

Business First of Columbus - April 6, 2009
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COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

Friday, April 3, 2009 | Modified: Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 8:00am EDT

Road to College of Fellows traveled by few architects

Business First of Columbus - by [Brian R. Ball](#)

Becoming an architect required Jack Hedge to invest years in college and on-the-job training.

But hard work and dedication to the profession during the last 35 years or so has earned the DesignGroup Inc. partner a return trip to another college of sorts.

The **American Institute of Architects** professional association in early May will install Hedge and 111 other architects nationally into its College of Fellows, an elite group of about 2,765 among nearly 86,000 AIA members.

Just **12 other current members** of the 750 architects in the Columbus AIA chapter have been invited to join the fellowship established in 1952.

“It’s not a prize, it’s not an award, it’s not a reward,” said Columbus architect Frank Elmer, a fellow in the class of 2001 who is chairman of the Columbus AIA Fellows Committee.

“It’s an honor,” the Lincoln Street Studios Ltd. principal said. “You’ve been recognized by your peers for contributions in some way to the profession.”

'Green' design pioneer

Hedge will be honored for his design prowess and a career built on how good design can reduce a building’s use of energy and provide other environmental benefits. The design industry within the past decade has increasingly emphasized this so-called “sustainable design” standard amid concerns of rising energy costs and the impact fossil fuels may have on the environment as well as water conservation, water quality and other issues.

Hedge said his interest in the environment dates back to 1973 amid the energy awareness that developed during the Arab oil embargo against the West.

While a graduate student at **Ohio State University**, Hedge wrote an environmental thesis called “New Town in Town” that won him the Owens Corning Energy Conservation Award.

“That’s kind of what got me going,” Hedge said. “It made me think, ‘This is neat stuff. No matter what, we should be’ conserving energy.

He continued to read professional and academic articles on the subject early in his career. In 1980, he started putting some of the concepts to work in the design of his Worthington Hills home. Those concepts include the use of natural lighting through well-placed windows and the construction of the home into the hillside lot that provides natural insulation for his family room, dining room and den.

He also created a black brick Trombe wall that absorbs heat from sunlight in cool weather that gets reflected into the house in the evening after the exterior of the wall gets covered.

“I’d experiment with some of these things I had read about,” Hedge said.

His first commercial experiment came in 1983 when he was asked to design energy efficiency into the Whetstone neighborhood library. That project used building orientation and glazed glass as part of an effort to maximize natural lighting while limiting the amount of heat from direct sunlight during the summer.

“That kind of gave us a chance,” Hedge said, “to demonstrate some of the principles.”

Many paths, same destination

Demand for reduced energy costs and other motivations in recent years has kept the architect busy with such projects as the DesignGroup-anchored office building at 515 E. Main St. and the **Ohio School Employees Retirement System**-anchored building at 300 E. Broad St.

Hedge also serves as design principal for the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and a consultant for the Franklin County Courthouse, both under construction.

“For the last 25 years,” Hedge said, “I have tried to show people how (sustainable design) works.”

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Hedge is joining an impressive list of local chapter fellows: Friedrich Bohm, the retired chairman of NBBJ; Curt Moody, CEO of the Moody Nolan Inc.; and Carole Olshavsky, the 2008 College of Fellows chancellor and Ohio's former state architect who serves as senior executive overseeing capital improvements for the Columbus Public Schools.

Robert Livesey, a professor and former director of Ohio State's Knowlton School of Architecture, earned a fellowship in the area of architecture education.

Elmer, whom the AIA recognized in 2001 for excellence in urban design, said Columbus AIA fellows such as architects Bob Loversidge and Dellas Harder joined the ranks for their work in historic preservation and design. Other fellows, he said, were elected for contributions in alternative or specialized careers or service to the community or industry.

"So you can't say all fellows are great designers," Elmer said. "What you can say is, all AIA fellows are really good architects in some way."

Architects nominated must present letters of recommendation and a work portfolio. They must detail accomplishments of any chapter or national committee and officer posts they have served.

"It's actually pretty difficult to get in," said Bohm. "It's not an easy process."

Loversidge, president of **Schooley Caldwell Associates Inc.**, served on the recent jury which elected Hedge. As with any design contest jury, judging candidates has its rewards.

"You get to see what the cream of the crop is working on nationally," he said.

Ongoing service

While volunteering within the industry can earn architects support for election as an AIA fellow, many of those elected work together on special projects.

For example, Elmer said the committee supports officers of an affiliated chapter of architectural students at Ohio State through annual book scholarships. They also have served as formal greeters at the state AIA convention and have volunteered to lead various education programs or judge design competitions.

Elmer said one downside to having a committee of fellows is the inability to simply send out a call for volunteers since, unlike other AIA committees at the local and national level, the pool of those qualified to serve is limited.

"My committee, I can't expand it," he said. "We have no control over (the membership of) our committee."

AIA fellows do talk to up-and-coming architects and veterans about the group so they aspire to work toward AIA fellowship, he said. Still, Elmer said the committee recently had its numbers reduced by the ravages of time.

He noted John Schooley Jr., a second-generation principal at Schooley Caldwell, passed away in February while Joe Scalabrin, the retired head of store planning for **Limited Brands Inc.**, passed away in August.

"We lost two," Elmer said, "and we picked up one."

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