

## Letter from the 2017 AIA|DC President, Carolyn Sponza, AIA

Over the holidays, I watched the new PBS documentary *Eero Saarinen: The Architect Who Saw the Future*. In addition to providing an interesting personal history, the film lent a snapshot of Saarinen's studio operations and how collaboration between architects and builders happened. As I saw photos of Saarinen (circa 1960) perched inside large-scale models of the TWA Terminal at JFK and other buildings, it occurred to me how radically the way we practice has changed over the past half a century. It also reminded me that even though Eero Saarinen was an innovator, he was supported by a team of other collaborators, who have since developed offices of their own.

Fast forward to 2017... architecture has always been a team effort, but as our profession becomes more connected, more digital and more global, the complexity of our teams and the way that they deliver projects has changed. More likely than not, our teams will be using virtual reality goggles far more frequently than life-size models this year. As the proliferation of data has added a new dimension to our designs, we may increasingly be looking to non-design professions for inspiration and expertise. The different methods we have available

to collaborate with our colleagues, our clients and consultants, and those outside the industry will explode this year, and the pace of change will only accelerate.

As 2017 AIA | DC Chapter President, I plan on using the lens of "collaboration" to talk about new ways we are working with each other. When our Board met recently to set the agenda for this year, the top priorities that emerged were project management, team building, and communication skills training. No matter what the medium, the key to a successful project is the ability to communicate well.

We know that AIA | DC can be the premier resource for teaching architects the soft skills that we don't often learn in school, or even the workplace. As AIA | DC members, we have a natural space for collaboration at the District Architecture Center. As the DAC moves into its sixth year, we know that 2017's programs, workshops and exhibits will be more interesting and relevant to our membership than ever before.

*(continued on page 2)*



Carolyn Sponza, AIA

**Letter from the 2017 AIA|DC President, Carolyn Sponza, AIA cont.**

We also know that our Chapter will need to take an increasingly important stance in the advocacy realm. The efforts that the Chapter had already started last year- advocating for a streamlined permit process in DC and promoting affordable housing – will continue. Our Board also hopes to expand this agenda by advocating for continued investment in Metro and other public transportation, as well as in efforts to make DC the resilient city we know it has the potential to be. I welcome members that are enthusiastic about these issues to reach out to Executive Director Mary Fitch, or me, for further information on how to contribute.

I have seen our Chapter evolve over the past twenty years. In many ways, this evolution has mirrored changes in DC. Today, we are a larger, more diverse organization, literally located at the epicenter of the city. As our 2017 Chapter President, I know that by working together and collaborating, we will emerge stronger, both as an industry and as champions of our built environment.

**2016 Barbara G Laurie Scholar Selected as Finalist of AIAS Imagine: Top 60-at-60**

In celebration of the organization’s 60th anniversary, the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) announced the finalists of the AIAS Imagine: Top 60-at-60. This new honor showcases the top 60 AIAS members and culminates in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage with Walt Disney Imagineers on May 19-21, 2017 in Orlando, Florida. Mariah Allegra Stewart, one of our 2016 Scholarship awardees who is now at Tuskegee University was selected as a finalist! Congratulations Mariah!

Students and alumni from across the world were selected to participate in the 3-day opportunity. Winners were determined by a team of seven jurors, including representation from the Walt Disney Imagineering team. The program seeks to identify the top AIAS students in all years of architecture school, including fifth year, graduate students and alumni members. The winners were announced at the annual AIAS FORUM 2016 conference, held in Boston.



**LV16 CKLDP a Key Part of the 2016 AIA Leadership Institute**  
 By: Ryan McEnroe, AIA, ASLA, LEED AP  
 Project Architect, Quinn Evans Architects

More than 100 attendees took part in the AIA Leadership Institute this year on November 18, 2016 at the AIA National Headquarters. For the second consecutive year, the AIA | DC Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program provided the regional content. The effort was spearheaded by Ryan McEnroe, AIA, ASLA, LEED AP, the Co-Founder of the CKLDP, and Leah Ijjas, AIA an alumni of the program and the 2017 Chair of the AIA | DC Emerging Architects Committee. The morning session kicked off the day with a presentation on entrepreneurial leadership, followed by a panel on professional and industry leadership, and a workshop on design and business leadership.

Shannon Kraus, FAIA, FACHA, MBA, of HKS provided an inspiring presentation on the importance of calculated risks as it relates to one’s leadership style. The panel discussion consisted of Ashley Clark, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP of LandDesign, Klaus Philipsen, FAIA, LEED AP, of ArchPlan Inc., and Paula Moya, Assoc. AIA, NOMA, of Marshall Moya Design. The panel shared how their personal interest aligned with professional leadership opportunities within the industry and provided insight to lessons learned during their growth into industry leadership. To wrap up the regional content, each of the speakers led smaller group breakout discussions that focused on topics such as succession planning, community involvement, business development, developing future leaders, team building, and strategic planning. Key outcomes from these conversations were summarized with the larger group, and further discussed over the course of lunch. The AIA Leadership Institute is intending on taking place again in 2017, more information can be obtained on their website: <http://www.aialeadershipinstitute.com>.

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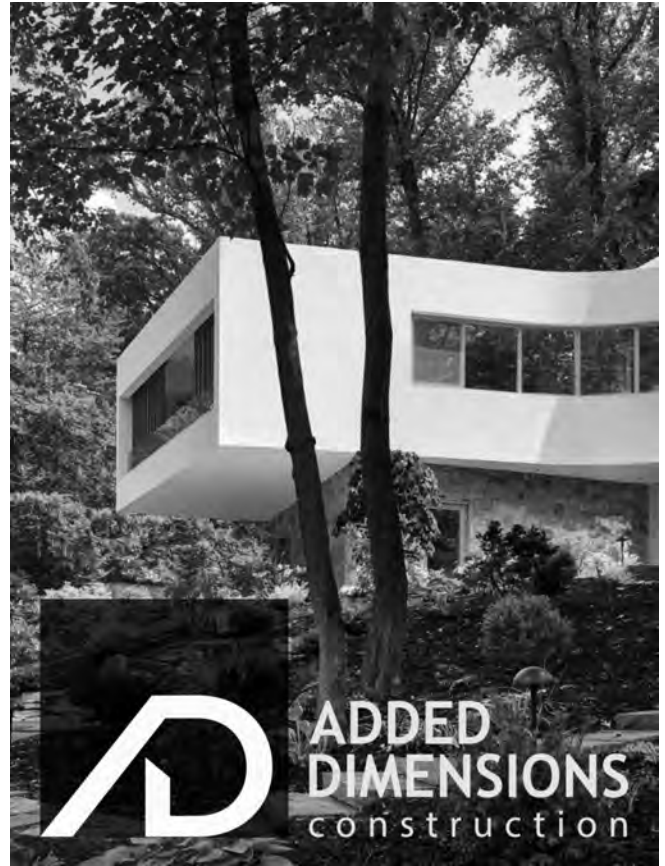
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## **Ring in 2017! Making Resolutions and Setting Goals**

It is the beginning of a new year. Most of us make resolutions, and set goals in our personal lives, but not many of us do the same in our professional lives and/or our businesses. People figure business is going well so, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” This article aims to highlight just a few areas of your business that you should consider taking a fresh look at in 2017; they may be “broke” and you just do not know it.

### **Contracts**

Do you use a standard contract for your architectural firm? When was the last time you sat down and reviewed such contract? Do you understand the terms and conditions set forth in your contract? When was the last time you updated the terms and conditions?

The questions above are just a few of the things you should ask yourself at the start of this New Year. If the answer to any of these questions is no, you should consider taking steps to change all the answers to yes.

First, it is important to ensure that there is uniformity in your contracting practices. It can be dangerous to agree to different contract terms with every contract. One example would be differing billing cycle requirements, wherein one contract requires that your firm bill monthly by the last day of the month, and another contract requires that your firm bill by the 25th of the month. If you miss submitting your invoice for payment by the 25th of the month because you are not aware of the unique contract terms you agreed to, you may be waiting a month or two or more for payment.

Second, it is important that you review, understand, and update your contracts on a regular basis. It is somewhat unrealistic to expect you to review and update your firm’s contracts every six months, or even every year; however, it should be a goal to review and update your firm’s contracts on some regular basis, for example every other year. Changes in the law, and/or your experiences with certain clients or projects can provide direction for updates to the terms and conditions.

### **Employees**

Does your firm have an employee handbook? Does your firm have its employees sign a confidentiality agreement, non-compete or non-solicitation agreement? When was the last time you dusted off the signed agreements to analyze their enforceability? When was the last time you confirmed all current employees have a signed employment agreement in their employee file?

Every firm, large or small, should have an employee handbook and employment agreement. Further, every firm should review and update its employee handbook and employment agreement on a regular basis in order to confirm it remains enforceable. Statutes and case law relating to employment agreements and policies often change. Therefore, a non-compete provision in an employment agreement that was enforceable when signed five years ago, may no longer be enforceable today. If that is the case, it may benefit your company to have all its current employees sign new employment agreements that comply with the present state of the law.

### **Office Policies**

Does your firm have a document retention policy? Do you follow the document retention policy? Do your employees follow the document retention policy?

It is important to establish a document retention policy and then implement the policy for all your projects. A document retention policy establishes the guidelines for (1) what files, documents, and communications will be retained, and (2) how long such files will be retained. Once a policy is established, it is important to follow the policy, not only for overall file management, but also for accounting and legal reasons.

### **Conclusion**

The topics and questions set forth above are only examples of issues you should be thinking about in order to begin 2017 with a fresh start. It is important to look forward and make a plan to achieve defined resolutions and goals to keep your business affairs organized and current. Just as with your firm, the business and legal environments are constantly evolving, and it is important that you stay up to speed. Keep an eye out for future articles that will go into further detail on each of the above topics. In the meantime, best wishes for a successful start to 2017!

Alison Mullins is Senior Counsel at Protora Law, PLLC, [www.protoraellaw.com](http://www.protoraellaw.com), and is a Professional Affiliate Member of AIA DC, and an Allied Professional Member of AIA Northern Virginia Chapter. She may be reached at [amullins@protoraellaw.com](mailto:amullins@protoraellaw.com) or by calling 703-639-0673. Alison focuses her practice on all aspects of construction law. In particular, she often represents architects, engineers, and others involved in the construction industry.


This article is not intended to provide specific legal advice, but instead as general commentary regarding legal matters. You should consult with an attorney regarding your legal issues, as the advice you may receive will depend upon your facts and the laws of your jurisdiction.

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## Marketing Fundamentals that Still Have a Role in Winning New Business

By Sylvia Montgomery

In this time of technology overload, it's important to recognize that many tried-and-true AEC marketing fundamentals still hold an important place in the pursuit of new business. Let's look at three often-overlooked marketing fundamentals that are critical to the success of any architecture firm.

### 1. Resumes / bios

In the professional services, the resumes of its technical professionals are valuable currency. The best resumes/bios tell a compelling story about the individual's role in key projects — positioning him or her as essential to the success of each project.

According to primary research conducted by Hinge, we know that more than two-thirds of AEC buyers seek out high-visibility experts because the buyers themselves lack the appropriate internal expertise. To address this need, your resumes and bios should provide project and professional details such as:

- Project names
- Locations
- Key areas of responsibility
- Past roles
- Niche expertise
- Clearances

It's also important to identify if project experience was gained with the current firm or a prior firm.

**See also:** AEC Professionals: Collaborate with Your Marketing Teams for a Competitive Advantage

### 2. Project portfolio: photos

When you commission project photography, it's important to hire a professional with a strong architecture portfolio — someone who

will make your projects look great. Amateur photography sells your work short and positions you a cut below the premium firms in your industry. Consideration will need to be given to staging, model releases, lightning, shadows, props and more — but a professional photographer can handle many of these details for you.

If your firm is not in a position to budget for professional photography, or if you are a subcontractor, try reaching out to the architects, owners, or developers of key projects in your portfolio. Most often than not, the architect will have commissioned professional photography and may be willing to share it with you.

### 3. Project portfolio: descriptions

Just as important as the photos are the project descriptions themselves, including explaining how you solved the clients' problems is even more important.

Tell a story that connects projects, teams and expertise. From a project description, for instance, consider creating cross-links between the teams and experts involved in them. If your firm has produced any related educational content, you might link to that, as well. Showcasing your firm's experts and their educational content will build your overall credibility and reputation.

Today's marketing has continued to grow in complexity. However, a continued focus on your marketing fundamentals will pay dividends for your firm.

*Sylvia Montgomery, CPSM, is a Senior Partner and the head of Hinge's AEC practice. When she's not traveling around the country for speaking engagements or client meetings, you will find Montgomery creating marketing and branding strategies for clients, supervising her AEC team, developing new business, or working on her personal brand. Sylvia can be reached at smontgomery@hingemarketing.com*

**B**

#### BELL Architects

Eleanor Choi, AIA, LEEDap BD+C, NCARB, joins the firm as project manager, bringing over fifteen years of experience, engaging communities and completing award-winning projects. Kelly Gilmour joins the firm from Pittsburgh, bringing experience in urban design, graphics, and the public process to her role of architectural designer.

Construction is underway for three **Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS** projects. 3825 Georgia Ave, NW, a new 5-story multifamily development will fill a vacant lot one block north of the fast redeveloping area surrounding the Petworth Metro station. 10th Street Flats located in prominent site in Clarendon, will be anchored by a new five-story, 143-unit mixed-use building, geared to the young demographic rental market. The Tilden, originally constructed in 1924 as a "high-class" apartment hotel, historic



Eleanor Choi, AIA  
BELL Architects



Kelly Gilmour  
BELL Architects

landmark Tilden Hall was a significant part of the street-car line development and the remaking of Cleveland Park along the Connecticut Avenue Corridor.

**C**

**CORE** has promoted David Cheney, AIA, and Allison C. Cooke, IIDA, LEED AP to partner. Cheney and Cooke join CORE's Principals Guy I. Martin, AIA, and Dale Stewart, AIA, on the firm's senior leadership team. These promotions recognize Allison and David's strong leadership and expertise. Their passion and creativity will shape CORE's future as the firm continues to innovate collaboratively with existing and future clients. David will be a leading voice in the firm's technical direction. He will continue to build the portfolio of boutique base-building projects, varying anywhere from new construction to strategic repositioning. Allison, Director of Hospitality Design, will continue to lead and grow the firm's restaurant and retail work, while also guiding the interiors of CORE's portfolio of libraries, residential buildings, office buildings, and hotels.

**D**

Local government leaders and residents from Loudoun County and the town of Round Hill, Virginia, recently gathered to celebrate the opening of the Western Loudoun Sheriff's Station, a facility that will enhance public safety services in the western part of the county.

AIA | DC members may submit "Member News" items to [newsletter@aiadc.com](mailto:newsletter@aiadc.com).

Designed by **Dewberry**, the free-standing station in Round Hill has enabled the deputies serving the area to relocate from leased space on the second floor of the town office to more expansive and secure space appropriately designed for sheriff's office operations. Dewberry provided architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, construction administration, and structural and civil engineering services.

**F**

**FOX Architects, LLC** is pleased to announce that Derek Wood has been promoted to Principal. Since joining FOX in 2006, Derek has been instrumental to FOX's growth. A leader in the industry, he has designed over five million square feet of built environments including master planning, design build, and built-to-suit projects. His leadership in some of FOX's key projects such as 440 First Street, 2175 K Street, 1900 N Street and the new 1000 Maine Avenue project at The Wharf have helped to transform DC's urban environment. Derek holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Dickinson College and a Master of Architecture degree from the Rhode Island School of Design.



Derek Wood

**G**

**Grimm+Parker**

After 44 years of creating together: meaningful architecture + client success, Steve Parker is retiring from the firm he co-founded with Clyde Grimm over four decades ago. Steve has consistently advanced the profession through transformative practice built on core values of inspiring award-winning sustainable design, fostering collaboration, promoting diversity, and mentorship of the next generation of architects. Steve's legacy can be seen across the region in K-12 and higher education, libraries, recreation, and multi-family housing. He will continue to work with NAAB, NCARB, and the AIA in his active retirement.

The Association for Learning Environments (A4LE) is a non-profit organization whose mission is the advancement of the environments in which children learn. Melissa Wilfong and Paul Bradshaw, both Principals in Grimm + Parker's K-12 Studio received ALEP credentials in 2016. Melissa and Paul are two of only 37 industry professionals in the Northeast region to hold this accreditation.

**H**

**Henry Adams** capped off a successful 2016 with the hiring of four new employees. Dominic Lewis joined the electrical department and brings over three years experience handling drafting and basic design concepts. Liliana Goldman joined the electrical department and brings 20+ years experience in the engineering industry handling residential, office, and retail projects. Marc Frias joined the mechanical department and brings over eight years experience with government, commercial, and academic projects. Tavon Manning joined the electrical department and is a recent graduate who gained relevant experience during his studies.

**Hickok Cole Architects**

The American Geophysical Union announced formal approval from its Board of Directors to undertake the renovation of their existing headquarters building to net zero energy. Hickok Cole Architects has been on the team from the outset, designing the American Geophysical Union's (AGU) \$41.7 million renovation of its 62,000-square-foot headquarters building, located in the Dupont Circle neighborhood. Throughout, AGU's and Hickok Cole Architects' goal has been to respect the historic values of the surrounding area, and ensure public understanding of the project and its potential impacts. With approval secured from the proper agencies and regulatory bodies, Hickok Cole Architects and project partners are now preparing for the first phase of construction to begin in March 2017.

**K**

**Keast & Hood** recently moved its Charlottesville, VA office to a new location on the City's historic Downtown Mall. Led by Associate Craig D. Swift, PE, SE, LEED AP, the firm's third location provides structural engineering for new construction and historic preservation projects. The office has shown continued growth over the past year with the addition of new fulltime staff members. Significant projects for the office in its first year include UNESCO World Heritage structures at Monticello and UVA's Academic Village. The new space at 113 4th Street NE will allow for the firm's continued success in the coming years.



Keast & Hood's new Charlottesville, VA office

**L**



Landis Architects/Builders

One of **Landis Architects/Builders** core values is life-long learning and the company's team has been busy fulfilling this mission. Director of Architecture Paul Gaiser and Chris Landis attended an AIA conference on the topic of how to be an entrepreneur and leader in design and the architectural community. Chris and Ethan Landis spent three days at a Remodeler's Advantage conference in Kansas City. Ethan and deputy production manager Andrew Kerr flew to Minnesota in early November to tour the Marvin Window factory. Chris Landis attended Contractor College, hosted by supplier TW Perry, for classes that addressed leadership, marketing, moisture-prevention technology, and contracts.



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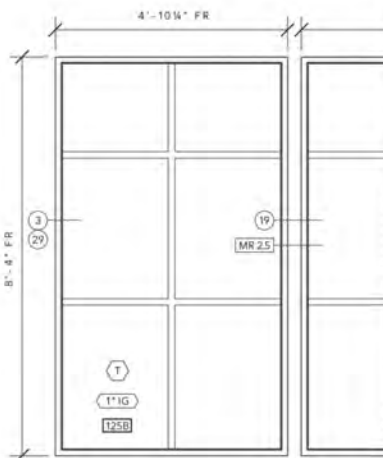
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## M

**Marshall Moya Design (MMD)** is pleased to announce the firm's role as Interior Architect for National Market, a casual food market experience at MGM National Harbor. MGM National Harbor's food market will feature an authentic, intimate and casual setting that will transport guests to a convenient epicenter of good eats, cultural exploration and beautiful scenery. Mirroring the food concepts, National Market's interior is dynamic, approachable, and reflective of the individual identity of each destination eatery while working collectively to tell a colorful story. The MMD team used design materials in unconventional ways to create unique, and sometimes unexpected, visual accents.

**Mimar Ponte Mellor** of DC welcomes our new CEO, George Tehan, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP. George brings 20 years of experience integrating the art, science, and business of building. He has expertise in commercial, residential, and retail design with a focus on sustainability and the contextual environment. George is excited to continue the high level of service and design that our clients expect from our firm.



George Tehan, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP

## N

**Newman Architects** is pleased to announce that Steven Orlansky and A. Brooks Fischer have been named Principals of the firm. A graduate of the Pratt Institute School of Architecture, Steven began his career in 2000 at Newman Architects. Since 2011 he has directed Newman's Washington DC office, serving educational, governmental, religious and diplomatic clients in the mid-Atlantic region. A graduate of the Roger Williams University School of Architecture, Brooks joined Newman Architects in 2004 and has been the manager for significant educational and mixed-use development projects undertaken by the firm. He also directs our small projects group, oversees business management, and leads in the advancement of the firm's project management procedures.

## P

**Perkins Eastman** was recently honored to receive an NAIOP Northern Virginia 2016 Award of Excellence for Adaptive Re-Use at the Ritz-Carlton in Tysons Corner. The award was given for WeWork/WeLive, one of the original office buildings in Crystal City that Perkins Eastman, Architect of Record, transformed into a vibrant co-living, micro-unit residential building—WeLive Crystal City—which is part of the international creative platform and shared workspace provider WeWork. Barbara Mullenex AIA, Principal of Perkins Eastman, and her team—Takehiro Nakamura, Tilden Cooper, and Katie Johnson—collaborated with ARExA, and the James G. Davis Construction Corporation to revitalize this building.



Copyright Assembly Studio  
Courtesy of Perkins Eastman

**Perkins+Will** was awarded a term contract with the University of Virginia for facility programming and planning services, which will support both academic and health system projects. The team for this contract includes Paul Harney, AIA; Gene Kluesner, AIA; Carl Knutson, AIA; Dan Moore, AIA and Amy Thompson, AICP. In collaboration with the DOEE and other partners, the firm has completed recently developed Climate Adaptation Plan for the District of Columbia. The local team was managed and led by Amy Thompson, AICP and Jon Penndorf, AIA. The firm was also selected to design the renovations and expansions of the Alexandria and Bethesda-Chevy Chase YMCA locations. Design team includes Chris Morrison, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C, Diana Horvat, AIA, IIDA, LEED AP, Rod Letonja, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, and Armando Nazario, AIA, LEED AP+BD. Perkins+Will also welcomes Lindsay Edwards, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, as a project architect!

**Skidmore, Owings & Merrill** introduces Faisal Mohsin as an Associate in the Washington, DC practice. Faisal is an architect with 17 years' experience on large, design-driven projects. He previously spent 6 years with SOM London and SOM Chicago. SOM also welcomes Susan Merrigan, FSMPS, CPSM as Senior Marketing Manager. Susan directs marketing and business development for SOM's DC office, focusing on civic + government, commercial + office, and education markets.



Faisal Mohsin



Susan Merrigan, FSMPS, CPSM

**SOM** also celebrates the groundbreaking of two major projects in the region. Construction began in September for the National Museum of the U.S. Army in Fort Belvoir, Virginia. At the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, construction has commenced on Hopper Hall, the Academy's new center for cyber securities studies.

## T

**Teass \ Warren** is pleased to welcome Phillip Blevins and CJ LaMora to the firm. Phillip is a recent graduate of Marywood University and is currently pursuing a post-professional degrees in Architecture and Sustainable Design at Catholic while also contributing to the firm's portfolio of project types on a full-time basis. CJ brings a wealth of knowledge from his previous experience at well-known design-build firm to bear. His experiences in the field and willingness to share are a valuable knowledge resource for the firm.



Phillip Blevins



CJ LaMora

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