

Ruth M. Gless, FAIA

As a creator of firm culture and a leader of professional and community advocacy organizations, Ruth M. Gless, FAIA, has always taught and mentored the community, clients, emerging architects, and fellow professionals.

BACKGROUND –

Ruth M. Gless, FAIA, has been a teacher, a firm leader, a community advocate, and a mentor. Her passion for teaching and mentoring, grounded in her earlier career as a classroom teacher, has been the guiding theme of her entire professional life. She has educated community leaders, clients, and fellow professionals. She has created public outreach programs that have elevated the public's awareness of the importance of architecture; she has taught clients to consider the impact of architecture on the community and the larger environment; and she has created mentoring and professional development programs for both young architects and seasoned professionals.

FIRM LEADER –

As a firm leader, Ruth has always focused on the development of young architects. As a rising leader at Perkins+Will in Chicago assigned to "write the manual," she knew that a highly skilled, creative, and energetic work force comes about through training. Ruth then spearheaded a re-formulation of the firm's professional development program to train P+W staff toward excellence and to provide opportunities for personal growth.

In Columbus, as the first female architect principal at NBBJ, she became a role model for women. In her own community-based practice, she incorporated education as an integral part of a collaborative studio environment. Her focus has always been first on people, second on process.

As a practitioner, Ruth has mentored a generation of architects, particularly women, teaching the value of collaboration and community engagement as critical elements of successful careers.

COMMUNITY AND CLIENTS – Public Outreach

An effective advocate for urban living, Gless has devoted her considerable talent and energy to non-profits that promote architecture and planning in the public realm. As Board President of the Columbus Center for Architecture and Design, she established Camp Architecture to introduce children and their parents to the public role of architecture. As Board President of the Neighborhood Design Center, she expanded its mission to educate architecture students, so they may then educate entire communities on the importance of architecture and planning.

Gless has collaborated with private developers and institutional clients on projects that contribute both to their own success and to their urban contexts. She has taught developers that good design is an urban responsibility. She taught institutions such as Lorain County Community College that good design spurs economic development. She taught The Ohio State University that good design contributes to the environment, guiding the University through its first LEED project, the Ohio 4-H Center. Through efforts such as these, Gless has expanded the role of the architecture in the public realm.

Ruth taught me that a work of architecture should be truly specific to a site, and that our work as client and architect is to find and celebrate that uniqueness. We don't just plop something down; rather we make a contribution to the neighborhood – that's what makes it great." Connie J. Klema, Land Use Plans, Inc.

MENTORSHIP THROUGH AIA–

Ruth has participated actively in AIA, rising from Design Committee chair, then Board Member to Chapter President in 2011, the second woman of four to date. She has been an AIA Ohio board member for 6 years, representing AIA

Columbus first as Alternate then as Director. Ruth is adamant that such leadership provides unique opportunities and obligations to create programs meant to develop and shape young architects into future leaders:

- **AIA Columbus/Center for Architecture – Camp Architecture**
Believing that the appreciation of architecture begins early in life, and that youth is the starting point for diversifying the profession, Ruth co-developed the Camp Architecture Program in 2010 with Marsh Reese Conrad. This popular summer “Camp” introduces young people to the world of architecture through hands-on design activities, tours, and interactions with industry professionals. At ten years, the program now reaches 100 children a summer, with an additional 25 in the two-week High School Design program held at the Knowlton School of Architecture, as well as additional mid-year, one-day sessions. Grants and gifts supply scholarships to one-third of the attendees.
- **ARCHway** – Ruth co-founded and acted as senior advisor to AIA Columbus’ ARCHway Program, which combines mentorship and leadership development by connecting rising leaders in the Columbus architectural community with seasoned professionals, including Fellows, in small groups to network, share knowledge, and explore a range of professional issues. There is an application process and tuition, sending a positive message that firms who send “students” are serious about the program’s benefits and are willing to invest in them. The program received a 2018 Emerging Professionals Component grant from the AIA College of Fellows.
- **Stories of Architects** – Ruth was honored to be the kick-off speaker of this series of conversations sponsored by Diversity by Design and focusing on under-represented groups.
- **Women in Architecture Exhibit for OVR Convention, 2015** – Ruth invented and chaired this endeavor. Through all of the listed initiatives, Ruth was at the forefront, a positive supporter and role model for women architects. AND – the Chapter continues to use the exhibit.
- **AIA Ohio Harassment Awareness Task Force** – Ruth proposed the formation of this task force to assist members and firms to understand the complexities surrounding diversity and inclusion, and to create work cultures free of harassment as well as equitable employment policies. She continues as a member of the conversation.

The reach of Ruth’s mentorship is as far as it is deep. She has made it her life’s mission to lift up those around her and to challenge architects of all generations and backgrounds to be their very best.
Hallie Delvillan, Assoc. AIA

AIA COLUMBUS FELLOWS COMMITTEE – CHAIR

Elevated to Fellowship in 2016, Ruth assumed leadership of AIA Columbus’s Fellowship Committee. As chair, she instituted the Columbus Fellowship Development program aimed at two important aspects of professional development:

- Identifying and mentoring future candidates toward leadership in the profession, and
- Mentoring current candidates toward successful submissions.

Ruth believes passionately that Fellowship is not a professional pinnacle but rather a platform for contribution, for serving the profession and for mentoring others toward professional excellence and a level of leadership which makes them deserve to be Fellows. This belief, shared by the Fellowship Committee, forms the basis for the AIA Columbus Fellowship Development Program.

Mentoring Toward Leadership –

Ruth leads the AIA Columbus Fellows through the following process:

- **Discovering Future Leaders** - AIA Columbus asks all eligible members (members for 10 years or more) whether they are interested in submitting for Fellowship. The Fellows recognize that this is a substantial number, but believe that no one should be left out as in the “old boys’ network” of decades past. The

Fellows meet, review the list, and assign mentors to consult with and mentor promising candidates going forward. The Fellows then develop a ten-year and a five-year list for continuing mentorship.

In the spirit of leadership development, the Fellows act as coaches, helping future leaders discover and develop their professional and leadership skills, sometimes for a number of years.

- **Mentoring Fellowship Candidates –**

The AIA Columbus Fellows Committee begins the yearly process soon after the National Jury of Fellows announces the list of Fellows to be elevated that year – which is usually some time in February. This allows the Committee to celebrate and to welcome the new Fellows. The group discusses the possible candidates and invites them to a series of group critiques covering the submission content, the submission process, the writing, and the visual appearance. Discussions of the candidates' focus and argument, sponsor and supporters, exhibits, and overall presentation happens in spring and early summer, and candidates find these group discussions enlightening and helpful. After mid-summer, the Fellows meet with candidates individually, as the submissions need a more fine-tuned approach involving language edits and specific graphic comments.

- **Ruth's Rules –**

During her tenure as Chair, Ruth has developed her Rules, and edits and augments them as new wisdom emerges. Ruth offers them freely to anyone who wants to apply for Fellowship, and these words of wisdom have been shared with and by other chapters. Everyone who has used the rules has found them invaluable.

Topics include:

- Theory and Initial Considerations
- Jury Process
- Sponsor's Role and Support Letters
- The Submissions Document
- Language and Graphics

As a helpful guide on the path to AIA Fellowship, "Ruth's Rules" are valued by candidates, sponsors, and Fellows committees across the nation. Peter L. Bardwell, FAIA

Under Ruth's leadership, the Columbus Fellows Development Program has garnered impressive results:

- Seven Fellows elevated in 2017-18 from Columbus/Dayton: Tim Fishking, FAIA, Lane Beougher, FAIA, David Meleca, FAIA, Bernie Costantino, FAIA, Jonathon Barnes, FAIA, Troy Sherrard, FAIA, Steve Sharp, FAIA.
- Ruth personally mentored Barnes and Costantino in Columbus, as well as Jack Bialosky, FAIA, Cleveland, and Steven Turckes, FAIA, Chicago.
- Six promising candidates from Columbus/Dayton will submit for 2020. The committee has high hopes for all.
- OVR components use the Fellowship Development Program – North East Ohio, led by Cleveland and including Youngstown, Akron, Toledo and Northeast Ohio, Dayton and Columbus, Cincinnati, Indiana, and soon Kentucky.
- Ruth has presented the Fellowship submission process at AIA Conferences in Kentucky, Indianapolis, and North East Ohio, and will lead a presentation at the up-coming OVR Conference in Cincinnati in 2019.

Ruth Gless is a tireless mentor. She brings an enormous amount of energy and dedication to all that she does. As Ruth says, ***"Once you've been a teacher, you can't not teach. You're a teacher for your whole life."*** For almost forty years, Ruth Gless has been a teacher, a leader, an advocate—and, in all of those roles, a mentor. At this stage in her career, mentorship is *the thing* that most matters to her. Helping architects to reach their full potential is the reward, and the obligation, of a work life well lived.



AIA Ohio Awards Committee
AIA Ohio
17 South High Street
Suite 200
Columbus, Ohio 43215

June 3, 2019

Dear Awards Committee,

It is with great pleasure to support Ruth Gless, FAIA, for the 2019 AIA Ohio Mentor Award. Ruth is an exceptional architect and artist, who has devoted much of her career to teaching and mentoring architects at all levels. Her passion, energy, and candor pushes others to be their very best.

Ruth serves as chair of the AIA Columbus Fellowship Committee, where she developed a methodology for attaining fellowship—something she shares with other candidates and chapters across the country. The critical pieces to the methodology are identifying and mentoring future candidates, coaching prospective candidates who may be ready to apply for Fellowship, and mentoring current candidates toward successful submissions. She also created "Ruth's Rules", a compilation of wisdom and information gleaned from her own submission process and from first-hand observations. Since chairing the Committee, the success rate for Fellowship is remarkable, 3/3 in 2017, 4/4 in 2018, and possibly six in 2020 from Columbus and Dayton.

Ruth believes passionately that Fellowship is not a professional pinnacle but rather a platform for contribution, for serving the profession, and for mentoring others toward professional excellence. Thus, in 2018, Ruth co-founded the ARCHway program. The program connects emerging professionals with firm leaders in the Columbus architectural community. ARCHway is a hybrid professional development program combining mentorship and leadership development. The program received a 2018 Emerging Professionals Component grant from the AIA College of Fellows.

Ruth is passionate about empowering women. She is a role model and mentor to women in architecture, helping them shape their careers and leadership skills, and celebrating their successes. In 2015, Ruth organized the OVR Women in Architecture exhibit, an exhibit that is still used today at the Center for Architecture and Design in Columbus. Ruth was also the first speaker in Columbus "Stories of Architects", a series that features architects from under-represented groups in architecture.

Ruth is a driving force within our Chapter. Her leadership and guidance makes our Chapter stronger and more resilient. I cannot think of a person who is more deserving of this award than Ruth Gless, FAIA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yanitza Brongers-Marrero".

Yanitza Brongers-Marrero, AIA
President

The American Institute of Architects

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50 West Town Street
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Columbus, Ohio 43215

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PERKINS+WILL

June 2, 2019

AIA Ohio
17 S. High St., Suite 200
Columbus, OH 43215

**Re: Letter of Support for AIA Ohio Mentor Award
Ruth Gless, FAIA**

To whom it may concern:

I write to provide my strong recommendation and unqualified support for Ruth Gless, FAIA for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award. I have known Ruth for nearly three decades. During this time, she has been a consummate colleague, a devoted friend, and especially a quintessential mentor.

I first met Ruth at Perkins+Will when, she as a Senior Designer and I as a young architect, collaborated on an elementary school in northern Ohio. This was the first of a number of such collaborations. Ruth brought a distinct energy to the projects and the team esprit de corps. I distinctly recall the time she would spend mentoring younger team members whether it be about the profession in general, a design strategy, or a detail. And, we all looked forward to Ruth's "word of the day". This was the former English teacher in Ruth making sure that we were all well rounded architects.

Some time later, when I was having a rather serious professional quandary, I sought out advice of trusted friends and professional whose opinions I knew I could trust. Ruth was one of the first people who helped me through that time providing a much-needed sounding board as I worked through the issue. I will forever be in her debt.

Most recently, as I was making my application for the College of Fellows, Ruth was, without question, the first person I thought of for support. I knew her keen eye for the written word and architectural content combined with a healthy dose of candor was just the combination that would help to make my submission sing. As I worked through constructing my submission, Ruth committed countless hours mentoring me on approach, proofing material, offering needed and appreciated criticism. I can say, without reservation, that Ruth Gless, FAIA is one of the main, if not the main, reason that I was successful with my first attempt. I will add that while Ruth and I worked on this at a distance, I in Chicago and she in Columbus, I know she helps lead FAIA submission efforts in Columbus and has mentored many others on this quest.

For the reasons cited above, I strongly endorse and recommend Ruth Gless, FAIA for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.R.Turckes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven R Turckes, FAIA, ALEP, LEED AP
Principal, Global K12 Practice Leader
Perkins+Will

3 June 2019

AIA Honor Awards Committee
17 South High Street
Columbus OH 43215

Dear Committee Members:

I am pleased and honored to recommend Ruth Gless FAIA for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award. There is no one who has demonstrated stronger leadership, guidance and service in mentoring young professionals and the local community. In her role as the president of AIA Columbus, Ruth established several mentoring programs and more recently she has led a very successful AIA Columbus Fellowship Committee.

Under her leadership the Chapter implemented Camp Architecture, a highly popular summer program to introduce kids (and their parents) to the world of architecture through hands-on design, field trips, tours and interactions with professionals. Now in its tenth year, 125 students will attend, including a two-week high school session at the Knowlton School. One of the greatest benefits of the program has been its ability to attract underrepresented individuals to the profession.

In addition, Ruth was the Co-founder and advisor to the ARCHway program, a leadership/mentorship institute during which rising leaders are paired with seasoned professionals in small groups to network, share knowledge, and explore a range of professional issues. There is an application process and tuition, implying that firms who send "students" are serious about the benefits and are willing to invest in them.

In general Ruth is a great role model and mentor to women in architecture. She helps them shape their careers and leadership skills, and celebrates their successes. She is relentless in contacting her mentees discovering their interests, advising them and helping to make connections. In a similar vein, Ruth organized the Women in Architecture Exhibit for the 2015 OVR Convention in Columbus.

Currently Ruth is the chair of the AIA Columbus Fellowship Committee. Again she has done a superb job of mentoring professionals. She has a rigorous 3-step process for aspiring Fellows. First is to identify and mentor future candidates. Second, she has educated other fellows to be coaches for prospective candidates. Third, she has organized a Fellows Committee to maximum input and support for candidates. Not the least of Ruth's contributions is Ruth's Rules – a compendium of wisdom and information for would-be Fellowship candidates that has been gleaned from her own submission tribulations and from several years' first-hand observations of the process as others suffer the experience. Since assuming chair-ship of the committee in 2017- there have been seven successful candidates from Columbus/Dayton, and this year there might be as many as six candidates. Because of her success rate, Ruth has been called on by other AIA chapters share her ideas and process.

As can be seen, Ruth Gless is a tireless mentor. She brings an enormous amount of energy and dedication to all that she does. It is for these reasons that I most strongly recommend Ruth Gless for the 2019 AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Livesey FAIA
Professor and Director Emeritus



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3 June, 2019

AIA Honor Awards Committee
17 South High St
Columbus OH 43215

Dear Committee Members,

Manners count.

Mentorship initiates in a number of unique and sometimes unexpected ways. While boarding a plane from Columbus to Chicago in 1993 and struggling to load my large carry-on into the overhead compartment, a smartly dressed woman behind me curtly quips “get out of the aisle”...and as she passes, adds “you know...it’s good form to allow people to board first, and then you can mess with your bag later”. Fast forward six years, interviewing for my first job out of architecture school, it dawns on me that the architect I am interviewing with is none other than the person who counseled me on that plane.

Twenty years on, Ruth Gless continues to be an invaluable mentor and friend. Her support has made a significant difference in my professional life and those of many of our colleagues.

From my very early days working with Ruth it was clear that she nurtures professional development by putting trust in young people and then holding their feet to the fire. She’ll provide the safety net and guidance needed for developing architects to take risks necessary to grow their skills and build confidence in their talents. She is generous with her knowledge of the practice of architecture and always embraces an opportunity to teach and share.

Ruth is not shy about her critical stance, opinions, and even feelings when it comes to the practice of architecture. In this age, our overwrought (if well-intentioned) sense of professional decorum tends to leave us wondering where we really stand at times, so Ruth’s direct style of engagement is a refreshing and liberating lesson for everyone who works with her. She is, as she likes to say “a tough broad”, and she respects and supports that sensibility in anyone who has the courage and wherewithal to break a social mold and speak up about what might be right, smart, or forward-thinking in any situation. She leads by spirit.

Ruth has a knack for recognizing talent of many types in people, and once identified, she works to encourage and promote them in professional and collegial spheres. The effect of this scouting can be seen quite directly in the vibrancy of AIA Columbus’ overall makeup – notably the Board of Directors, and the Diversity by Design and Fellows Committees, all of which benefit from the intersection of new and established talent, which she very deftly orchestrates.

Ruth is always engaged in the profession. Whether it’s a Chapter event, a student jury at the Knowlton School of Architecture, or at service on the Board of the Center for Architecture and Design, her presence fosters connections across our professional community that make it possible for practitioners, young and old, to thrive and succeed.

It is a great pleasure to recommend Ruth Gless, FAIA for the AIA Ohio Mentorship Award.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Moss, AIA

June 1, 2019

AIA Ohio Distinguished Honor Awards Committee
17 S. High Street, Suite 200
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Ruth Gless, FAIA, AIA Ohio Mentorship Award

Dear Committee Members,

It is my distinct honor to support Ruth M. Gless, FAIA for the AIA Ohio Mentorship Award. I have a long relationship with Ruth as a colleague, client, collaborator and friend. As Principals at NBBJ, we were the studio leaders with Ruth playing several important roles including staff mentor and role model for women designers. As the University Architect at Ohio State, I witnessed Ruth's leadership in promoting sustainable principals to university leaders and students in the design for our first LEED certified project, the Ohio 4-H Center. As a newly invested Fellow, I am currently following Ruth's leadership for the Columbus Fellows Development Program.

Ruth personally mentored me in the development of my fellowship application last year. She was the most impactful in my deciding to apply and in my success in being elevated. Ruth convinced me that I was a deserving candidate and maintained that support throughout the process including celebrating with me in New York. Her support included leading mentorship sessions with the Development Program, several one on one meetings and reviews and encouraging conversations. She was relentless in keeping me focused, on schedule and motivated. The opening statement was a continued work in progress as she helped me avoid common errors. She advised the written descriptions of my Exhibits to be organized, succinct, clear and supportive of my arguments. Ruth's gift in advising on clear and precise writing was critical to my success.

Ruth, being a former teacher, has maintained an ethic of life long learning in herself and her colleagues. She is the personification of mentorship. I strongly encourage the committee to recognize her continued commitment to the profession.

Respectfully submitted,



Bernard Costantino, FAIA, NCARB, LEED AP



6555 Carnegie Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44103

P 216 752 8750

May 31, 2019

Awards Committee-AIA Ohio
17 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Ref.: AIA Ohio 2019 Mentorship Award

Dear Committee Members,

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to nominate Ruth M. Gless, FAIA for the AIA Ohio 2019 Mentorship Award. Ruth is an exemplary architect who has consistently led our profession, sought to elevate practice, and serves the profession. She has done this by example, and by energetic, active mentorship at every level of the profession and the community at-large.

Ruth has paved a path for others to follow. She was the first female architect principal at NBBJ, where she served as a role model for peers. Later, through the creation of her own firm, Ruth mentored and educated young architects who carried her teachings to nearly thirty firms. It is clear, she has had an impact on two generations of architects on a national scale.

In the public realm, Ruth has built awareness in Washington DC, Chicago, and Columbus. She developed Camp Architecture, which was recognized by the American Architectural Foundation. Ruth resurrected the Columbus Neighborhood Design Center where she educated at-risk urban neighborhoods on planning and design impact.

On a personal note, I met Ruth at an OVR session 7 years ago. She took me under her wing and we worked together on a number of issues including coaching emerging leaders, equity and diversity in practice, and professional leadership. She was my strongest supporter and my mentor through two years of a successful Fellowship Process. Subsequently, she has led in Columbus and aided in Cleveland in the creation of Fellows Development programs that work to foster a culture of servant leaders in the profession, which is a far cry from previous generations who have sought to pull the ladder up after themselves.

As a former teacher, Ruth personifies the tenets of lifelong learning. She is a giver, not a taker and she has shown me that mentorship works and indeed is necessary at every level and in all directions of our profession. **I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically encourage your consideration of Ruth M. Gless FAIA for the AIA Ohio Mentorship Award.**

Respectfully Submitted

Jack Alan Bialosky, Jr. FAIA LEED AP
Senior Principal Bialosky Cleveland *an AIA Ohio Gold Medal Firm*
AIA CLE Past President and 2019 Chapter Advisor
AIA Ohio Mentor Award 2015
AIA Ohio Public Service Award 2016

1 June 2019

AIA Ohio Honor Awards Committee
17 S. High Street, Suite 200
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Committee Members:

It is my pleasure to recommend Ruth Gless, FAIA for the AIA Ohio 2019 Mentor Award. I have known Ruth since 2005 when I worked with her at Lincoln Street Studio. Throughout this tenure, Ruth consistently provides mentorship and advocates for equality and diversity in the profession.

Ruth provides mentorship and provides leadership at multiple levels across the profession, especially within the AIA, from the Emerging Professionals to her colleagues aspiring to become Fellows. Ruth provided guidance and mentorship to the committee chairs for the inaugural 2018 year of AIA Columbus' ARCHway program, a chapter mentorship program for the Emerging Professionals. Ruth lobbied for Board support of the program and sought out mentor and mentee participants. Also, Ruth takes great pride in serving as the Chairperson for the AIA Columbus Fellows Committee. She personally fosters future candidates, as well as mentors the current candidates towards successful elevation.

Ruth is instrumental to promoting equality and diversity in the profession. Ruth proposed the formation of the AIA Ohio Harassment Awareness Task Force, a Task Force established to assist firms to understand the complex issues of harassment, to create cultures of inclusion, and to set internal clear anti-harassment as well as equitable employment policies. Ruth continues to serve on the Task Force and advocates for change across the State.

You must know Ruth well to know that her gumption and tenacity comes from perseverance, passion, and her innate quality as a strong leader. Ruth exemplifies mentorship to her fellow professionals. On a personal note, Ruth provides me with guidance and support towards my own leadership goals as I move through my career. Again, it is my honor to recommend Ruth Gless for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Respectfully,



Sara R. Boyer, AIA
Associate Principal
2018 AIA Ohio Mentor Award Winner

