table. Dean Tanzer has done much to strengthen our ability, quite literally, to improve the world.

The first five years of our next dean’s tenure will be crucial as we approach the University’s bicentennial and the A-School’s centennial in 2019. These milestones will give us occasion to celebrate past achievements across a broad range of intellectual endeavors. More importantly, that year, and those leading up to it, offer a unique opportunity to converse about the possibilities and accomplishments yet to come, and the resources and support that will be necessary to fulfill the Jeffersonian vision. As we work to articulate the School’s opportunities and needs as its second century begins, I hope you will be a part of that discussion — in part, by supporting the School financially. Without you, the incredible potential of our students and faculty will go unrealized, their ideas untested, and their aspirations unexplored. With your help, however, we have the ability, quite literally, to improve the world.

Finally, please join me and the School of Architecture Foundation Board in thanking Kim Tanzer for her exceptional service, leadership, and dedication as dean. With each of us doing whatever we can to help, the future of our School is undoubtedly bright.

Paul S. Weinschenk, BSArch ’87
President, School of Architecture Foundation Board of Trustees

Why Do You Give Back to the A-School?

“In thanks for inspired teaching, many decades ago, by Bruce Abbey, Benjamin Howland, Jane Johnson Jacobs, Rob McLeod, Meade Palmer, Harry Porter, Jaque Robertson, Peter Rolland, and Michael Vergason.

“In recognition of what a bargain that 1970s education was for my parents, and how little the Commonwealth of Virginia asks me to contribute to public education today.

“In celebration of the bright and caring students I teach, and their desire to improve the ecological performance and human experience of constructed landscapes in our cities, suburbs, and countrysides.”

-Beth K. Meyer, BSArch ’78, MLA ’82
Merrill D. Peterson Professor of Landscape Architecture, U.Va. School of Architecture

Meyer has made an annual gift to the School for 28 consecutive years.

“Through giving to the School of Architecture I want to help talented and deserving students gain the critical and problem-solving skills I learned and still use in my architectural practice every day. At the same time I hope to strengthen the School’s broader culture of giving — inspiring passionate practitioners who are driven to excel in design, and to contribute to the profession and their communities.”

-David T. Haesign, BSArch ’76
Partner, Bonstra | Haesign ARCHITECTS

Haesign made a planned gift to the School to fund the David T. and Patricia L. Haesign Endowed Scholarship Fund in Architecture, which will support an annual scholarship for an outstanding undergraduate student in architecture, based on merit and demonstrated financial need. The Haesigns are also longtime Dean’s Forum members.

“ar to be able to go to U.Va. in general is a blessing, and to be part of its School of Architecture is an absolute gift. The Lawn and its environs really do offer countless microcosms of how to think about, develop, and resolve design. It’s a wonderful place, and I wouldn’t want the experience itself, nor the School’s reputation, to be compromised by lack of funding or alumni participation. Despite being a ‘state’ school, its programs cannot be maintained, much less grow and prosper, without the help of individual gifts. I clearly benefited from the opportunity to attend U.Va., thanks to my predecessors who sought to make it extraordinary. Why would I not be willing to do the same?”

-Andy Welch, BSArch ’89, MArch ’93
Design Partner and Principal, CWB Architects

Welch made a multiyear pledge to the Veneto Programs in honor of his 25th Reunion.

“The A-School represents some of my most formative years both personally and professionally. The pedagogical approaches of the School are truly unique within the context of architecture schools, and I believe that, as alumni, we have the opportunity to help sustain the programs that place U.Va. students among the strongest and best-prepared professionals out there, even in fields that extend far beyond the realm of architecture.”

-Alex F. de Mesa, BSArch ’06
Associate, Steven Harris Architects

De Mesa is a new member of the Dean’s Forum at the Associate level (for young alumni one to nine years since graduation).

“The School of Architecture helped me leverage my architectural education in arenas beyond the traditional practice of architecture. My U.Va. connections have opened many doors for me, both professionally and personally. I support the A-School because I am grateful for the School’s many gifts to me and want to help ensure future generations can enjoy the School’s richness as well.”

-Susan W. Ross, BSArch ’83
Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, Clark Construction Group LLC

In addition to her individual donations, Ross has stewarded a strong relationship between Clark Construction and the A-School. Among many other initiatives, the company has funded the Clark-House Colloquium Series and Clark Construction Scholarships.

Paul S. Weinschenk, BSArch ’87
President, School of Architecture Foundation Board of Trustees

Foundation Notes

The 25th Anniversary of the Dean’s Forum Dinner at Monticello and Montalto, September 28, 2013

Colonnade
Lillian K. Stone

Lillian “Libby” Stone, 87, of Rancho Bernardo, Calif., formerly of Belmont, Mass., and Arlington, Va., passed away on March 7, 2013, after a brief illness. She was the first woman to graduate from the College of Engineering at Northeastern University. Immediately after World War II, she went to Oak Ridge, Tenn., with engineering firm Stone & Webster (no relation), with which she held co-op employment until 1948. Afterwards, she became a homemaker and had two sons. One of her sons is Thatcher A. Stone, Col ’78, Law ’82, a close friend of the School of Architecture and a trustee of the Madison Lane and Rugby Road Charitable Trust together with Frank D. Kittredge, Jr., BArch ’78.

Mrs. Stone pursued an advanced degree at Harvard University in the early 1960s. She taught physics in Weymouth, Mass., where she is remembered for making the subject come alive by taking students on field trips to watch bridges and tunnels being built. After being widowed in 1966, she ultimately returned to Stone & Webster, where she was the lead safety engineer for Indian Point (N.Y.), Connecticut Yankee I and II (Conn.), and Seabrook (N.H.), she was the lead safety engineer for Indian Point (N.Y.), Connecticut Yankee I and II (Conn.), and Seabrook (N.H.), among other nuclear power stations.

From 1975 until her retirement in 2002, Mrs. Stone worked as the branch chief of industrial projects in the Office of Environmental Project Review (now the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance), within the Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Department of the Interior. In that role, she was responsible for advising the Secretary about any and all land use that might have an environmental impact on federal land, including range land, National Forests, wildlife refuges, the navigable waterways of the United States, and the National Park System. Mrs. Stone’s impact on the environment of the United States was substantial, including working with then-governor of Arizona Fife Symington on efforts to preserve air quality and visibility at the Grand Canyon. Mrs. Stone was awarded three meritorious service awards by three Secretaries of the Interior. In the spirit of her achievements, and the manner in which she used science and engineering to expand the national discourse about the public’s interest in the natural and man-made environment, the Madison Lane and Rugby Road Charitable Trust endowed the Lillian K. Stone Distinguished Lectureship in Environmental Policy. The endowment will benefit equally the University’s Schools of Architecture and Law. The Stone Distinguished Lectureship will support a current faculty member, one or more invited eminent scholars, or a conference with resulting publications. The goals of the fund are to educate students from both schools on environmental policy and the National Environmental Policy Act, and to support a dialogue about the values, methodology, techniques, and concerns that arise in connection with land use, developments, and natural resources.

In Memoriam

Lillian K. Stone

In Remembrance

Lillian K. Stone

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