



2020 Ones to Watch: Ryan Zegarelli, SWBR

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Name: Ryan Zegarelli

Company: SWBR

Title: Associate & Project Architect

Education: Bachelors of Science in Architecture , University at Buffalo

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

The restoration project at Our Lady of Victory Church in downtown Rochester. I was able to take on all aspects of the architectural side of the project and saw it through construction. I managed the project locally and successfully collaborated with local craftsmen and an internationally recognized liturgical arts workshop called GRANDA, based in Spain.

Who or what inspires you?

Architects of the past inspire me. Hand-drafters. Before BIM, before CAD, before calculators! Some of the greatest architects in the past had the most intimate knowledge of the construction materials and methods and were geniuses with geometry, trigonometry and more. They were masters of proportions and designed not just buildings, but fabrics, tiles, fixtures, and furniture. There is something so basic and beautiful about designing with your hands, with just pencil and paper. But it is not easy! I would be lost without a mouse and computer screen.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

For many years I was a mentor for the ACE Mentorship program, meeting weekly to mentor high school students in the Architecture, Construction and Engineering fields. I’ve also served on committees for the AIA Rochester Chapter. Within the firm, I am always looking for ways to get younger staff & college interns excited about the profession, from construction site visits to tours at local factories to see the products we design with being made. I also really enjoy giving tours of my projects to interest groups, boy scout troops, and the public.

What do you like most about your job?

I really enjoy all aspects of a project. At first its all about listening and forming a relationship. Helping a client see a vision through conceptual sketches and getting them excited about an idea is always top of the list for me. Then jump to the end of the project and now we’re walking together and experiencing the spaces that only a few months ago were just lines on paper. It’s all about people.

