

ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE ALUMNI SOCIETY NEWS

The Arts and Architecture Alumni Society has experienced a year of unprecedented change, with five new directors, five retiring directors, a new executive committee and a director's election to the governing body of the Penn State Alumni Association.

Effective July 1, **Emilee Taylor** ('74 B.S. Art Ed.) assumed the leadership of the Alumni Society, after serving three three-year terms on the board and then returning after a two-year lapse. She will serve as president until June 30, 2009. Rounding out the executive committee are **Jeff Morgan** ('74 B.Arch.) as vice president and **Sue Manus** ('79 B.A. Music) as secretary/treasurer. (See box below for list of new and retiring board members.) **Rex Gedney** ('80 B.S. Arch.), the Alumni Society's immediate past president, is now also serving on Alumni Council, the Penn State Alumni Association's governing body. He is the first College of Arts and Architecture alumnus to serve on Alumni Council in an elected position.

Arts and Architecture Alumni Society membership is open to all graduates of the College of Arts and Architecture. Membership is obtained by joining the Penn State Alumni Association; there are no additional dues to join the organization at the college level. In conjunction with the academic units in the college, the Alumni Society sponsors a number of alumni receptions and reunions throughout the country, and supports the college's annual alumni awards program. The society also hosts an annual "Career Tips" event for Arts and Architecture students and has established a scholarship endowment, which currently provides financial assistance to two students per year. To join the organization, to get involved in an event, to be considered for board membership or to inquire about how to make a scholarship contribution, contact **Joyce Hoffman**, director of alumni relations and communications, at jhoffman@psu.edu.

NEW ALUMNI SOCIETY BOARD DIRECTORS

(effective July 1, 2007, for a three-year term)

Matt Connors ('93 B.A. Art)

Mark Hackenburg ('88 B.S. L.Arch.)

Amy Zuckerman Moll ('97 B.A. Graphic Design)

Kurt Pitluga ('90 M.A., '94 Ph.D. Art History)

Christopher Short ('02 B.S. Music Ed.)

RETIRING ALUMNI SOCIETY BOARD DIRECTORS

(all served for multiple three-year terms)

Jeff Kunkel ('82 B.S., '95 D.Ed. Music Ed.) (three terms, plus two additional years as immediate past president)

Jim Villani ('84 B.M. Music, B.S. Music Ed.) (three terms; secretary/treasurer for most of his tenure)

Gary Bloss ('72 B.S. L.Arch.) (three terms)

Jean Dance ('64 M.A. Theatre) (three terms)

Lynne Smyers ('84 B.A. Graphic Design) (three terms)

James Pashek ('74 B.S. L.Arch.) (two terms)

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE ALUMNI AWARD WINNER

ENTREPRENEURIAL ARCHITECT FOCUSES ON DESIGN/BUILD SERVICES

Tim McDonald ('89 B.Arch.) is an architect. And a real estate developer. And a contractor. Oh, yeah, and an entrepreneur, too.

So how does he manage with only 24 hours in a day? By combining all the aspects of designing and building structures, from site selection to financing to the actual construction work, into three related firms that he runs with his brothers and one of his childhood friends.

In 1997, Tim and his brother Pat, a master plumber, co-founded Onion Flats, a Philadelphia-based real estate development and design/build firm. The firm now also includes their brother John, a licensed realtor. "When we decided to create this firm, it was a no-brainer to include the real estate aspect, because this way we're our own clients," he explains. "We are able to design how we think is important and cut through the layers that exist when a number of different companies are involved."

However, Tim says it's not just about being in control. "I'm simply more interested in exploring my own work than a client's work. Life's too short for fighting over colors."

McDonald recently expanded his business venture to include architecture firm Plumbob, which he started with longtime friend Howard Steinberg, and JIG, a construction management and licensed green roof and solar panel installation company that includes Steinberg and the three McDonald brothers. Together, they provide full design/build services for their own projects and selected partners.

According to Tim, design/build "is becoming a more accepted way of bringing architecture into the world." He says the integrated design/build method prevents the problems that often arise between separate architects, clients and contractors and makes the entire building process more creative. "Being the owner, designer and builder means you can leave space in your drawings for idea development, allowing you to take the creative process into the building process."

McDonald says the architecture industry's increasing focus on the design/build process is simply a return to how things used to be done. "The earliest architects trained as stonemasons, but in the 19th century, with the creation of distinct disciplines of knowledge with respect to engineering, building and architecture, architects began to lose their position in society and in the building process as 'master builders,'" he explains, adding it was only a matter of time before architects became marginalized and lost the respect of builders and engineers.

According to McDonald, if you're an architect, it only makes sense that you also understand how to build a structure. He grew up in the building business, but did not understand what architecture really was. "I didn't realize that it was one of the most interdisciplinary disciplines you could take on. My exposure to what an architect did was limited to what Mr. Brady did on *The Brady Bunch*," Tim explains. "I was just blown away when I learned that architecture also involves communication, history, business and so many other things. But I saw that as a plus, because I've always been one to live with a full plate."

Penn State's rigorous architecture curriculum kept McDonald's plate full. He says he appreciated the professors who really challenged him, including **Don Kunze** and **Katsu Muramoto**. "Don Kunze never just gave an answer—he always made me think and consider the 'underside' of everything," McDonald remembers. "And Katsu Muramoto taught me how to teach. He taught me about the power of silence and how to motivate a student."

Dennis Playdon was also a notable influence during McDonald's fourth year. "Dennis, who was from South Africa, was an astute, articulate and worldly architect. He could speak about architecture on so many levels but was so humble."

Tim also credits Muramoto with showing him the benefits of international experience. Through Muramoto, after graduation McDonald got a job in Japan working with architect and sculptor Yasuo Yoshida in his steel and wood shop, where they built everything they designed. "International experiences are essential," McDonald notes. "It's all about possibility, and how you remain inspired."

Tim stays inspired by choosing his projects carefully and by spending lots of time with his family, which includes his wife, Liz Kinder; son, Jack Peter and a daughter expected this fall. To him, practicing architecture is a way of life and a learning process that never ends. He advises current students not to draw a line between their time in school and when they enter the profession. "You never stop being a student of architecture," he notes. "You need to create your own studio in the world, and remember that you don't suddenly become a professional." —AMM

