



## **2020 Ones to Watch: Robert Ikes, H2M architects + engineers**

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Name: Robert Ikes III, AIA, LEED AP, CDT

Company: H2M architects + engineers

Title: Assistant Vice President/ NYC Office Director

Education: New Jersey Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Architecture

Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game-changer” in the advancement of your career?

When I think back, several events and decisions stand out that put me in the position that I am in today. Early in my career, I questioned whether or not I was technically savvy enough to work at a large firm like H2M; but after I was given an opportunity to design The Hilton Garden Inn at Stony Brook University, a new five-story hotel, I quickly realized I was stronger than I thought and had not yet reached my full potential. My strengths working within the real estate market developed over the years working on projects throughout Long Island. It wasn't until I made the decision to move my home office to NYC that I saw my career quickly advance to the architectural studio leader then shortly after to the office director position.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

My family and I love to boat, enjoy the beaches, and appreciate our community parks. Routinely, I participate in cleaning the debris that collects on our shores and within animal habitats. At times, I have had a boat full of other people's garbage that I've collected from the beach. I also understand the importance of a donation. Whether it be a financial donation or time, the more people that feel the same, the more of an impact we can make to help others. I do both, I participate in running events that are held to raise money, I participate in Habitat for Humanity builds, and my band has performed neighborhood shows to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

If your life were made into a movie, what actor would you want to portray you?

Ha, I needed to seek the opinions of my two daughters and they said Ryan Reynolds can really capture my wittiness and sense of humor and that's coming from a 13 and 16 year old.

What led you to your current profession?

I have always had a God-given talent for art and a passion for construction. It was either go into

architecture or pursue a career as a rock and roll drummer. My mom was not going to pay for drum lessons so I went into architecture.

What do you like most about your job?

I enjoy being able to collaborate with my team to develop a design that wins the client over. I love working toward that next opportunity that I can share with my team and making new connections. Relationships are so valuable in our industry, both within and outside the firm.

Who or what inspires you?

The short answer is everything. Inspiration comes from all around me. My family, my NYC team, the built and unbuilt environments I can see opportunity. What's interesting is I never know where it's going to come from on the next project. I purposely surround myself with people I respect and appreciate. They inspire me and influence my work every day.

What social media platform do you use the most professionally?

Instagram is what I use most consistently on a regular basis. I follow many design and construction firms throughout NYC and I enjoy watching all the stories on what's happening outside of H2M. I get to learn a little more about personalities and character watching community activity involvement, project accomplishments, or company hosted events.

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