A GUIDE TO CAREERS IN DESIGN

Becoming an
Architect

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The Careers of an Architect

The building of a career is quite as difficult a problem as the building of a house, yet few ever sit down with pencil and paper, with expert information and counsel, to plan a working career and deal with the life problem scientifically, as they would deal with the problem of building a house, taking the advice of an architect to help them.

FRANK PARSONS

THE CAREERS OF AN ARCHITECT 223
As Parsons says in the above quotation, the building of a career — the process of career development — is a difficult but important task, yet he also notes that few individuals prepare for their careers in a thoughtful, careful, and deliberate manner. Instead, many fall into a career, while others make random career choices that show little commitment to their occupation, often leading to dissatisfaction.

**Career Designing**

Regardless of where you are on the path to becoming an architect — completing your architectural education, gaining experience in an architecture firm, or in the process of taking the Architect Registration Examination (ARE), you should pursue deliberate career designing to maximize success.

You may argue that a career is not something you create or plan, that it just happens. However, like architectural projects, careers should be carefully planned. In many ways, designing a career is like designing a building. Programming, schematic design, design development, working drawings, and construction are replaced in the career development process with assessing, exploring, decision-making, and planning.

**ASSESSING**

Know thyself.  

Inscription over the Oracle at Delphi, Greece

When an architect designs a project, what is typically the first step in the process? Most likely programming. As William Pena points out in *Problem Seeking*, the main idea behind programming is the search for sufficient information to clarify, understand, and state the problem. In a similar manner, when designing your career, the process begins with assessing.

Assessing is learning about yourself. Assess where you want to be; analyze what is important to you, your abilities, the work you would like to do, and your strengths and weaknesses. Just as programming assists the architect in understanding a particular design problem, assessment helps determine what you want from your career. This ongoing process must be reiterated throughout your entire career. The details of assessment include your values, interests, and skills. But what exactly are values, interests, and skills, and how do you determine them?

**Values**

Values are feelings, attitudes, and beliefs you hold close to your heart. They reflect what is important to you; they tell you what you should or should not do. Work values are the enduring dimensions or aspects of your work that you regard as important sources of satisfaction. Values traditionally held high by architects include creativity, recognition, variety, independence, and responsibility.

As a quick inventory, circle the items on the following list you value in the work you do:
Helping others
Improving society
Creativity
Excitement
Working alone/with others
Monetary reward
Competition
Change and variety
Independence
Intellectual challenge
Physical challenge
Fast pace
Security
Responsibility
Making decisions
Power and authority
Gaining knowledge
Recognition

**Interests**

Interests are the ideas, events, and activities that stimulate your enthusiasm; they are reflected in choices you make about how you spend your time. In simplest terms, interests are activities you enjoy doing. Typically, architects have a breadth of interests because the field of architecture encompasses artistic, scientific, and technical aspects. Architects enjoy being involved in all phases of the creative process—from original conceptualization to a tangible finished product.

To determine your interests, for an entire month note on your desk calendar what you most and least enjoyed doing each day. At the end of the month, summarize and categorize the preferences you recorded. Here is another method: In ten minutes of continuous writing, never removing your pen from the paper or fingers from the keyboard, answer this question: What do I like to do when I am not working?

**Skills**

Unlike interests, skills and abilities can be learned. The three types of skills are functional, self-management, and special knowledge. Having a functional skill means you are able to perform some specific type of activity, action, or operation with a good deal of proficiency. In contrast, self-management skills are your specific behavior responses or character traits such as eagerness, initiative, or dependability. Special knowledge skills are what you have learned and what you know.

The importance of knowing your skills is noted by Richard Bolles in his book *The Quick Job-Hunting Map*: "You must know, for now and all the future, not only what skills you have, but more importantly, what skills you have and enjoy." With respect to skills, think back over the past five years. What were your five most satisfying accomplishments? Next to each, list the skills or abilities that enabled you to succeed. Similarly, review your failures to identify traits or deficiencies you want to overcome.

A variety of techniques may be used to conduct an assessment. The few listed here are simply to get you started; others include writing an autobiography and undertaking empirical inventories or psychological assessments with the assistance of a career counselor. Regardless of the
In your career, will you lay bricks, build a wall, or build a cathedral? Regardless of your answer, designing your career is one of the most important tasks you will ever undertake. Yet if career design is so important, why do most people spend such little time on it? Think about it!

EXPLORING

Students spend four or more years learning how to dig data out of the library and other sources, but it rarely occurs to them that they should also apply some of the same new-found research skill to their own benefit—to look up information on companies, types of professions, sections of the country that might interest them.

ALBERT SHAPERO

Schematic design is the phase of the design process that follows programming. Schematic design generates alternative solutions; its goal is to establish general characteristics of the design, including scale, form, estimated costs, and the general image of the building, the size and organization of spaces. According to the AIA Architect’s Handbook of Professional Practice, the goal of schematic design is to establish general characteristics of the building design, such as the scale used to satisfy the basic program requirements and estimated costs. Additionally, schematic design identifies major issues and makes initial decisions that serve as the basis of subsequent stages.

In career development, exploring is parallel to schematic design. It develops alternatives or career choices. Career exploration
is the process of accumulating information about the world of work. Its goal is to obtain career information on a plethora of careers or specializations within a particular career. Even if you already have chosen architecture as a career, exploring is still necessary. Instead of exploring careers, you can explore firms, possible career paths within architecture, and other areas that affect the direction of your architectural path.

How do you explore? In *Career Planning Today*, the author describes a systematic process that includes collecting, evaluating, integrating, and deciding. Following these four steps guarantees the highest possible level of career awareness.

Where do you begin? First, you must collect career information from a variety of sources, both people and publications. With respect to people, the most popular tool is called *information interviewing*. What you do is interview someone to obtain information. You could do this with one of the senior partners in a local firm, a faculty member, a classmate or colleague, or your IDP advisor. Other ways to explore include attending lectures sponsored by the local AIA chapter or your university, volunteering your time through local AIA committees or other organizations of interest, becoming involved with a mentor program, and observing or shadowing someone for a day.

As Shapiro says, you should use your research skills to access any and all information you need on a career. Visit your local library and inquire about the following publications: *The Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT), *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (OOH), *Guide to Occupational Exploration* (GOE), and *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Ask a reference librarian to identify other resources you might find valuable. In addition, investigate resources at your local AIA chapter or the library or resource center at a school of architecture. Other resources include the Internet and professional associations (see Appendix A).

After completing the exploring process, your next step is the decision-making process.

**DECISION-MAKING**

What most people want out of life, more than anything else, is the opportunity to make choices.

David P. Campbell

The heart of the design process is design development. Similarly, decision-making is the heart of the career development process. Design development describes the character and intent of the entire project; it refines the schematic design and defines the alternatives. Decision-making means selecting alternatives and evaluating them against a predetermined set of criteria.

How you make decisions? Do you let others decide for you? Do you rely on gut-level reactions? Or do you follow a planned strategy of weighing alternatives? Whatever your method of deciding, you should be aware of it. While some decisions can be made at the drop of a hat, others, including career designing, require more thought.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-making Model</th>
<th>Architectural Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the decision to be made.</td>
<td>Need or desire for new space or building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather information.</td>
<td>Develop a building program (budget, style, size, room, specification, layout).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify alternatives.</td>
<td>Develop alternative schematic designs, incorporating the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weigh evidence.</td>
<td>Evaluate schematic designs as they meet determined needs, preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose among the alternatives.</td>
<td>Select the design that best captures ideals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review decision and consequences.</td>
<td>Long-range evaluation may identify need for major building renovation for reuse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pietiläinen Old Church, Petajavesi, Finland. Photographs: Ted Shelton, IH.
For demonstration purposes, review this architectural application of the decision-making process:

Decision-making can be difficult and time-consuming, but knowing the quality of decisions is affected by the information used to make them, we quickly realize that making informed decisions is an important skill to learn.

As you can see, both exploring and decision-making are critical steps to successful career designing. Do not wait to begin this important process; instead, take this information and build your future with career designing.

**PLANNING**

If you do not have plans for your life, someone else does.

*Anthony Robbins*

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that we can do something about it now.

*Alan Lakein*

"Cheshire-Puss," ... said Alice, "would you tell me, please which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

*Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

You may wonder why I am quoting from a popular children's book. If you look closer, you realize that half of reaching your destination is knowing the direction in which you are headed. Planning is key to fulfilling your career goals.

After the owner/client and the architect decide on a design for a potential building, the next step is the development of plans. These plans — construction documents, specifications, and construction schedules — play an important role in realizing the design. In a similar way, planning, as part of the career designing process, ensures a successful career.

In its simplest form, planning is the bridge from dreams to action; it is an intention to take an action by a certain time. At its fullest, planning is creating a mission statement, developing career goals, and preparing action plans.

But what are mission statements, goals, and action plans?

In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, author Stephen Covey says a mission statement focuses on what you want to be (character), to do (contributions and achievements), and on the values or principles on which being and doing are based. To start the planning process, consider your mission statement by asking yourself: What do I want to be? What do I want to do? What are my career aspirations? Review the example below:

I want to act in a manner that brings out the best in me and those important to me, especially when it might be justifiable to act otherwise.
After you have crafted your mission statement, the next step is to develop goals that will lead to its fulfillment. Goals are future-oriented statements of purpose and direction to be accomplished within a specified time frame. They are stepping stones in achieving long-range aims and should be specific and measurable. Write down your goals. It has been said that the difference between a wish and a goal is that a goal is written down.

Once you establish your goals, you are ready to develop the action plan that will help you accomplish them. Action plans are the steps on the path toward your goals; they are stepping stones in achieving related short-range intentions. Look at your established goals. What steps must you take to accomplish them? As with career goals, write down your action plan, including specific completion dates.

The final step in career planning is to review your action plans and goals regularly. Cross out the goals you have accomplished and revise, add to, or delete others. Be honest with yourself. Are you still committed to achieving your goals? You can change them, but remember that the magic road to achievement is persistence. Abandon goals only if they have lost meaning for you — not because they are tough or you have had a setback.

Now you have read about the entire career/life planning process: assessing, exploring, decision-making, and planning. As you progress through your professional career, you will realize that this process is never-ending and cyclical. As soon as you secure an ideal position in a firm, assess your new life situation and make adjustments to your career design accordingly.

**Career Paths**

Pursuing architecture prepares you for a vast array of career possibilities. Many of these are within traditional architectural practice, but many are also in related career fields.

Within the traditional architecture firm, you may obtain a beginning position as an intern and progress to junior designer, project architect, and, eventually, associate or principal. This does not happen overnight; it can take a lifetime. You may pursue your career in a traditional firm regardless of its size — small, medium, or large — or you may choose to work in a different setting, such as a private corporation or company; a local, state, or federal government agency; or a university — or, after obtaining your architectural license, you may start your own firm. You must consider which path is best suited to you.

Nontraditional career paths tap into the creative thinking and problem-solving skills you develop during your architectural education. These opportunities also are growing in popularity; in a survey of interns and young architects, nearly one-quarter of the respondents indicated that they do not plan a traditional career in architecture although they still plan to obtain their license. Further, respondents working in nontraditional settings reported better salaries, benefits, and advancement opportunities. These results are not shared to encourage you to pursue a nontraditional career path but rather to demonstrate that your architectural education is excellent preparation for many sorts of jobs. In fact, the career possibilities for people with an architectural education are limitless.
On the next page is a beginning list of traditional and nontraditional career paths. Katherine S. Proctor, who was director of student services at the University of Tennessee for a number of years, shares her perspective:

For people interested in an architecture career, the possibilities are endless. I have seen students graduate and become registered architects, professional photographers, lawyers, bankers, business owners, interior designers, contractors, and artists. The education is so broad and has such a strong liberal arts base that it provides a firm foundation for a wide array of exploration. This comes not only from the curriculum content but also from the methodology. The design studio, the core of the curriculum, teaches a method of applying pieces of intellectual information within the design process. The movement from thinking to doing is powerful. The ability to integrate hundreds of pieces of information, issues, influences, and forms, and to find a solution, is a skill every professional needs to solve problems, whether about building or life.

KATHERINE S. PROCTOR FCSI, CDT, ATA
The Careers of an Architect

Traditional Firm
Principal
Project Architect
Staff Architect
Senior Designer
Junior Designer
Draftsperson
Intern
Model Maker

Other Employment Settings
Architectural Illustrator
Corporate Architect
Facilities Architect
Public Architect
University Architect

Architectural Education
Professor
Architectural Historian
Academic Dean/Administrator
Researcher

Art and Design
Architectural Photographer
Art/Creative Director

Artist
Clothing Designer
Exhibit Designer
Filmmaker
Furniture Designer
Graphic Artist/Designer
Industrial/Product Designer
Interior Designer
Landscape Architect
Lighting Designer
Museum Curator
Set Designer
Toy Designer
Web Designer

Science and Technical
Building Pathologist
Cartographer
Civil Engineer
Computer System Analyst
Construction/Building Inspector
Illuminating Engineer
Marine Architect
Structural Engineer

Construction
Carpenter
Construction Manager
Construction Software Designer
Contractor
Estimator
Fire Protection Designer
Land Surveyor
Project Manager
Real Estate Developer

Related Professional
Architectural Critic
City Manager
Environmental Planner
Golf Course Architect
Lawyer
Preservationist
Product Manufacturer Representative
Property Assessor
Public Official
Real Estate Agent
Urban Planner
Writer
Design Build Teaming

RANDALL J. THARP, RA
Senior Vice President and Director of Construction
A. Epstein and Sons International, Inc.
Chicago

Why and how did you become an architect?
In my late elementary years, I took several art classes outside of school and became very interested in drawing. When I was in middle school my family moved to England, where I took technical drawing classes that I really enjoyed and excelled in. We often had projects in which we would draft plans and then build the design in our wood shop or metal shop classes.

During my time in Europe, I had the opportunity to visit and see many great buildings and places in architectural history, including the Hagia Sophia, the

Parthenon, Pompeii, and ancient Roman sites in England. All of these experiences set the background for an interest in architecture that was encouraged by an architect in our neighborhood. I took all of the architectural design and drawing classes in high school and decided to pursue architecture when I went into college.

Why and how did you choose which school to attend for your architecture degree? What degree(s) do you possess?
I went to high school in suburban Detroit. In talking with neighbors and teachers, I kept hearing that the University of Michigan was one of the best schools in the country. I also learned from a neighbor architect that Michigan was the only college in the state that offered a master of architecture program. While a sophomore in high school, I decided to attend Michigan to obtain a degree in architecture and become an architect. I applied to Michigan only and earned a B.S. in architecture, master of architecture, and master of business administration degrees there.

What has been your greatest challenge as an architect?
My greatest challenge has been to bridge the gap between two sides of the building industry that are traditionally adversarial: architects and contractors. Having spent my entire career in design-build, I am both and thus break down preconceived notions about these two. Some see me as an architect who does construction, while others want to view me as a contractor who tries to do design. Although I am a licensed architect, I really am neither architect nor contractor. I view my role as an integration of both that creates a synergistic result.

Why did you pursue the dual degree—master of architecture/master of business administration—during your graduate studies?
In my last year as an undergraduate in the architecture program at Michigan, I really began to understand the many facets of being an architect and that not all architects...
are the same. I also realized I was not going to be a designer. I saw that if I added business skills to my strong technical skills, I could be an asset to another architect who was more focused on design. At the same time, Michigan began offering a formal joint M.Arch./MBA program. I took the necessary exam, applied to both the business and architecture graduate programs, and was accepted.

I was completely surprised to see how my architectural skills applied to business, especially in marketing and strategic planning. The problem-seeking, programming, and solution development skills I had learned in architecture school fit right in, and I soon found I was a very good designer of marketing plans and business plans. I believe my business education helped me both find my niche and gave me excellent skills that have yielded many career opportunities.

**How and why did you pursue a career path more related to construction than to traditional architecture?**

The salary is better. Also, I felt my skills, especially my business skills, were much more valued in a construction environment than in a traditional architectural practice. Within a construction organization, my design and architectural technical skills were more unusual, and the business orientation of the construction industry offered me greater opportunity to use these talents from day one. Compared to architecture firms, construction and development firms were much more forward-thinking and immediately saw opportunities to put me in the front line with clients and leading projects because of my unique skill set.

**What is design-build teaming?**

Design-build is an integration of the design and construction process that breaks away from the traditional design-bid-build process.

Design-build involves the collaboration of all parties from the onset of the project. The construction professionals, the designers, the engineers, and the architects all participate in jointly understanding the client requirements for quality, cost, and schedule, and the impact of design decisions and solution alternates are evaluated by all parties. They use their combined expertise and skills to arrive at a final solution that best meets all of the basic client requirements as well as the specific details of the project.

**What are your primary responsibilities and duties?**

My primary responsibility is as the leader of Epstein’s Construction Group, where I work with thirty-five construction professionals in our home office and at project jobsite locations around the country. In this capacity, I work with others to secure new business, maintain client relationships, identify new talent and develop current staff; I also oversee administration for the group and review project and group financial performance on a continuing basis.
For several clients, I am the project executive or principal in charge. In these cases I assure that our project execution plans are implemented and our clients’ requirements are met.

I also serve on Epstein’s management committee and am a member of the corporate board of directors. In these roles, my primary responsibilities are to develop and plan strategic and tactical corporate plans to implement and manage across the firm.

What is the most/least satisfying part of your job?
I love the opportunity to hire young graduates out of architecture and engineering programs or early in their careers. It is rewarding to see them succeed and to know I played a role in teaching them, providing them opportunities, and enhancing their work experience. I also find it exciting and rewarding to be involved from the initial stages of meeting a prospective client and following the process from proposal through sale, project kickoff, design, documents completion, groundbreaking, and on through construction and occupancy.

The least satisfying part is the administrative work necessary in a large organization. All of it is critically necessary, but generating and reviewing reports, sitting in update meetings, and handling bureaucratic issues is simply not stimulating.

Who or what experience has been a major influence on your career?
When I was at the University of Michigan, I had the opportunity to have a work-study position at the University Planner and University Architect handling a variety of responsibilities. I gained a better understanding of the interaction of all the parties around the table and learned how the process of getting a project from needs assessment through program, concept, and final design was much more valuable than most of what I was learning in the classroom or studio. I was an outside observer of the process and saw it for what it was.
Succeeding in the Built Environment

H. ALAN BRANGMAN, AIA
University Architect
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

Why and how did you become an architect?
I became an architect because I always had a fascination with building things.

Why and how did you choose which school to attend for your architecture degree? What degree(s) do you possess?
I initially went to school at the University of New Hampshire to study civil engineering. At the beginning of my sophomore year I met an art professor who had been a former instructor at Cornell University. He suggested that I transfer to Cornell. My degree is the bachelor of architecture.

What has been your greatest challenge as an architect?
My greatest challenge as an architect has been and continues to be convincing other professionals that architects are capable of doing much more than just architecture.

How is working as a university architect different from more traditional architecture jobs?
My job responsibilities are more in line with those of a principal in a real estate
development firm. I am responsible not only for the hiring and oversight of design and planning consultants, providing program, planning, and design oversight for all university facilities, but also for all matters related to real estate.

**How and why did you pursue what might be considered a nontraditional career path?**

Initially, I did so because I had an interest in more than just designing buildings. I spent nine years with The Oliver T. Carr Company, a real estate development company in Washington, D.C. That opportunity opened my eyes to the breadth of the built environment and provided me with a much more global perspective on place making.

**During your career, you worked in the Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, an independent agency of the federal government. Can you describe your role in this agency?**

I was the deputy director of the Design Arts Program. The program was primarily responsible for grant making and supporting initiatives to spread the word about the benefits of good design. The initiatives I enjoyed the most were the Mayors Institute on City Design, a series of national forums dedicated to improving the understanding of the design of American cities through the bringing together of Mayors and urban design professionals; Your Town — Designing Its Future, a series of national workshops teaching the importance of design to those who can influence and make decisions about the way rural communities will look and work in the future; the Design for Housing Initiative, a national workshop dedicated to bringing together representatives from the housing delivery system to spur a better understanding of good design and its application to affordable housing; and the Presidential Design Awards, an honor awards program, administered in conjunction with the White House, wherein every four years the president gives awards to projects that came about as a result of federal involvement.

The first three initiatives were partnered with universities that had schools of design, such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Tulane University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the universities of Virginia, Minnesota, California, Berkeley, and Maryland. These initiatives were typically run as three-day seminars and involved not only decision makers like mayors, in the case of the Mayors Institute, but also nationally acclaimed design professionals, planners, landscape architects, real estate developers, economists, sociologists, and educators.
Why did you pursue the additional credentials of a Real Estate Development Primer Certificate at Harvard Graduate School of Design and Wharton School of Business?

When I started my career in real estate development, I was counseled to consider obtaining an MBA. At the time, I did not want to commit the time required to return to graduate school. Besides, the president of my firm did not have a business degree and seemed to be doing quite fine. I decided to pursue the path of learning through experience. Besides, I had been schooled as an architect, and architects are taught to solve problems. I was able to manage the problems that were part of my job responsibilities quite well. After a few years, I took the primer courses as a way of confirming what I had learned. It worked.

What is the most/least satisfying part of your job?
The least satisfying aspect of my current job is the pace at which things are accomplished in an academic environment — very slow. Entrepreneurship is not typically associated with academia.

Who or what experience has been a major influence on your career?
Bob Smith, AIA, an associate principal of RTKL, was influential in encouraging me in 1979 to look to real estate development as a possible career. Oliver T. Carr, Jr., of The Oliver T. Carr Company, was a mentor in my early years; through my employment at Carr, he provided me with the opportunity to preside over 5,000,000 gross square feet of commercial development in downtown Washington, D.C.
A Creative Career Transformation

ERIC TAYLOR, ASSOCIATE AIA
Photographer
Taylor Design & Photography, Inc.
Fairfax Station, Virginia

Why and how did you become an architect?
I decided on an architectural career to combine my visual/creative side with technical aptitudes. I went to college and worked in intern positions in high school and college to learn about the work world of architecture; during my architectural career I worked in variety of firms ranging from a three-person design firm to a 150-person architecture and engineering (A&E) firm.

Why and how did you choose which school to attend for your architecture degree? What degree(s) do you possess?
I looked for a school that combined a strong design direction with the practical side. I wanted to graduate with practical skills along with design sensibilities. I chose Syracuse University and earned a bachelor of architecture degree. I also studied photography as a sideline.

Why and how did you transition from architect to architectural photographer?
I had seventeen successful years in architecture, many as a senior project architect and designer. My work included office build-
ings, commercial, municipal and educational buildings, and interior design. But I came to a crossroads in my career—I could join another firm, start my own firm, or try something new. I chose something new.

I had always loved photography and had coordinated the photo programs at the firms I had worked at. I realized I could bring something to architectural photography that was unique: a true understanding of architecture from inside the profession. So my new direction was set. Because I lacked some of the technical expertise, I attended photography school to learn about professional lighting and camera systems. I built a photo portfolio by shooting projects on specification and by photographing the projects of architect friends. Then I got serious about marketing and launched my new career.

How are the two disciplines the same? Different?
The skills needed for success in architecture are parallel to those needed for success in architectural photography: ability to communicate visually and verbally; ability to visualize three-dimensionally; ability to distill a set of requirements to their essence; ability to arrive at solutions that answer these requirements; ability to entertain others.

Both disciplines require attention to detail and the ability to visualize what does not yet exist. The goal of architecture is to arrive at a three-dimensional solution to a complex set of criteria. The goal of architectural photography is to analyze that three-dimensional solution and find a compelling two-dimensional representation of it that explains the three-dimensional reality. While architectural design deals with form, volume, color, texture, perspective, and so on, the essence of photography is light and its effect on the rendering of those design elements. I believe architectural photography is enhanced by an understanding of design concepts, design elements, and construction methods.

When offered a commission, how do you approach the assignment?
First, I meet with the client to discuss the scope of assignment—exteriors, interiors, aerials, quantity of images expected, and so on. Next, we discuss the
intended uses of the photography — display prints, award submissions, in-house newsletters, website. We discuss the design concept the designer wants to be sure is expressed in the photos, the logistics of access to the space, scheduling, and budget. From there, I scout the location to assess equipment needs. Finally, I schedule assistants and do the photography.

What has been your greatest challenge as a photographer?
Predicting the weather! It is difficult to schedule exterior shoots far in the future because they are dependent on weather. Other than that, I have faced the same challenge as anyone starting any new business: developing a client base. On the technical side, photographing interiors under mixed lighting — daylighting, fluorescent, incandescent — was a new challenge. But on the creative side, I feel I have been preparing for this my whole life.

What is most/least satisfying about your work as a photographer?
Most satisfying is creating dynamic images and having clients be excited about them, and being involved with a wide diversity of building types, design, and construction. In addition, I no longer have to wait a year or two to see the results of my efforts!

I do miss the complexity of the design problem-solving process, but this loss is outweighed by the satisfaction I get from photography.

Do you still consider yourself as an architect?
Yes, but as it influences my photography and my understanding of the buildings and construction I photograph.
Who or what experience has been a major influence on your career?
In college, I became aware of the value of strong visual presentation. Good design professors required it, and I learned that dynamic graphics and photography were essential tools for explaining to others and for gaining their support for a design solution. As an architectural photographer, I see myself as helping others in their marketing efforts by providing dynamic images of their design work.

Why still photography rather than video or interactive images?
While video allows a broad-sweep understanding of a building or space, I see architectural still photography as visual editing. In this way, still compositions present the built environment in an edited version so others can see the inherent concept, form, composition, texture, color, balance, and beauty that I see.