

MINNESOTA CHAPTER
OF THE SOCIETY OF
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

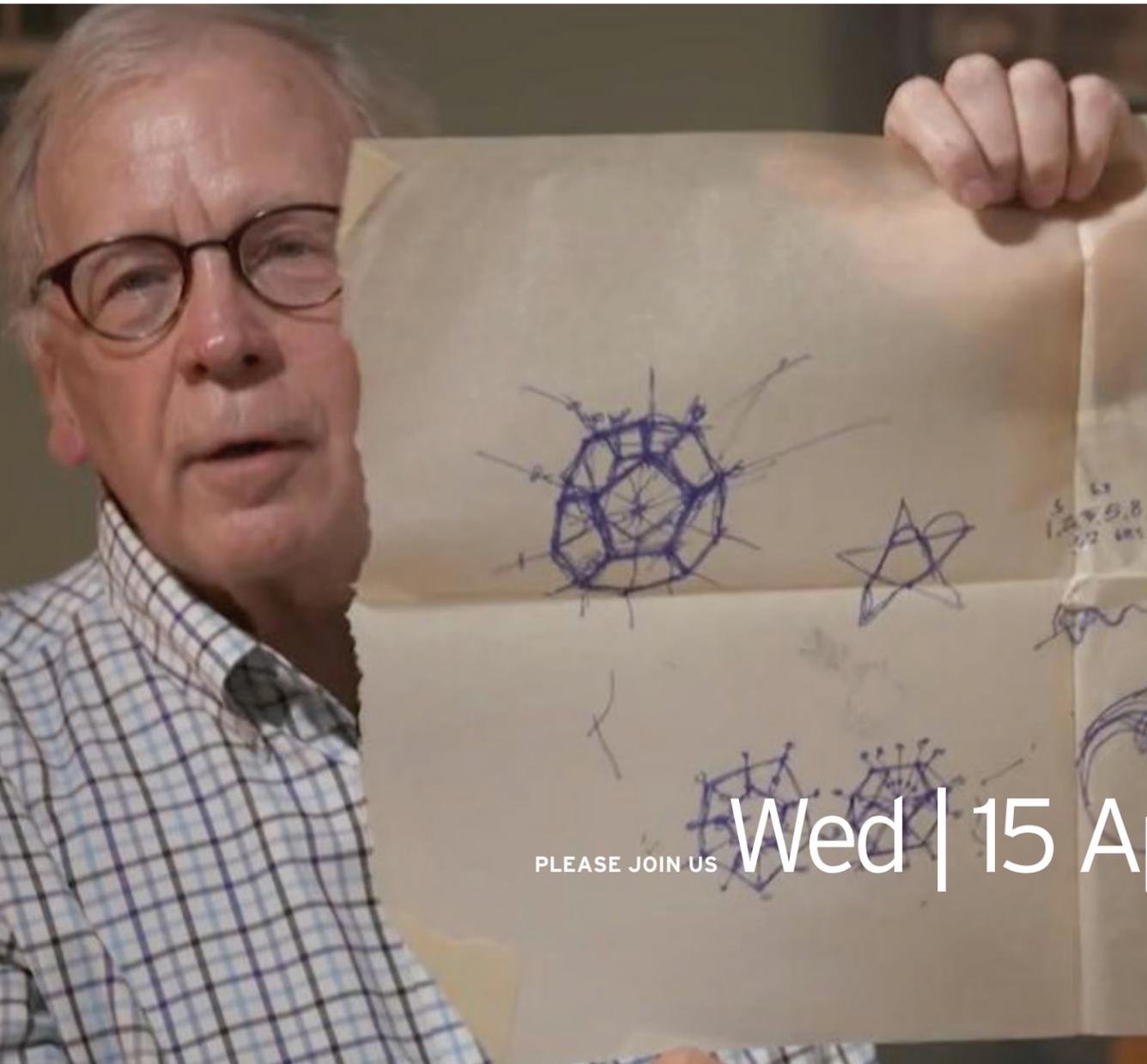
105 5TH AVENUE SOUTH
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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

Gary Johnson describes a series of sketches
by Ed Sovik, demonstrating how Sovik used
drawing as a means to teach architectural
concepts. Photo: Lisa Blackstone

Jane Hession and Tom Fisher interviewing
David Salmela. Photo: Bill Olexy

MINNESOTA CHAPTER
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MINNESOTA
WITH RESPECT TO ARCHITECTURE | MARCH 2020



PLEASE JOIN US **Wed | 15 April** OUR ANNUAL MEETING **Modern Masters**



MNSAH Annual Meeting
Minnesota Humanities Center
Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Opposite: Fred Bentz and George Rafferty at the 2015 AIA-MN Honor Awards event. Both men have passed away since their Modern Masters interviews. Photo: Linda Mack

“Buildings are not just created for people; they are also created by people...”

Minnesota Modern Masters: The Highlights, Insights, & Architectural Humor

Minneapolis architect John Cuningham imitating Walter Gropius, his design critic at Harvard in the 1960s... Aaron Parker, son of Leonard Parker, describing the teenage bike trip to Johnson Wax Company in Racine, Wisconsin that inspired Leonard to become an architect... Craig Rafferty and his father, George, then 99, discussing how Vatican II — and their projects — changed modern church design... Julie Snow explaining how CHS Field was designed for all sorts of fun besides watching baseball.

These are but a few of the fascinating snippets of Minnesota architectural history that MNSAH’s Minnesota Modern Masters oral history project has uncovered — and captured — for future historians and aficionados. The current MMM volunteers will share a selection of their favorite excerpts at the MNSAH Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 15.

Begun in 2012 by MNSAH volunteers, Minnesota Modern Masters has blossomed into the most ambitious oral history effort by a Society of Architectural Historians chapter. Funded by three successive Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage or “Legacy” Grants, more than two dozen hour-and-a-half interviews have been completed, transcribed and deposited for researchers at the Northwest Architectural Archives. They have been edited to 15-minute

versions, which can be viewed on the MNSAH website: mnsah.org under Programs or MNSAH’s Vimeo site: vimeo.com/mnsah.

AIA-MN honored the project with a 2019 Special Award. As former College of Design Dean Tom Fisher wrote in his nomination for the award: “Buildings are not just created for people; they are also created by people and we can never fully understand the ideas that drive our architecture without also comprehending the ideas of the people who designed or critiqued it.”

The Modern Masters interviews take us inside the lives and careers of Minnesota’s architectural community. It started with the goal of documenting the careers of the architects who brought modernism to Minnesota after World War II, among them Leonard Parker, James Stageberg, Ed Sovik, Milo Thompson, and Elizabeth and Winston Close.

It has expanded to include architects of the next generations — MacDonald & Mack, Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, David Salmela, Julie Snow, Vincent James and Jennifer Yoos, Joan Soranno and John Cook of HGA, and architectural educators, journalists and critics such as Tom Fisher and Linda Mack.

OUR annual meeting

Recent interviews included Su Blumentals, one of the earliest women students at the University of Minnesota School of Architecture, Foster Dunwiddie, who co-founded Miller-Dunwiddie Associates, one of Minnesota's two firms concentrating on historic preservation, Dennis Sun Rhodes, founder of AmerINDIAN Architecture, and Beverly Hauschild-Baron, who was Executive Director of AIA-MN for more than 30 years.

We can tell you again and again how rich the interviews are: But the way to find out is to watch them. It will make you proud to be a supporter of Minnesota architecture and of MNSAH, which originated this project.

Kudos to all who contributed to this project — prior committee members Karen Duncan, Judy Kurtz, Carol Ahlgren, Heidi Oxford, Deb Baumer, Frank Martin, Bruce Wright, and videographer John Clouse — and to the current members of the Minnesota Modern Masters committee: Rolf Anderson, Martha Douglas, Bob Frame, Jane Hession, Linda Mack, and committee chair Gary Reetz.



Modern Masters Committee members at the AIA-MN awards ceremony. From left to right: Bob Frame, Gary Reetz, Martha Douglas, Bill Olexy, Jane Hession, Linda Mack, and Rolf Anderson. Photo Emily Ganzel

THE details

DATE AND PLACE

Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Minnesota Humanities Center
987 Ivy Avenue East
Saint Paul, MN 55106
651-772-4242

6:00 p.m. Reception

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Annual Meeting

8:00 p.m. Lecture

9:00 p.m. Adjourn

COST

\$40.00 for MNSAH members

\$45.00 for nonmembers

REGISTRATION

Deadline: Thursday, April 9, 2020

Please register online at www.mnsah.org/events/annual-meeting/ or mail your registration form and check (payable to MNSAH) to:

MNSAH
c/o Lock Bounds
2072 Iglehart Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104

Note: Members who wish to attend the annual meeting and the lecture, but not the dinner, may do so at no cost. Please send in the registration form or contact Lock Bounds at 651-659-9932 or lockbounds@yahoo.com if you plan to attend only the meeting and presentation.

MENU

Lasagna with Meat Sauce or Wild Mushroom Lasagna
Dinners will be accompanied by a garden salad and dessert.

DIRECTIONS

From Highway 35E, exit onto Maryland Avenue, proceed east 1.7 miles to Earl Street, turn left and go four blocks to Ivy Avenue East, turn left and the Humanities Center will be on your right.



2020 JUDGING UNDERWAY

The MNSAH panel of judges is reviewing nominations for the 2020 Gebhard Award, presented every two years at the annual meeting. Named in honor of the late David Stanley Gebhard, distinguished Minnesota-born architectural historian, the award recognizes the outstanding books and articles on Minnesota's architectural history published in the preceding two years. The judges select the publications that best strike a balance between scholarship and accessibility.

Nominated publications must address some historical aspect of the Minnesota built environment, but there is no restriction on the author's place of residence. Books and articles receive separate awards.

MNSAH received the following nominations for this year's award, all published between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2019:

BOOKS

- Greg Gaut, *Reinventing the People's Library*, Eastside Freedom Library.
- Denis P. Gardner, *Our Minnesota State Capitol: From Groundbreaking through Restoration*, Minnesota Historical Society Press.
- Larry Millett, *Metropolitan Dreams*, University of Minnesota Press.
- Charlene Roise, *The Saga of the Stillwater Lift Bridge: A Preservation Case Study*, Minnesota Department of Transportation.

ARTICLES

- Aine C. McCormack and Eileen McCormack, "The Tazewell: 100 Years in the Life of a St. Paul Apartment," *Ramsey County History*.

- Bob Olsen, "Another Siberia, Unfit for Human Habitation: St. Paul's Super Ice Palaces 1886, 1887, 1888," *Ramsey County History*.
- Bob Roscoe, "How St. Paul's Federal Courts Building and Post Office Became Today's Landmark Center," *Ramsey County History*.
- Diane Trout-Oertel, "Emma F. Brunson: The First Woman Registered as an Architect in Minnesota," *Ramsey County History*.
- Eduard Krakhmalnikov, "The Trailer Park that Became a City: Hilltop and the Importance of Mobile Home Parks as Endangered Historic Places," *Minnesota History*.
- Eric Boime, "Homecroft City: The 'Duluth Idea' in the Progressive Conservation Movement," *Minnesota History*.
- Kathy Kullberg, "Pendergast Row, Dean Parkway," *Hill and Lake Press*.
- Kathy Kullberg, "Sulphur Vapor Parlor," *Hill and Lake Press*.
- Kathy Kullberg, "Lake of the Isles Historic Lighting - An Illuminating Subject," *Hill and Lake Press*.
- Kathy Kullberg, "Historic homes of early brewers in Lowry Hill East," *Hennepin History*.
- Kimmy Tanaka and Jonathon Moore, "Fuji Ya, Second to None: Reiko Weston's Role in Reconnecting Minneapolis and the Mississippi River," *Minnesota History*.
- Richard L. Kronick, "Planning a Dream Home," *Hennepin History*.

The MNSAH board, which appoints the panel of three judges, is enthusiastic about the range of authors, topics, and publishers represented in the current round of nominations. The recipients of this year's awards will present highlights of their publications at the annual meeting on April 15.

news FROM THE BOARD

There's much to report

since our last newsletter! The MNSAH board and committees have been working diligently to create meaningful programs and events, and also advance other initiatives that we feel promotes the organization's mission.

Last year, MNSAH became aware that changes had been proposed to the National Register of Historic Places program. The National Register is the federal listing of buildings, sites, and structures worthy of preservation. This program is the cornerstone for the identification and preservation of the nation's historic properties.

MNSAH Vice President Dennis Gimmetstad spent considerable time researching these changes, some of which were confusing and ill-conceived. Dennis composed detailed comments about these changes, which MNSAH submitted to the

National Park Service, the agency that administers the National Register program. Our comments were submitted as part of the process that allows the public to comment on such changes. We were recently advised that the procedural changes will be finalized in the near future, and we will learn the extent to which they reflect the original proposal, or any modifications that may have been suggested. MNSAH's involvement in this issue is an example of how our board will work behind the scenes in an effort to promote the cause of historic preservation.

Our event for Sponsor-level members was held in August at the Galusha Cottage, designed in 1884 by Cass Gilbert for a site on the shores of White Bear Lake. The picturesque summer home retains its 19th century character and many of its original features. MNSAH

members enjoyed a pleasant summer evening at the cottage, where we were hosted by Susan Bonne, whose family owned the home for many years.

The Fall Tour featured the Metcalf property located on eighty acres in rural Afton. The International style residence and two guest houses were designed in 1959 by Brooks Cavin, Jr. The property was essentially unknown to the architecture community and MNSAH was pleased to share this discovery with our members.

The property was built by Father George Metcalf and his wife, Mary. Metcalf was an Episcopal priest who also used his home as a religious retreat center. After Metcalf and his wife passed away, the property was purchased by the Belwin Conservancy, an organization that focuses on connecting people with the natural world.

Photos left to right:
 The Galusha Cottage by Cass Gilbert
 MNSAH members at the Sponsor-level event at the Galusha Cottage
 Rolf Anderson, Katie Bloome, and Ed Cavin at the Fall Tour of the Metcalf property
 Ben and Sally Scott at the Metcalf property
 Works in Progress: Tom Cavin, Ann Cavin, Rolf Anderson, Brooks Cavin IV, and Barb Cavin

The program began with Katie Bloome, Belwin's Executive Director, who welcomed us to the Metcalf property. Special guests added immensely to our appreciation and understanding of the property. MNSAH members Ben and Sally Scott spoke about their recollections of the Metcalfs from the 1960s, and the importance of the religious retreats that they attended. They also remarked about the wonder they felt when sitting under the palm trees in the atrium during the winter months. Brooks Cavin's son, Ed, also attended the event. He spoke movingly about his father's architecture and his high personal integrity.

December's Works in Progress (WIP) event was perhaps the best-attended WIP in MNSAH's history, with seventy in attendance. The speakers included Dick Kronick, who spoke about his recent research on George Elmslie. Dick writes

about his research in a separate article in this issue. As a follow-up to the Fall Tour, Rolf Anderson also spoke and discussed the architecture of Brooks Cavin, Jr. As was the case with the Fall Tour, Cavin family members were in attendance. Cavin's son, Tom, traveled from Shelburne, Vermont, and his daughter, Barb, traveled from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Tom and Barb likely traveled the longest distances to attend an event in MNSAH history!

The Minnesota Modern Masters Committee was particularly busy toward the end of the year, completing the latest round of interviews, presenting a program at the annual AIA-MN conference, and preparing the final report for our latest Legacy Grant. The committee also updated our website to include the newly completed interviews.

In January, the MNSAH board conducted its annual planning retreat. The retreat is an opportunity for the board to review the past year and identify goals and objectives that we should address in the coming year.

We hope you can attend the MNSAH annual meeting in April where we will reflect upon and celebrate the Minnesota Modern Masters program, perhaps the most important initiative in the history of the organization.

ROLF ANDERSON
 PRESIDENT



Architecture for Free: Archipedia Goes Open-Access

BY GREG GAUT

The national chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) and University of Virginia Press have launched a new open-access, mobile-friendly edition of *SAH Archipedia*, their authoritative online encyclopedia of the built environment of the United States. The newly redesigned *SAH Archipedia* brings peer-reviewed scholarship to a worldwide audience of researchers, students, teachers, preservation advocates, and anyone interested in learning more about the architectural history of the U.S.

SAH Archipedia contains histories, photographs, and maps for over 20,000 structures and places, and showcases the richness and diversity of architecture and landscapes throughout the U.S. In addition to building entries, *SAH Archipedia* includes place-based and thematic essays, comprised of peer-reviewed scholarship contributed by architectural historians nationwide, and lesson plans designed for K-12 educators.

The SAH started *Archipedia* in 2012 to provide digital access to the content of the SAH's Buildings

of the United States books, a series which publishes volumes documenting our country's architecture on a state-by-state basis. Until now, online access to most of the entries was limited to SAH members and institutional subscribers. Thanks to major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, all of *SAH Archipedia* is now free and open to all.

Since the SAH has not yet published a Minnesota volume in the Buildings of the United States series, the coverage of our state is limited. However, there are over 100 entries on Minnesota buildings, the result of a project led by former chapter president and current SAH First Vice President Victoria Young and Frank Edgerton Martin. They wrote some of the entries and assembled a statewide team of authors for the rest. Several other MNSAH members contributed, including, for example, former chapter presidents Jennifer Komar Olivarez (Purcell-Cutts House) and Kristin Anderson (Target Field). The Minnesota entries range from vernacular buildings of the 1850s to postmodern buildings of the last decade. Victoria stated she is hopeful that the Minnesota entries will be expanded.

In the meantime, we all have access to an impressive database of our nation's architecture, and one that you can browse or search by state, building type, material, style, and architect. Check it out *SAH Archipedia* at sah-archipedia.org.

George Elmslie: In the Shadow of Louis Sullivan



BY RICHARD KRONICK

In 1889, the Chicago firm of Dankmar Adler & Louis Sullivan hired George Elmslie as a draftsman. There Elmslie worked alongside fellow draftsman Frank Lloyd Wright. But in 1894, when Sullivan fired Wright for taking projects on the side, Elmslie became Sullivan's chief draftsman. Elmslie remained in that role until 1909 — so, in all, Elmslie spent 20 years with Sullivan.¹

Elmslie and William Purcell, who were architectural partners from 1910 to 1921, claimed that, during the last 15 years of his work in Sullivan's office, Elmslie did nearly all of the design work on eight buildings usually credited solely to Sullivan: the Guaranty Building, Buffalo, New York (1895); the Bayard Building, New York City (1898); the façade of the Gage Brothers Building, Chicago (1898); the Schlesinger & Mayer Store, Chicago (1904 remodeling); the Felsenthal Store, Chicago (1905); the Henry Babson house, Riverside, Illinois (1907); the National Farmers' Bank, Owatonna, Minnesota (1908); and the first Bradley house, Madison, Wisconsin (1909).

If Purcell and Elmslie's claims are valid, two questions arise. First, why didn't Sullivan do the work himself? And second, why hasn't Elmslie received widespread credit for his work?

Sadly, the answer to the first question is that Sullivan was incapacitated by alcoholism. In December, 1909, Elmslie wrote to Carl Bennett, vice president of the National Farmers' Bank: "Mr. Sullivan told me last Saturday that the end had come as far as working for

him was concerned... He is keeping up his drinking and I do not know how much longer he or any man can stand it."² Harold Bradley, another Sullivan client, wrote that during the design of his house in Madison, "Sullivan... whom we enjoyed in spite of his insistence on dominating the plans, seemed to deteriorate. He was obviously and often under the influence of liquor." Bradley went on to say Elmslie took over from Sullivan and actually designed the house." In today's language of alcoholism treatment, Elmslie became Sullivan's "enabler."³

The second question raised above is: Why hasn't Elmslie been widely credited for his work?⁴ The answer has two parts. First, Elmslie was quite shy and reserved — not the type who would stand up for himself, especially to Sullivan, his employer.⁵ The second part of the answer is that most 20th-century architects and historians, under the influence of statements like "A house is a machine for living in" (Le Corbusier) and "Ornament as Crime" (Adolph Loos), viewed all architectural ornament as an abomination. Accordingly, they decided that Sullivan's famous dictum, "Form follows function," meant simply that the exterior of a building should honestly express its structure. They reached these conclusions despite the fact that Sullivan had stated over and over again that the most important function of any building is its spiritual function — and that ornamentation was the natural expression of that spirituality. And because Elmslie designed most of the ornament on the eight buildings listed above, Elmslie and his work became inconvenient truths.⁶



Below: Terracotta panel by George Elmslie
 Previous page: George Elmslie
 Images courtesy Dick Kronick



A few scholars have defended Elmslie. For example, David Gebhard wrote that, "... as Elmslie matured, his responsibilities in the work produced by the [Sullivan] office became greater until in fact the last of the buildings were almost entirely from his hand."⁷ Roger Kennedy wrote that, by the late 1890s, Elmslie "became Sullivan's unadmitted partner [and] in the long years of Sullivan's despondency and alcoholism, with infrequent commissions, Elmslie was his nurse and custodian."⁸ For the rest of his life, Elmslie was torn between his deep respect for Sullivan and his knowledge that Sullivan had taken advantage of him. On one hand, he could describe Sullivan as "one sitting on Olympus and looking at the sun."⁹ And on the other hand, he wrote that "I have never gotten over those L.H.S. years of giving all and getting nothing. It was too long an experience of master and man."¹⁰

In his last years, like Sullivan, Elmslie went downhill. Practicing on his own, he had few commissions. His building designs were uninspired and his ornament lost its vitality. He was bitter, unhappy, and more alone than ever. George Elmslie died in 1952 at age 83.

¹Evidence for these claims: For the Guaranty Building: Hugh Morrison: *Louis Sullivan: Prophet of Modern Architecture*, p. 143; for the Bayard Building: David Gebhard (ed. Patricia Gebhard): *Purcell & Elmslie: Prairie Progressive Architects*, pp. 32-33; for the Gage Brothers Building: George Elmslie to Frank Lloyd Wright, 10/30/1932, *Purcell Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives (hereafter: NAA)*; for the S&M (later Carson, Pirie Scott) Store: William Purcell: *Review of Gebhard Thesis; George Elmslie Section, Part III*, p. 2; for the Felsenthal Store: Purcell and Elmslie: *unpublished typescript, written 1939-47*; for the Babson House: David Gebhard, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33; for the National Farmers' Bank: Hugh Morrison: *op. cit.*, p. 178; for the Bradley house: Harold C. Bradley to Jon Phillip Buschke, September 30, 1965, *Purcell Papers, NAA*.

²Elmslie to Carl K. Bennett, December 7, 1909, NAA.

³Harold C. Bradley to Jon Phillip Buschke, September 30, 1965, NAA.

⁴For example, in the current Wikipedia article on Sullivan ("Louis Sullivan," accessed 2/11/2020), Elmslie receives no credit for designing any specific buildings. Another example: David Van Zanten dismissed Elmslie as "Sullivan's faithful but meddling chief draftsman" in *Sullivan's City*, p. 94.

⁵"George just didn't have the self starter...he was always subconsciously resentful that Sullivan didn't take him in as a full partner...plus the fact that he continued to support and work for Sullivan...during...1908, 1909, and part of 1910 and never received \$1 in salary." Wm. Purcell: "Comments on Sullivan to Nickel," 8/12/1958, p. 19, NAA.

⁶"I value spiritual results only. I say spiritual results precede all other results, and indicate them. I can see no efficient way of handling this subject [the relationship between ornament and structure] on any other than a spiritual or psychic basis..." Louis Sullivan in "What is the Just Subordination, in *Architectural Design, of Details to Mass*," 1887, republished in Robert Twombly, ed.: *Louis Sullivan: The Public Papers*, University of Chicago Press, pp. 33-34.

⁷Gebhard, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁸Roger Kennedy: *Men on the Moving Frontier* ((Palo Alto: American West Publishing Company, 1969), p. 176.

⁹Elmslie to Purcell, undated, NAA.

¹⁰Elmslie to Purcell, June 26, 1917, NAA.

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MNSAH Nominating Committee Report and Bylaw Change

MNSAH members who attend the annual meeting on April 15, 2020 will vote on the following slate of officers and board members submitted by the nominating committee (Rolf Anderson, Dennis Gimmestad, Bob Frame, and Barb Bezat). New board nominations may come from the floor.

PRESIDENT	<i>Rolf Anderson</i>
VICE PRESIDENT	<i>Dennis Gimmestad</i>
TREASURER	<i>Bob Frame</i>
SECRETARY	<i>Barb Bezat</i>
AT LARGE	<i>Renee Barnes</i> <i>Martha Douglas</i> <i>Deb Ford</i> <i>Greg Gaut</i> <i>Gary Reetz</i> <i>Matt Seltzer</i>

All officers are nominated for a one-year term. New board members Renee Barnes and Matt Seltzer (see bios below) will serve for a two-year term. Board members Rolf Anderson, Bob Frame, Barb Bezat, Greg Gaut, and Gary Reetz are nominated for an additional two-year term. The remaining board members will be serving the second year of the two-year term to which they were elected in 2019.

RENEE BARNES is a historian at the Minnesota Department of Transportation where she works in the Cultural Resources Unit. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture from the University of Minnesota. Renee also holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Architectural History from the Savannah College of Art and Design.

MATT SELTZER is a Minneapolis attorney with a longstanding interest in architectural history. He previously served as a MNSAH board member and president. Matt recently earned a master's degree in Heritage Conservation and Preservation from the University of Minnesota School of Architecture.

All MNSAH members present at the annual meeting will also vote on the following bylaw change:

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Chapter shall be:

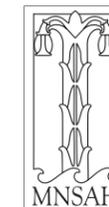
- SECTION 1 Promote and advance research of Minnesota's architectural history
- SECTION 2 Broaden awareness of the state's architectural heritage through meaningful scholarly and public engagement with the history of the built environment
- SECTION 3 Offer opportunities to experience significant architectural sites, structures, and landscapes
- SECTION 4 Advocate for and promote the documentation, preservation, and conservation of the built environment
- SECTION 5 Engage and cooperate with learned and professional societies in the pursuit of common objectives

ARTICLE V: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1 Board Members shall serve a term of two (2) years... Terms are renewable for six (6) consecutive terms for a maximum total of twelve (12) years.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

SECTION 3 The duties of the Vice President shall include all duties of the President in his/her absence or inability to perform the duties of office. The President may delegate additional responsibilities to the Vice President.



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