

May 29, 2019

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

RE: AIA Ohio Mentor Award, Letter of Nomination for Steve Kordalski, AIA

Dear Committee Members,

Over the course of the past few years, I have had the great pleasure of knowing and working alongside Steve Kordalski through AIA Cleveland leadership. I cannot tell you what a breath of fresh air Steve brought to the Board when he jumped on to be the Kent State Liaison. There isn't anyone like Steve. He lights up a room and makes our work together fun, ALWAYS. He has an UNMATCHED natural chemistry with everyone that bridges across age and gender gaps and he is one of the rare individuals that connects across our design community and holds us all together.

As one of the few women in our Cleveland design community that have taken on the AIA Cleveland leadership track, I want the committee to realize that women in my chapter would not feel comfortable, empowered and unintimidated to lead if it wasn't for men like Steve Kordalski. Steve is an avid supporter and mentor for women in architecture. He does everything in his power to lift-up and to provide growth opportunities. He just gets it and his personality and wisdom always bring me great perspective. Friendships like Steve's have given me the confidence to lead the chapter next year and I will continue to look to him as an advisor as the year progresses.

It's interesting, Steve has won all sorts of awards, including the Cleveland Arts Prize, the AIA Ohio Gold Medal Firm Award and countless awards for design excellence, but he is unique in that he really has a humble confidence about himself. He is very open on sharing experiences and guiding young professionals and designers on how to excel. He truly cares about design excellence as a community. It took some serious coercion on my part to get him to submit for this honor.

As the 2017 recipient of this award and as the current nominating committee chair for AIA Cleveland, I put forth Steve's nomination to our Chapter, because I believe that he exemplifies the true spirit of this award. Steve is a well-respected design professional in our community that sets the bar for what it really means to *PAY IT FORWARD* in our profession. He is well-deserving of this honor.

Thanks so much for your consideration.
Very best,



Jodi van der Wiel
AIA, NCIDQ, LEED AP BD+C, WELL AP
Design Director
AIA Cleveland President-Elect
AIA Cleveland Nominating Committee Chair
AIA Cleveland COTE Committee Chair
AIA Ohio Advocacy Task Force Chair



AIA
Cleveland

30 May 2019

AIA Ohio 2019 Honor Awards Committee
17 South High Street, Suite 200, Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: **AIA Ohio 2019 Mentorship Award**
Steven Kordalski, AIA Nomination

Committee Members,

Steve is charming and has a great sense of humor. He also is a straight-shooter, with a passion for supporting the next generation of architects. Steve is an excellent designer – having won numerous AIA design awards – and an experienced architect who gracefully shares his talents with others. These attributes attract many mentees. Within our very-active chapter “Cleveland Connect AIA Mentorship Program,” Steve is definitely our most popular mentor. Steve takes seriously this program’s mission to develop a culture of mentoring within AIA Cleveland, and to provide guidance, encouragement and nurturing to allow all members to excel and grow in all aspects of the profession.

AIA Cleveland unequivocally supports Steve Kordalski, AIA for the 2019 AIA Ohio Mentorship Award. The AIA Cleveland Board asks that you strongly consider his nomination for this statewide acknowledgment.

As a 2016–2018 member of the AIA Cleveland Board, in the role of Kent State University Liaison, Steve:

- Founded / managed the AIA Cleveland Annual Student Scholarship
- Applied for and received a yearly national matching student-scholarship grant
- Advocated that AIA Cleveland support an AIAS student with a grant to attend the national AIA convention – that student returned, gave a verbal and written report to the board. After graduation, at Steve’s recommendation, he joined the AIA Cleveland Board as Steve’s KSU liaison replacement – continuing his leadership experience with AIA
- Organized and hosted the joint AIA Cleveland / AIA Akron / AIA Eastern Ohio “AIA Studio Coffee and Donuts” Event – an event that supports the AIA – AIAS relationship, while allowing AIA members to informally discuss the profession with students, while proactively supporting student charrettes with sustenance and mentor care
- Organized and attended the annual KSU Career Fair as the AIA representative
- Actively shared AIA benefits, and free first 18-month membership, with graduating students, both through letters and meetings

Sincerely,
Christopher Toddy, AIA

AIA Cleveland, President
AIA Ohio Payment Assurance Taskforce, Co-Chair
AIA National Small Firm Exchange (SFx) Member Group, Chair

The American Institute of Architects
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STEVEN KORDALSKI AIA | 2019 AIA OHIO MENTOR AWARD SUBMISSION

THOUGHTS ON MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is typically a relationship in which a more experienced person helps guide a less experienced individual. A mentor can be older or younger than the mentee but must have an area of expertise. The interaction only works when it becomes a partnership. I believe the partnership develops best when communication is face to face over an extended period. This allows for open dialogue. Mentoring can be accomplished in a formal or informal manner. I have found that many times when beginning a mentor relationship, as time passes, I also become a mentee. I believe mentoring future leaders of our profession is not only a responsibility but a privilege.

As a young architect starting a career in 1976 it was tough to connect with mentors outside the workplace. I vowed, once I reached a level within our profession not to act selfishly but rather be extremely approachable to anyone that reached out - especially young professionals. I believe in breaking down the cast system that was prevalent within our profession as I was progressing through my career.

Owning a small boutique design-oriented firm for 34 years has not always been an easy task. Over the years I have learned several lessons the hard way. In fact, I feel I earned my PhD from Street Smarts University. If I can use my experience to help mentees avoid some of my pitfalls and allow them to incorporate some of my successes, it's a huge win for each of us.

The following are principles I practice and believe define a good mentor:

- Exhibit relevance and enthusiasm towards the profession
- Involvement and participation
- Willingness to share
- Ability to listen - never lecture - set the right tone
- Provide honest and direct feedback
- Helping people find their "right place" within the profession

A mentor, through leading by example has a responsibility to help mentees become great mentors. I try to take an enthusiastic and intelligent approach to every task and commitment whether that is the design of a project, a university studio critique, an AIA jury assignment, participation in AIA programs or a mentor / mentee collaboration.

I was extremely honored when AIA Cleveland decided to nominate me for this award. I was even more honored when I reached out to four individual mentees asking if they would take time to write letters of support and they all responded with a quick – "of course". In the end - helping one another - that's what a mentor / mentee relationship is all about.



Steven Kordalski, AIA
KORDALSKI ARCHITECTS INC.
AIA Ohio Gold Medal Firm

STEVEN KORDALSKI AIA | 2019 AIA OHIO MENTOR AWARD SUBMISSION

My mentorship involvement has developed over the years. Beginning with employee mentees and evolving through what I refer to as planting the seed events. My understanding of the importance of “event mentoring” came as a direct relationship with mentees. Winning numerous design awards along with participating in AIA programs has allowed me to exhibit relevance within the profession and my opinions to be valued.

EMPLOYEE / INTERN MENTEES

This group consists of architectural mentees that have been interns or employees at Kordalski Architects Inc. My mentorship role varied with everyone’s experience level. I feel these individuals are an extension of my practice - a landscape architect in Philadelphia, a professor at RISD, a partner in an office in Fort Myers, an owner of a firm in Honolulu, a sculptor in Minneapolis and several employees in Cleveland. These mentees have gone onto have successful careers and represent the profession well.

Daniel Denk | Rick Hansel, AIA | Taylor Killen | Carol Lasch | Steffany Malarik | Bart Nelson | Ronald Reitz | Edward Sheehan | Mick Tanaka | Mark Tomon | Randy Walker | Nicholas Young | Kristina Zsigmond

CLEVELAND CONNECT AIA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM MENTEES

AIA Cleveland’s structured mentorship program started in 2015. Mentors and mentees attend a meet and greet “interview” event before mentees request their preferred mentors. When mentoring within this program, the mentee and I schedule quarterly meetings at a minimum. The mentee always directs the discussion direction.

2018-present: Robyn Wolf, AIA

2015-2017: Nicholas Slaughterbeck, Associate AIA

2015-2016: Jessie Hawkins

INFORMAL MENTOR / MENTEE PARTICIPANTS

This group of mentees grew out of involvement and participation allowing us to get to know one another. At some point, each mentee reached out to me to seek advice. These relationships have grown over the years and continue today. I am confident that these mentees will (if not already have) become great mentors.

Nate Bailey, AIA | Michael Christoff, AIA | Justin Gleason, Associate AIA | Matt Lindsay, AIA | Adam Yaracs, AIA

PLANTING THE SEED PROGRAMS

These are examples of involvement / participation events I have helped initiate. Although not one on one mentoring situations, these events establish relevance and begin conversations that help open doors. Events such as these show students, interns and young architects that professionals are approachable and care. They begin to get the mentorship ball rolling.



AIA Cleveland Board Member 2016-2018

Role: Kent State University College of Architecture and Environmental Design Liaison
Our chapters relationship with the School was almost nonexistent. I saw an opportunity to correct that situation. With the opening a new building along with a new director the timing was perfect. Now AIA Cleveland and KSU CAED's relationship is the strongest it has ever been. This is obvious with the increased student attendance at AIA Cleveland events.

AIA Cleveland / KSU CAED Career Fair 2016-2019

I coordinated the first representation of AIA Cleveland at the career fair. I continued organizing and leading this event for three years. AIA Cleveland's representation created an exciting event - supplemented with give a ways and drawings. Students saw we were approachable - even fun. Participating in this yearly has allowed AIA Cleveland to strengthen a relationship with the CAED and the AIAS Chapter. Our data base through student sign up has expanded by about 75 per year. Introduction and staying in touch are a great way to begin mentorship.

AIA Cleveland Scholarship 2017- present

Upon joining the Board, I coordinated and established an AIA Cleveland yearly scholarship given to an AIAS student. AIA Cleveland had never sponsored this type of scholarship. The program is now in its third year. This scholarship allows students to realize that AIA Cleveland values participation. The first recipient Justin Gleason, Associate AIA is currently a member of the AIA Cleveland Board. I nominated, strongly supported and worked with Justin helping him in becoming the current KSU CAED Liaison.

AIA Cleveland / KSU AIAS Student National AIA Convention Sponsorship 2017

I strongly advocated for AIA Cleveland (for the first time) to provide a stipend sponsoring the AIAS President to attend the AIA National Convention. Justin Gleason has stated numerous times that this opportunity had a positive impact on his professional development.

AIA Cleveland Graduation Congratulation Letter Campaign 2016 - present

I initiated and coordinated with KSU CAED a program that congratulates recent graduates. This also introduces them to AIA and invites them to join a Chapter wherever they locate. AIA Cleveland's recent graduate membership has increased because of this effort.

AIA Cleveland / KSU CAED AIAS Meet and Greet 2018

A simple donut / coffee introduction event that I along with Adam Yaracs, AIA (AIAS advisor) coordinated with the AIAS Chapter. By reaching out to the surrounding Chapters - AIA Eastern Ohio Region and AIA Akron - this became the first event at the CAED with the Chapters working in unison. By engaging the students, they realize the importance of our organization and involvement. Upon hearing of this coordinated event, Bruce Sekanick, FAIA, AIA National Secretary attended and presented a \$1000 donation from AIA to the CAED AIAS Chapter.

Planting the seed events are extremely important in helping to establish participation, promoting AIA membership and creating initial mentee / mentor career relationships.



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

RE: AIA Ohio Mentor Award 2019, Letter of Support for Steven Kordalski, AIA

AIA Ohio Awards Committee,

My name is Adam Yaracs, AIA and I am pleased to write a letter of support for Steven Kordalski, AIA in consideration for the 2019 AIA Ohio Mentor Award. Steve is a deserving candidate for this honor and he exemplifies what it means to be a mentor. Throughout his career, he has continuously acted in a devoted and selfless manner, always choosing to focus on helping those who were just beginning their professional development. There is no better example of Steve's desire to help others succeed than his relationship as a mentor to me.

Early in my career, I had the privilege of meeting Steve at a local AIA chapter event. At this particular event, it was immediately apparent that he was a welcoming presence to all of the young professionals in attendance. He took the time to introduce himself to each of the attendees and start a conversation about the profession. He listened, offered advice, and expressed his desire to continue the dialogue. From this initial meeting forward, our relationship blossomed and Steve naturally became one of my mentors. Whether it was a scheduled meeting, an informal phone call, or attending a local design event, he was always available to discuss career goals, and my future aspirations. In 2015, Steve nominated me to be on the Presidential tract for AIA Cleveland. His nomination and support have had a profound effect on my career. With his confidence in my abilities, I was elected as First Vice President, and soon became the President of AIA Cleveland in 2017. He believed in me, when others had reservations due to my age. As a younger, less-experienced professional, I was now tasked with leading a component chapter consisting of over 500 members. Throughout the experience, I often consulted Steve for advice and even asked him to volunteer to join the executive board. The most rewarding experience of my presidency was when I had the honor of presenting Steve with a Presidential Citation for his commitment to mentoring and engaging future generations of leaders within our profession. Late last year, he was instrumental in encouraging me to submit for the AIA National Young Architect Award. Through letters of his support and consistent coaching during the submission process, I submitted for the award and was successfully selected as a 2019 Young Architect recipient.

Steve's practice of mentoring individuals does not stop with me. In fact, it is something I have seen him do time and time again. He has mentored Kent State University students, participated in AIA Cleveland's mentorship program, and always offered to listen and talk with anyone looking for some experienced guidance. His calming demeanor, display of passion and excitement for the profession, willingness to put other's needs before his own, and his ability to listen, is what makes him such a successful, respected, and valuable mentor. Steve Kordalski, sets the gold standard of what it means to be a mentor and serves as an example on how we should return the favor to those not lucky enough to call him their own.

Sincerely,



Adam Yaracs, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB
Perspectus Architecture | Project Manager
Kent State University College of Architecture and Environmental Design | Adjunct Faculty
AIA Cleveland | Director of Communications

2019 AIA National Young Architect Award Recipient

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

RE: AIA Ohio Mentor Award 2019, Letter of Support for Steven Kordalski, AIA

Dear AIA Ohio Awards Committee,

As a young Architect starting out, identifying positive, respected, and accomplished mentors can be difficult as those individuals are often hard to gain access to and short on time. It shouldn't be surprising to hear that the truly talented practitioners don't volunteer to mentor young designers as their time is consumed running a practice, acquisitioning new work, or chasing awards. Steve is the exception to this. As a successful owner for 30+ years, an awarded designer, and highly respected Architect in Cleveland, Steve is engaged in the AIA community, passionate about design, and has made himself available as a mentor to many young designers/ Architects, including myself.

My path crossed Steve's a year out of graduate school at an AIA portfolio review event. After a few short minutes discussing my work, our conversation quickly turned personal as Steve made an intentional effort to understand who I was, what my passions were, and where I wanted to go in the future. Unlike other reviewers that day, Steve was interested to invest in the individual behind the work and not simply critique the work itself. It is these characteristics that set him apart from his peers. Steve is passionate about two things: people and good design; this is evident from reviewing his professional portfolio and considering his impact on the architectural community.

Since meeting Steve, he's become an invaluable resource and mentor that I've turned to with questions about career advancement, business ownership, and design. I'm honored to write a letter of support to recommend Steven Kordalski for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Sincerely,



Nate Bailey
Architect, AIA

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



May 28th, 2019

RE: AIA Ohio Mentor Award 2019, Letter of Support for Steven Kordalski, AIA

I can easily recall the first time that I met Steven Kordalski as he has a larger than life personality one does not forget. He was in attendance at the Kent State University (KSU) College of Architecture and Environmental Design's (CAED) Career Fair. Serving as the newly appointed AIA Cleveland KSU CAED Liaison, Steven was promoting the AIA and networking with students. From the second we shook hands Steven began speaking with an unprecedented passion for Architecture, the AIA, design, and service. He showed great interest in my experiences, life decisions, future ambitions, and my involvement in the KSU chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS). At the time Steven was new in his liaison position but he was far from new in the world of mentorship.

Steven was sought after by the AIA Cleveland board to join as the KSU CAED Liaison in 2016. At the time, the board had created an initiative to strengthen its relationship with the CAED and they felt that he was the perfect member for the task. Right out of the gate Steven created initiatives such as the AIA Cleveland Scholarship program for a student that has shown great leadership and involvement in the KSU AIAS chapter. He also helped create a stipend program for the AIAS chapter president to be sponsored by AIA Cleveland to attend the AIA National Conference. As the 2016-17 KSU AIAS president, I was able to take full advantage of this new program and attend the national conference. Completely immersed in the AIA experience, this conference left a lasting impression on me of the importance of the professional organization and its impact on the profession. During my graduate career Steven and I worked closely together, strengthening the relationship between AIA Cleveland and KSU AIAS. He continuously reached out to me to invite myself and our members to AIA Cleveland events, taking the time at each one I attended to check how I was doing, introduce me to new faces, and overall show interest and care in my life.

Through the opportunities Steven presented me and encouraged me to get involved in, I was honored as the first AIA Cleveland Scholarship Award recipient at the AIA Cleveland Design Awards in 2017. Steve himself presented me with the check which was a very meaningful moment. In one year, he had gone from a new face, to a close mentor that was leaving such a large impression on me. As my terms as president ended, Steven and I continued advocating for the collaboration between AIA Cleveland and KSU AIAS. Several AIA Cleveland/AIAS events have been created and are recurring yearly. For example, the two organizations partner together at the KSU CAED Career fair to advocate for both AIAS and the AIA to the student body. This is a collaborative effort that Steven started and has continued to attend each year since. All of these events and initiatives are possible due to Steven's leadership, guidance, and above all mentorship to me and the KSU AIAS student chapter.

Upon graduating Steven's mentorship to me has not dwindled. He personally encouraged and asked me to proceed him as the 2019-20 AIA Cleveland KSU CAED Liaison. Advocating for me amongst our chapter's members and board, I was elected into the position freshly out of school while just taking the first steps of my professional career. Steven prepped me for this position from the first day we met and is still mentoring/supporting me through it now. He outlined and defined the liaison position for future liaisons to work from for years to come, taking his involvement with the position far past his two-year term.

Over the last three years Steven has inspired me through leadership, guided me through mentorship, and helped me grow through his personal connection and care. He takes time with those he mentors and makes a difference both personally and professionally. I look to Steven for support in my career and life decisions. He is always a friendly face at AIA Cleveland and KSU AIAS events, connecting with more students and emerging young professionals, encouraging them as he has encouraged me. If I were to describe Steven in one word, that word would be passionate. He exudes contagious passion in everything that he does specifically helping our younger membership grow as they enter our profession. In every shape of the word "mentorship" Steven has been there for me and many others. I fully support him in his nomination for the AIA Ohio Mentorship Award 2019; Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for any further questions or comments.

Justin Rudy Gleason, MBA, Assoc. AIA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JR Gleason'.

DS Architecture
Director of Operations | Project Design
AIA Cleveland KSU Liaison

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May 29, 2019

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

1 3 0 0 0 S H A K E R B L V D

RE: AIA Ohio Mentor Award 2019, Letter of Support for Steven Kordalski, AIA

CLEVELAND, OHIO 44120

Dear AIA Ohio Awards Committee members:

Steven Kordalski, AIA, is an architect who is deeply committed to fostering excellence in our profession through mentorship, and it is with great enthusiasm that I recommend him for the 2019 AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Steven and I met through our service on the 2018 AIA Cleveland Board where he continually impressed me with his tenacity and passion to build better connections between our professional community and the students at Kent State University's College of Architecture and Environmental Design. It was readily apparent that he viewed the passing of knowledge and experiences between generations as foundational to the development of great architects.

After working together on the Board for nearly a year, I was excited to find that Steven was participating as a mentor in the AIA Cleveland Connect mentorship program and selected him as my first choice, anticipating that he would provide a fresh perspective and would challenge me to move outside of my comfort zone.

We've met regularly since the mentorship program started, and in a recent meeting we discussed the self-evaluation I was preparing for my annual employee review which focused heavily on areas of needed improvement. Steven's insight helped me to see aspects of the self-grading process in a new light which resulted in revision of the document to a more balanced and realistic evaluation.

Steven Kordalski, AIA, has in a short time, been an impactful mentor to me, and I am looking forward to continuing our mentor-protégé relationship. It is my sincere hope that you will select him for the 2019 AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Sincerely,



Robyn A. Wolf, AIA, NCARB
Architect, Richard L. Bowen + Associates, Inc.
AIA Cleveland, 2018-19 Dir. of Women in Architecture / WIA+
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A R C H I T E C T S

E N G I N E E R S

C O N S T R U C T I O N
M A N A G E M E N T