2023 AIA Young Architects Award

Information from online submission form

**Candidate**  David J. Wilson, AIA

**AIA Chapter**  AIA Minnesota:

**Summary Statement**

David Wilson, AIA is a positive and collaborative Project Designer at HGA in Minneapolis. David tirelessly pursues Community Impact through Design Excellence, Service, and Leadership.

**Education**

University of Minnesota: Master of Architecture, 2008
University of Minnesota: Bachelor of Science in Architecture, 2005

**Initial Licensure**

December 2013, Minnesota

**Licensure**

Minnesota

**Work History**

Project Designer, HGA, 2015 - Present
Project Designer, Charles R. Stinson Architects 2008 - 2015
Teaching Assistant, University of Minnesota 2006 - 2008
Designer, CVDB Arquitectos, Portugal, 2007
Designer, Cumingham Group, 2005 - 2006
September 1, 2022

AIA Young Architects Award
AIA National
1735 New York Ave NW
Washington, DC 20006

Letter of Nomination – David Wilson, AIA

Dear Young Architect Award Selection Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I nominate David Wilson, AIA, as a candidate for the 2023 AIA National Young Architects Award. I first heard of David when renowned landscape architect, Shane Coen, FASLA, contacted me to sing his praises from their work together for families and communities locally and abroad. According to Shane, David was one of most talented young architects he’s ever worked with and highly recommended that we hire him. I am currently working with David on the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Jackson Hole History Museum where he is providing both design and technical leadership for esteemed arts and cultural communities.

I admire David’s introspective pivot from early formative years serving families in residential architecture towards community and cultural projects, seeking to widen his impact. During his tenure with HGA, I’ve witnessed first-hand David’s passion for deeply serving a wide range of arts, cultural, and education communities locally, regionally, and nationally. The result has been a tirelessness for design excellence, trusted relationships with communities, and a future vision for architecture broadening its impact beyond the built environment.

David is a unique talent in the architectural community. Whereas most architects are closely aligned with either design, project leadership, or technical sides of architecture, David excels at all three. In many ways he’s like a master builder that can conceive, model, draw, execute, and communicate his ideas in a self-assured manner that is rare in this increasingly segmented field. At the core of David’s wide-ranging talents is a commitment to deeply serving the current and future needs of a given community through whatever design, service, or leadership necessary.

David’s design and practice reflect the vision laid out by the AIA Design Framework—that no matter the scale or type of project, his projects seek to be a “source of good in the world.” Beyond creating socially responsible building environments, he has also had significant impact on HGA’s National Sustainability Council and National Racial Equity Task Force where he has persistently advocates for environmental and equitable design. David’s contributions extend to years of volunteering within AIA and the larger community as an extension of the impact he seeks through project work.

Some people simply embody the reason this award was created; David Wilson is one of them. I recommend his selection for 2023 AIA National Young Architects Award in the highest and most enthusiastic terms possible.

Unpaid Labor Declaration Policy: I affirm that I do not have unpaid intern architects, including working students, and neither does any firm of which I am an owner or manager.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Soranno, FAIA
David Wilson, AIA is a positive and collaborative Project Designer at HGA in Minneapolis. David tirelessly pursues Community Impact through Design Excellence, Service, and Leadership.

**DESIGN EXPERIENCE**

- Project Designer, HGA, 2015 - Present
- Project Designer, Charles R. Stinson Architects, 2008 - 2015
- Teaching Assistant, University of Minnesota, 2006 - 2008
- Designer, CVDB Arquitectos, Portugal, 2007
- Designer, Cuningham Group, 2005 - 2006

**DESIGN EDUCATION**

- University of Minnesota: Master of Architecture, 2008; Valedictorian, Accelerated Track
- Bachelor of Science in Architecture with High Distinction, 2005

**LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

- AIA Minneapolis/St. Paul Executive Board of Directors, 4 yrs.
- AIA Emerging Professionals Committee, 2 yrs.
- AIA-MN Membership Committee, 2 years
- AIA-MN Leadership Forum
- AIAS-MN Vice President
- AIAS-MN Secretary
- AIAS-MN Representative, Grassroots National Leadership
- AIAS-MN Representative, Regional Conferences: Ohio, Iowa, Kentucky
- Arts & Community Sustainability Leader, HGA
- International Project Team Leader, Charles R. Stinson Architects
- Mentor, University of Minnesota, Mentor Program, 4 yrs
- National Racial Equity Task Force, HGA
- Nat’l Sustainability Leadership Council, HGA
- Peninsula Papagayo Nature Reserve, Design Review Board, Costa Rica
- Team Leader, Community Action Design Workshop

**AIA DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

- AIA Central States Region Honor Award, 2019
- AIA Faith & Form International Award, 2020
- AIA Henry Adams Gold Medal, 2008
- AIA-MN Young Architect Award, 2022
- AIA-MN Honor Award, 2020, Countryside Community Church
- AIA-MN Honor Award, 2020, St. Paul Academy Math & Science
- AIA-MN A.R.E. Scholarship Essay Winner
- AIA & MAF Ralph Rapson Traveling Fellowship, Finalist, 2016
- AIA & MAF Ralph Rapson Traveling Fellowship, Winner, 2021
- AIA Nebraska Honor Award, 2019
- AIA Northwest & Pacific Honor Award, 2022

**ADDITIONAL DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

- American Architecture Award, Chicago Athenaeum, 2020
- Best Conceptual Design Award, University of Minnesota
- Best Overall Project, Building Excellence Awards, BOMA, 2020
- Bill & Elizabeth Pedersen Endowment (Of Kohn Pedersen Fox)
- Community Prize International Interior Design FAB, 2020
- ENR Mountain States Higher Education Merit Award, 2019
- Graduate Design Excellence Award (x2), University of Minnesota
- People’s Choice Award, Idaho Business Review, 2020
- Project of the Year, Idaho Business Review, 2020
- Overall Grand Prize International Interior Design FAB, 2020
- Midwest Home Fellowship (x2)
AIA YAA 2023, DAVID WILSON

EQUITABLE DESIGN

Living in Downtown Minneapolis during the murder of George Floyd re-awakened me to how much work needs to be done by white males like myself to help address systematic racism and inherent biases ingrained in my community, profession, and the privilege in my own path to becoming an architect. I want my daughter to see a more equitable tomorrow. It is exceedingly clear to me that architecture without equity is not architecture at all.

As a small first step, independently and volunteering with HGA’s newly formed National Racial Equity Task Force, I’ve engaged in extensive training, workshops, discussions, books, and, most importantly, focusing my ears on the perspectives of BIPOC Communities. As part of a small, diverse focus group, I explored and helped identify what an equitable design process at HGA could look like. Applying my design background in the creation of a visual resource guide, we presented to firm leadership a series of short and long-term recommendations, from advocating for an equity retrospective to developing metrics for accountability and expanding firm-wide racial equity training.

DESIGN EXCELLENCE

DESIGN FOR COMMUNITIES

About 10 years ago, at the time focusing on high-end residential architectural, I remember sitting in awe next to the National AIA Award-winning Lakewood Cemetery Mausoleum in Minneapolis, daydreaming about what it would be like to design buildings that impacted the community in the way that this building inspired me. A few weeks later, I spent hours with my dad, who first went to school to be an architect and had introduced me to the profession, taking in every space and design detail of Lakewood. At the time I didn’t realize that would be the last moment I’d ever see my dad before he passed in a car accident. Lakewood heightened into a profound place of mourning and healing for me and my family. Beyond the grief, I took this as a sign to focus on design with broader community impact, reaching out to, getting hired by, and eventually working side-by-side with Joan Soranno, FAIA and John Cook, FAIA of HGA, the lead designers of Lakewood. As a Project Designer focused on arts, community, and education projects, I am fortunate to feel as close to my life’s calling as any time in my career—something that I know would make my dad smile.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

I remember being haunted as a teenager by a documentary depicting the amount of waste the average American creates in their first year of life, heaping above the pile that a citizen of a third world country produces in their entire lifetime. And then, in college, realizing the outsized role that the embodied and operational carbon of buildings have in exacerbating this disparity—how did we come to this moment? How can I start to be the change I would like to see? In a firm of nearly 1,000 employees, I was appointed to our National Sustainability Council and to the role of Minneapolis Arts, Community, & Education Sustainability Leader, helping to set firm benchmarks, share knowledge, and examine internal practices around sustainable design. In addition to leading an initiative on how we gather and share sustainable project stories centered on the AIA Framework for Design Excellence (lower left), I served in the development and as an early beta tester for a custom early design energy analysis tool (below). And, as the 2021 winner of the Ralph Rapson Traveling Fellowship, I’ll be studying the deep connection between nature and architecture in Japan in the coming months, through a lens of sustainability and resiliency.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 1 of 2

I recently created a web tool for brainstorming, collecting, and sharing community project stories and metrics based on the AIA Framework for Design Excellence.

I recently shared potential uses for a custom energy analysis tool during a national education session and with community clients.

As part of a small focus group, I explored what an equitable design process could look like and presented recommendations to firm leadership.
SERVICE THROUGH DESIGN

I fondly recall a professor stating that architecture was the last of the “naive” professions, in that architects still believe they can change the world. I understood this to be an endearing comment about the social charge of architects and our responsibility to deeply serve a wide range of communities. Early in my career, one unexpected international project opportunity led to the next until I found myself working on a Penthouse for a Royal Family. I felt a big asterisk next to the project, knowing that there was no way I was going to “change the world” one Royal Penthouse at a time. My heart wasn’t in the work and I knew it was time to change paths. I realized my widest social impact would come from centering my daily design practice on community and non-profit-based organizations ranging from theater, music, dance, art, museum, and worship projects. I also realized that my design advocacy needs to extend to organizations not yet in a place to use their resources on architectural fees, recently leading a pro bono community design effort for a local museum.

SERVICE THROUGH MENTORSHIP

My childhood obsessions in drawing, math, and Legos led to my first encounter with an architect, a friend of my dad, when I was 16 years old. The casual conversations over a B.L.T. sandwich at Perkins restaurant made a lasting impression on me—an experience I’ve always hoped to pay forward. I’ve had the opportunity to serve many talented architecture students through the University of Minnesota Mentor Program. Each year I’ll typically mentor a student through tours of our office, attending design events or exhibitions together, reviewing design portfolios and resumes, offering career advice, fostering connections with other professionals, and encouraging involvement within the AIA. I’ve also had the opportunity to introduce architecture and design over several years to St. Therese Elementary School students, creating presentations that showcase our design tools, process, and construction sites. I hope to continue to excite and inspire future architects across gender, race, and culture.

SERVICE IN LARGER COMMUNITY

I’ve enjoyed volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and Hearts & Hammers, two organizations offering assistance to deserving community members through creating or repairing a home.

I also volunteered weekly in the Pediatric Unit at the local Children’s Hospital for over a year, looking for a way to serve a group with one of the greatest needs in our community. I’d hold and comfort newborns with severe illnesses, play games with older kids, and provide a temporary distraction for the patients’ siblings and family members. I learned as much from those children as I ever have from any adult on showing courage in the face of adversity.

I’m reminded of advice from an AIA mentor that when we volunteer our time in activities beyond the typical boundaries of our roles as architects, we are still serving as positive representatives of our profession to the larger community.
LEADERSHIP

AIA LEADERSHIP

The American Institute of Architects is foundational to my leadership skills, starting as Vice President of AIAS-Minnesota created a path to my first architectural internship with Cuningham Group in 2005. My early involvement in the AIA focused on helping to ensure pay for intern architects, connecting students to professionals, providing orientations to new AIA members, and creating design competitions for emerging professionals. AIA has provided me with a safe testing ground to network, build public speaking skills, and lead initiatives.

- AIA Minneapolis/St. Paul Executive Board of Directors, 4 years
- AIA-MN Emerging Professionals Committee, 2 years
- AIA Membership Committee, 2 years
- AIAS-MN including as Secretary and Vice President, 4 years
- AIA-MN Leadership Forum Graduate, 2017
- AIAS Representative, Grassroots National Leadership Conference, Washington D.C. and Regional Conferences in Ohio, Iowa, Kentucky

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Professionally, my early leadership skills were forged as the International Team Leader for Charles R. Stinson Architects, managing and designing projects across Latin America, Europe, and Asia. I served as the primary liaison with local tradespeople and Owners, actively managing multiple projects from early design on a middle class housing prototype to being on-site months during construction. In working across cultures, languages, and construction methods, I learned that we all have more in common than we do apart. And that architecture has a role in creating the health, safety, and connection we all desire within our communities and families.

"David served high expectation families and communities, international review boards, and global contractors all with ease. He is a man of great talent, high moral integrity, and I consider him to be a rising star in the world of architecture."

CHARLES R. STINSON, AIA

LOCAL & NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

“A trajectory of focus from single-family residential work to community and cultural projects have allowed and advanced David’s passions to create and impact the greatest number of people and the environment for the better.”

STEVEN DWYER, FAIA

Beyond local and national project work, I was selected for our National Racial Equity Task Force and National Sustainability Council (and recently appointed as our office Arts, Community, and Education Sustainability Leader), co-leading focus groups, researching, and developing resources for integrating sustainability and equity into our day-to-day national practice. As a Project Designer on buildings like a new history museum nestled within the historic urban fabric of downtown Jackson, Wyoming, I provide design and technical leadership, lead team meetings, present concepts to the Owner, identify cost-saving measures, and mentor team members across disciplines.

LEADERSHIP CREDENTIALS

I organized and moderated a large AIA Minneapolis panel discussion for emerging professionals on future trends in technology, firm practice, and design culture.

I actively led multiple projects across Latin America, Europe, and Asia as International Team Leader, above planning for a new mixed-use community.

My model of leadership is described as positive, collaborative, and energetic, always looking for a scenario in which every voice feels heard.
Designing for Community

“No matter the scale, location, or type of project, David seeks to uplift communities and families.”

JOAN SORANNO, FAIA
Music Rehearsal Building, Marlboro, Vermont 2021

Nestled within the densely wooded rural community of Marlboro in Vermont, Marlboro Music is a world-renowned institution dedicated to connecting emerging professionals with the world’s most respected chamber musicians. We were asked to design a small “village” of environmentally-sensitive music rehearsal studios (meeting AIA 2030), a music library, offices, common areas, and neighboring residential dorms that create the open and supportive environment desired by the musicians with their students. World-class musicians have offered their praise for the acoustics of the rehearsal studios and the sensitive connection to the natural context.

My primary role was in leading the technical design and documentation of the exterior and interior shell, coordinating building systems, and striving for simplicity and beauty within extremely precise construction tolerances and high performance goals. Sustainability was integral to the idea of connecting the community of musicians with nature.
“The beauty, privacy, and intimacy of the setting are integral to the in-depth exchange of ideas, and the nurturing family of musicians who gather on campus...there is a wonderful, idealistic synergy here between music, nature, and community.”

PHILIP MANEVAL, MANAGER, MARLBORO MUSIC

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: HGA
Declaration of Responsibility
I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit above, which included:
Design Team Member, Leading Technical Design
John Cook, FAIA
Vice President, Senior Project Architect, HGA
"Thank you for inviting Dunwoody students to participate in this design workshop. It was great to see collaboration done at its best. I learned so much in such a short time. David, thank you for guiding the team."

LATOYA DENNIS, DUNWOODY COLLEGE STUDENT, NOMAS

COMMUNITY ACTION
Minnesota African American Heritage Museum & Gallery, Minneapolis
This past year I served as the team leader for a pro-bono community design workshop for the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum & Gallery (MAAHMG). The Museum is envisioning a new 15,000 SF home with galleries, classrooms, and support spaces to help share the unique stories of Minnesota African Americans. Pairing with two students from the Dunwoody College Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMAS), we visited MAAHMG’s existing museum, prepared plans and renderings for fundraising a new facility, and provided preliminary cost and site analysis for their planning efforts. In the weeks leading up to the event, I volunteer coordinated with the students and the Museum, outlining the parameters and desired outcomes for the two-day workshop. During the event itself, and based on my experience with museums, I led our design process, communications with the Client, the final presentation drawings, and compiling a package for the Museum to use after the event in helping to bring their inspiring vision to life. Following the workshop, we have been asked to participate in a focus group to contribute to their strategic plan for moving forward. The collaborative spirit of the group, and the amazing work created so quickly, was a highlight of my own career.

Role of Nominee: Team Leader  
Design Firm/Firm of Record: N/A  
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit above, which included: Team Leader; Led Design Team  
Rebecca Celis, AIA  
Vice President, National Arts & Community Leader, HGA
“David’s design influence uniquely positioned him to improve life on numerous levels for Countryside members and staff.”

RICK MACINNES, VICE CHAIR TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
The Tri-Faith Initiative is an unprecedented, interfaith community bringing together a Synagogue, Mosque, and Church on a 38-acre campus in America's heartland. Our work included designs for the larger campus masterplan, a unifying bridge, and Countryside Community Church, all focused on the mutual goal of creating inclusive environments that help advance interfaith relationships and understandings.

My role was in co-leading the overall design and leading the coordination, representation, and documentation from schematic design through construction. My work involved multiple site visits, stakeholder presentations, participatory design workshops, and close integration with several local artisans for specialty features like the sanctuary’s organ and cross (upper left).

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: HGA/APMA
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee's responsibility for the exhibit above, which included: Co-Leading Design

Rick MacInnes
Countryside Relocation Committee, Chair
Dedicated to sharing and advancing a complete and equitable history of the region, the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum envisions a new home rooted within their downtown community. Our integrated team collaboratively designed the included gallery, retail, research, classroom, and administrative spaces that preserve and highlight cultural artifacts, photographs, and oral histories. 

The integrated design process included significant engagement with the community through workshops, surveys, and presentations.

Emerging out of deep research and respect for the community’s historic Western design guidelines, the cedar-clad museum is a quietly contemporary extension of the existing urban fabric in the town of Jackson. The covered wooden boardwalk and the repetition of the punched windows on the second level embrace the storefront vernacular of the larger region.

My primary role, bridging between project designer, project architect, and project manager, has been to provide design and technical leadership, presentations/ renderings, and documentation from the interview through construction. Bridging design aesthetics, research, building systems, and client presentations, my work has required leading coordination with a team of engineers, landscape architects, and exhibit design consultants, in addition to working closely with the Owner’s representative and contractor.

"David is the most professional and well-rounded architect that I have had the pleasure of working with in my 20+ years in the industry.”

JASON BERNING, OWNER’S REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON HOLE HISTORY MUSEUM

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: HGA
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit above, which included: Co-Leading Design

Jason Berning PE LEED AP
Owner’s Representative, Jackson Hole History Museum
Berning Project Management, LLC
BRINGING ART TO THE COMMUNITY

Minneapolis Institute of Art Expansion/Renovation (In Design)

Merging the architectural legacies of McKim, Mead, & White, Kenzo Tange, and Michael Graves, the Minneapolis Institute of Art is one of the largest art museums in the country and art educators in Minnesota.

Founded in 1883 on bringing art into the life of the community, the Institute envisions an expansion and renovation that creates a more accessible, contemporary, and welcoming beacon to the community. We are in early design and planning where, as Project Designer, I'm currently exploring architectural concepts and spaces that seek to fulfill the Institute’s vision.

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: HGA
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit above, which included: Project Designer, Member of Design Team
Joan Soranno, FAIA
Vice President, Design Principal, HGA

COMMUNITY OF EMERGING ARTISTS

Spokane Falls Community College Fine and Applied Arts, Washington (Under Construction)

"A jewel of the college … draw[ing] more people from the community out to events that we hold on our campus."

BONNIE GLANTZ, DEAN

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: HGA/ALSC
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit above, which included: Co-Leading Design
Clinton Brown
Director, Capital Construction, Community Colleges of Spokane

EXPANDING CULTURAL IMPACT

College of William & Mary Performing Arts Center, Virginia (Under Construction)

"This will be a state-of-the-art facility for teaching and performance."

AMY SEBRING, W&M CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: HGA/Moseley
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit above, which included: Design Team Member, Led Exterior Design
Rebecca Krull-Kraling, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
Vice President, Senior Project Manager, HGA

Founded in 1693, the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia has a deep history as a premiere public university, rooted in a rich fabric of Flemish-bond brick buildings and communal plazas. As a member of the lead design team, my particular focus was on the exterior design of the 180,000 square foot, LEED Silver Performing Arts Complex, sited as the signature gateway into a new Arts District on campus—a commitment to nurturing, understanding, and elevating the arts in all of its forms to the larger community.
COMMUNITY GATEWAY
Boise State University Visual Arts Center, Idaho

“This building will be the model that others will measure by — it is really that good and unique. I think it is going to be great for the University and Boise. It is world class.”

MARY ANNE CARTER, CHAIR, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The Center for Visual Arts is a new state-of-the-art, 98,000 square foot facility positioned on the west edge of Boise State University along Capitol Boulevard, serving as a gateway between the campus and larger urban community.

I led the digital design development, coordination, and documentation of the new arts center, integrating the design intent from early phases through the end of construction. My focus included the complex curving building skin and common & gallery spaces that seek to embody the arts and engage with the larger community and campus.

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: HGA/LCA
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit above, which included: Co-Leading Design

Casey Huse
Quality Manager, ESI Construction
“Unique and gorgeous . . . helps increase the artistic, cultural and historic value the University shares with our Community.”

LAUREN MCLEAN, MAYOR OF BOISE, IDAHO
I was the 2021 winner of the Ralph Rapson Traveling Fellowship, the premier and prestigious annual design competition for AIA Minnesota members with an ever-changing design brief, resulting in a shortlist, jury presentation, and a single award of a $12,000 traveling fellowship. To the right are excerpts from my winning design boards, exploring community-based health equity through a new Center for Whole Health in a rural Minnesota community—asking the question of how architecture can help provide access to the many components that constitute ‘whole health’ including educational, physical, and environmental health. With the traveling fellowship, I plan to study the deep connection between architecture and nature in Japan through a lens of sustainability and resiliency.

“David readily is embracing the challenges of our time, seeking to find solutions that go beyond the built environment to the larger environment we seek to build, as a profession and society.”

STEVEN DWYER, FAIA

Role of Nominee: Project Designer
Design Firm/Firm of Record: David Wilson, AIA
Declaration of Responsibility: I have personal knowledge of the nominee’s responsibility for the exhibit listed above, which included: Solely Responsible for Design

Amber Allardyce, Hon. AIAMN
Deputy Director, AIA Minnesota