



Outlook for 2010: Architects as leaders

January 25, 2010 - Spotlights

I'd like to take this month's column to introduce myself and my agenda for the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter.

I am a registered architect, a member of the AIA, the International Interior Design Association, and the Society of American Registered Architects. I have been a part of AIANY leadership since 2004, and am finishing a two-year term as the vice chair for architecture of the New York Building Congress. As chairman and CEO of Mancini Duffy, I have had the good fortune to work with a very talented group of people who have helped to build a multi-office, full-service firm with a national reputation for its strategic planning and design capabilities. I've been with Mancini Duffy for fifteen years, and prior to that I spent fifteen years at Gensler, the last ten of which I was a vice president/principal. My roots in New York go farther back still - I am a Brooklyn native, and still involved with my alma mater, Brooklyn Tech High School, as a mentor and recently elected to the board of the Alumni Foundation.

I list these accomplishments not to boast, but to offer credentials for what I hope to accomplish this year as AIA New York Chapter president. Each year, the chapter president picks a theme; last year, you got to know my predecessor, Sherida Paulsen, FAIA, on these pages, and watched her explore her theme of "Elevating Architecture: Design Literacy for All." This year, rather than elevating architecture, I'd like to elevate and celebrate the architects themselves for all they do as designers, planners, innovators, and leaders. The 2010 Theme is "Architect as Leader."

The ball is already rolling on my year's agenda. In December, the Chapter adopted a five-year plan that will not only ensure its long term fiscal and programmatic health, but will encourage it to be better engaged in the community. The Chapter facilitated a number of Energy Code workshops this winter, introducing architects to the changes that the recently-approved Greater Greener Buildings legislation will bring to the NYC building code. These workshops reinforce my commitment to making the chapter a leader in sustainable design and a resource for all those in the city who want to "go green" in our community.

As we emerge from the worst recession of our lifetime, the AIA New York Chapter will redouble its efforts to support the design community until our industry gets back on its feet. We will continue to show our commitment to our members and professional colleagues with our "Not Business As Usual" lunchtime programs.

At NBAU we enhance job skills, training, and provide new opportunities for professional development. I hope to do something similar for the next generation of architects, by inaugurating a leadership training program with a local university. I have experience managing large teams of architects and firms, but I see that many in our community do not have the leadership and administrative skills it takes to make successful leaders on a project or firm level. Since business school students are now taking design courses, why should our architects-in-training not take

business courses? I hope to align with the real estate community in this effort.

What else is coming up? We're already planning for my presidential theme show to open this fall: Integrate : Innovate - Building Better Together, and the Center for Architecture has issued an open call for innovative curtain wall designs. The winning design will be built, at full-scale model, in the center's double height space facing LaGuardia Place. If you have any colleagues that would be interested in submitting a design, direct them to our "competitions" page on the aiany.org website. There's still a few more weeks to submit.

The Design Awards program is now accepting submissions; winners will be celebrated April 14 at Cipriani's Wall Street. The Design Awards Luncheon, an annual tradition that I inaugurated, brings together leaders from architecture, real estate, and the construction community to honor the best in recent construction in and by New Yorkers, while offering vital support to the chapter and Center for Architecture Foundation.

It's the third week in January, and I am more excited than ever about my tenure. Some of my initiatives are still in formation, and I look forward to developing - and to sharing with you on these pages - my program over the next twelve months. It's going to be a great year!

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