

June 11, 2020

AIA Ohio Board of Directors  
400 West Wilson Bridge Road  
Suite 120  
Worthington, OH 43085

RE: AIA Ohio Mentor Award Nomination for Howard Blaisdell, AIA

Dear Members of the Awards Committee:

I have had the privilege of working with Howard Blaisdell, AIA, for more than 30 years and heartily endorse and nominate him for the AIA Ohio Mentor award. Howard and his patient leadership in sharing knowledge and developing young staff has been a key element in the success of Moody Nolan as we grew from the 20 person-small firm when he joined us, to the 220 strong, Ohio AIA Gold Medal Firm we are today.

Beginning with technology; then extending into sustainability, codes, design technology and quality assurance, Howard has been a leader in the continual improvement of our staff's knowledge and abilities. From continuing education to the emerging professional development of our younger staff, he does this on both the formal and informal levels. Organizing and delivering programs, lunches and full-day workshops that impact a dozen offices nationwide is one measure of success, but even more important is the personal, one-on-one interaction with young staff for which Howard excels.

A mentor is most effective when they are trusted and engaging. Howard maintains an open-door policy of help to any of our young (and even more seasoned) staff; always willing to be a resource with patience, empathy and the skill of a favorite teacher that is sought out as a source of direction and support. Young staff look forward to the experience of working with Howard and the humble confidence he exudes on all matters technical. He continually approaches any issue as a learning opportunity, paying-forward the sharing of knowledge in a contemporary, empathetic adaptation of the architect-intern mentorship tradition. In a diverse firm such as Moody Nolan, this ability and dedication is critically important to both our firm and the future of the architecture profession.

Howard Blaisdell is a role model of true mentorship, relishing the tradition of Architect as a lifetime learning and sharing profession. I recommend he be acknowledged with this award as a shining example of a bridge to the next emerging generation of architects.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Bodien, AIA  
Partner

Moody Nolan, Inc.





AIA Ohio Board of Directors  
400 West Wilson Bridge Road  
Suite 120  
Worthington, OH 43085

June 12, 2020

Dear AIA Ohio Board of Directors,

The American Institute of Architects

AIA Columbus  
50 West Town Street, Suite 110  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

T (614) 469-1973

[www.aiacolumbus.org](http://www.aiacolumbus.org)

I am writing in support of Howard Blaisdell, AIA of Moody Nolan for the 2020 AIA Ohio Mentor Award. Howard shares his strong knowledge of building codes, technical proficiency, and depth of construction experience with a broad population and he does so with patience, encouragement, and compassion.

**Strong Knowledge:** Howard has many years of experience on the technical side of architecture which is complicated and often open to interpretation. Howard is extremely knowledgeable and shares his knowledge in a variety of platforms. Howard often authors technical newsletters and shares them with his firm located in 12 cities across the country. Howard serves on a variety of committees within the AIA to advance the diligence of technical documentation, leading several code presentations and teaching sessions.

**Broad Population:** Howard is committed to sharing his knowledge with the emerging staff within his firm and beyond. Howard reaches far more consultants, clients, and partner firms than the typical architect, due to the unique nature of his sports and recreation center projects across the country. Howard is regularly in a position where he patiently shares and educates many architects and professionals on the technical aspects of these projects.

**Personal Qualities:** Howard has the personal qualities of an exemplary mentor. His patience is unmatched. Howard also values the other person, he listens, and does not make them feel uncomfortable. Howard has raised initiatives to train emerging staff and provide educational seminars.

Howard motivates and educates staff, partner architects, consultants, and clients on the technical aspects of a project. He shares his experiential and institutional knowledge in a variety of ways, to a wide range of people. I strongly encourage the committee to honor Howard based on these qualities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Vala Jr.".

Michael J. Vala Jr., AIA  
AIA Columbus President, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hannah Ewvaraye".

Hannah Ewvaraye, AIA  
AIA Columbus Director, 2020

## Howard Blaisdell, AIA

Howard Blaisdell, AIA leads through example in mentoring staff both within Moody Nolan while also teaching and mentoring consultants, partners and clients. Howard utilizes his strong background in building codes, sports programming, technical detailing and construction administration to mentor others.

Working on projects for 31 years, Howard has managed projects from as small as \$2.5 million community recreation centers to sports complexes often in the range of \$65 to \$105 million whether at The Ohio State University Jerome Schottenstein Center, Purdue University France A. Cordova Student Recreation Center or Ithaca College Athletics and Events Center. Throughout his entire career, Howard has seen the importance of mentoring and teaching.

**CAD Manager:** Howard's first role as teacher and mentor was as the MicroStation CAD manager from 1991 through 2002 when Howard became a project manager. Throughout this time, Howard established a personal mindset that it is vitally important to prioritize teaching others so that they understand the WHY of an item and not just the HOW and in a patient supportive manner in order that colleagues will be inclined to ask questions again to continue learning. Understanding that training and learning takes additional time, Howard would often work late to meet his own deadlines.

**Teaching Sustainability:** Howard continued teaching and mentoring after becoming the second architect at Moody Nolan to pass the LEED AP exam in 2002. He then started teaching sustainability to Moody Nolan staff as well as to clients and consultants by conducting LEED and sustainability Workshops and seminars for both his projects and other projects firmwide. Howard was a founding member of the Green Team; instructing and eventually encouraged 65 staff members to achieve LEED AP status as well teaching a session on sustainable design at the 2005 Association of College Unions International region 7 conference.

**Expanding Teaching to all Moody Nolan Staff:** As Howard grew in his experience, he spent a year issuing "Code Bits" and then "Practice Bits" via email to the staff in multiple offices to cultivate and teach key issues on architectural practice, ADA, building codes and sustainability. Howard also began mentoring younger staff on his projects as he realized, the more the staff learned, the more productive they could be on his projects and for the overall firm moving forward. Howard also began working with colleagues from the firm's Washington DC, Nashville, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Chicago offices. Howard has continued to expand his mentoring role, first participating in leading separate Speed Mentoring and Goal Setting sessions for the Moody Nolan Emerging Professionals program.

**Working with Clients:** Along the way, Howard also started mentoring and teaching his clients as most had not previously built anything and did not understand the design and construction process. Howard invests the necessary time to teach.

- The design and construction process
- How key decisions early effect sustainability, cost and efficiency
- How the building layout can affect and reduce staffing costs for the life of the building
- Result: Clients feel more comfortable with the design process and design decisions which improve trust, communication and lead to better buildings.

**Working with Consultants:** As a Sports and Recreation Specialist, Howard typically works with partner architects who serve as architect of record. Howard includes them in design charrettes and design meetings and takes the time to help them understand the design intent, special sports design and code considerations which are unique to sports and recreation complexes. Results: The partner architect is better able to maintain the design intent and function during construction documents and construction.

**Open Door Policy:** Throughout Howard's entire tenure, he maintains an open-door policy of being willing to work with younger staff (and often more seasoned staff) to answer any questions. A key part of Howard's success is showing patience, making them feel valued and being supportive in his responses to encourage them to continue to ask questions to improve. A key part of this teaching is showing them where to find the information in the future so that they become more productive. In addition, Howard listens to their goals, and then talks with them about options, opportunities and makes suggestions for progressing in their careers.

**IDP/AXP:** Howard has served as mentor for many of the intern architects reviewing their IDP and then AXP experience and making recommendations for expanding their experience.

**Big 5 Coach:** In 2018, Moody Nolan initiated a Big 5 coaching program to help team members feel more empowered and to provide more one-on-one mentoring. Howard has been the coach or assistant coach for various studio members. Howard has also worked with team members in other Moody Nolan offices to encourage them to find coaches or assistant coaches to help them create connections within the firm.

**QA/QC:** In 2018, Howard worked as part of a larger committee and then a core three-person team to review the current QA/QC processes and help develop checklists that could be used by Project Managers and Project Architects for Quality Assurance and for separate reviewers for Quality Control.

**Outcome:** This process is currently being implemented with the intended outcome of improving the quality and consistency of project documents throughout the 12 offices.

**Expanded Teaching Small Group:** During early 2019, Howard learned that most of the younger staff within his studio were not exposed to building codes in college. He also learned that several architects within the firm had never completed a code analysis. Seeing a need, Howard began teaching to groups of 5 – 10 during a brown bag lunch session at three times a month from February through June 2019. Howard would spend about half of the time teaching a section of the code and then ask what issues they might currently have on their projects and spending the rest of the session working on their issues.

**Outcome:** Most of the group then felt much more comfortable understanding building and construction types and are now taking the lead to prepare their own code drawings.

**MN Professional Development Series:** In June of 2019, Moody Nolan established a Leadership Practice Strategic Workgroup. As part of the core committee Howard was instrumental in leading the effort in improving and combining the various efforts for education within Moody Nolan Emerging Professionals, the Project Architect Forum and the Code Sessions into the MN Professional Development Series. This committee proposed sessions, conducted surveys and developed a year-long program for 2020. The sessions include monthly lunch presentations for teaching tools, codes and processes and monthly brown bag lunch programs which go further in depth for the program. Quarterly summits also talk about improvement and broader topics.

**Outcome:** This series has reached an average of 45-60 staff twice a month for the lunches and more for the summits. This program started as in person and via smart board and has continued as Teams Live events.

**Code Teaching Sessions:** Howard has co-presented two sessions thus far in 2020 with a third one scheduled for August.

- January 2020: **"What Code Officials Wish We Knew"** by Howard Blaisdell, AIA and Rick Jordan, AIA

- o Presented key items code officials look for in reviewing contract documents, life safety items that often get overlooked and how to improve the approval process to reduce review time, correction letters and secondary reviews.

o **Outcome:** 60+ Staff attended, had engaging discussion and the results were that the staff had an improved understanding of how they could improve their submittals.

- April 2020: **"Chapter 10 Part 1"** by Howard Blaisdell, AIA and Rick Jordan, AIA
  - o Focused on occupant loads, common path of travel, sizing and locating exits, access to public ways

o **Outcome:** 70 people attended the presentation and had a better understanding of Means of Egress.

- August 2020 **"Top 50 Code Items We Should All Know"**
  - o To look at frequently missed items including multiple occupancies, ratings, allowable areas, egress, assembly, access, insulation requirements, etc.

o **Expected Outcome:** Drawing Quality will improve consistency

**Code Consulting:** Howard saw a need for someone to assist the office in Code Consulting: Howard attends seminars, conducted thorough research, worked with code consultants and code officials and became a member of the International Code Council for further experience.

**Outcome:** Through Howard's breadth of knowledge, patient teaching style, willingness to listen and the code presentations, he has become an expert within Moody Nolan answering code and practice questions for the entire firm. Younger staff as well as seasoned architects are comfortable seeking out Howard as management seeks Howard for second opinions and clarifications.

**Outreach to Larger AIA Community:** In 2019, Howard joined the Mastering the Business of Architecture committee within AIA Columbus. This committee is working on creating education sessions to be held in the fall of 2020.

#### **Mentees:**

- Casey Annunzio, AIA, San Antonio Office Director and Principal at Huckabee / (10 years)
- Mark Beebe, AIA, Partner Lancer+ Beebe Indianapolis (several projects)
- Jodi van der Wiel, AIA, Design Director, VOCON Cleveland (multiple projects)
- Mario Siciliano, Senior Architect at Davis Partnership Architects, Denver Colorado (seven years)
- Kellie Cole, Mills Group, LLC (18 months)
- At Moody Nolan (partial list): Michael Burriss, AIA; Amadeus Escudero, AIA; Brandon Kroger; Kris Cochran, AIA; Austin Wessels; Jenn Rittler, AIA; Jonathan Moody, AIA

**Summary:** Howard Blaisdell has leveraged his knowledge of programming, production, building codes and construction to mentor and teach younger staff and Architects as well as Clients, partner Architects and others in the broader community and is an outstanding candidate for AIA Ohio Mentor of the Year.

11 June 2020

RE: Ohio Mentor Award  
Howard Blaisdell, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Fitwell Amb.

To the AIA Ohio Mentor Award Selection Committee:

I am honored to recommend Howard Blaisdell, AIA for the Ohio Mentor Award. I have known Howard for over a decade and his most admirable qualities are his patience and his knack for technical expertise. Howard melds these qualities to be a natural mentor, sharing his technical proficiency throughout the firm and the profession at-large in a variety of ways. Howard has a long history of contributing to the firm and profession.

Examples of his efforts include:

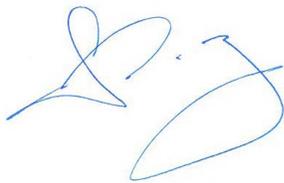
- Managing and teaching the firm's technical standards during the transition from hand-drawing to CAD
- Motivating and supporting the LEED AP initiative and subsequent sustainable design of buildings
- Authoring email "Bits" focusing on code, ADA, and sustainable technical information and lessons learned
- Coaching and mentoring emerging professionals
- Coordinating education sessions with the AIA Columbus chapter

Howard takes it upon himself to educate the entire staff, notably the emerging professional staff, as well as clients and consultants, in a manner that exudes knowledge sharing and respect. He presents the information with patience while providing the assistance to the emerging staff that they need in establishing a well-rounded career.

Howard is the "go-to guy" for code and technical information. Not only does he have the institutional knowledge, he shares his expertise in a naturally patient and respectful manner, thereby exemplifying the qualities of an exemplary mentor.

Howard's mentorship through expertise over the years has truly impacted the technical proficiency of the staff and the community overall. It is my pleasure to recommend Howard Blaisdell for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Respectfully,



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



June 11, 2020

AIA Ohio Board of Directors  
400 West Wilson Bridge Road  
Suite 120  
Worthington, OH 43085

RE: Letter of Support for Howard Blaisdell, AIA

Dear AIA Ohio Board of Directors,

It is my pleasure to endorse Howard Blaisdell for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award. Howard personifies a great mentor and creates a welcoming atmosphere for all employees at Moody Nolan. He encourages his teammates to participate and engage in conversation, and I am fortunate to have him as a mentor.

As Project Manager for the new Linden Park Facility and Louisville Urban League Athletics and Learning Complex, Howard has a deep knowledge and understanding of complex design issues. He directly supported my development as an architect and helped me to develop my technical expertise.

In addition, to supporting project teams and the studio, Howard also provides mentorship to emerging professionals across Moody Nolan. He is pioneering learning sessions on building code for emerging professionals. Through hosting intermittent sessions, he teaches fundamental and advanced techniques for employees to excel their interpretations and understandings of building code.

Howard's willingness to share his experiences makes him an approachable and knowledgeable leader. He has positively impacted my growth and development as a practicing architect. I look forward to continuing our mentorship, and I support an endorsement for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Rittler, AIA  
Senior Associate  
Moody Nolan



June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To the Ohio Mentor Award Selection Committee:

Howard Blaisdell is an excellent mentor and a pillar of architectural knowledge and practice within our firm. I send this letter in support of his application for the Ohio Mentor Award with no reservations. Howard exemplifies all the qualities that make a good mentor in our field. Despite the demands of any project timelines he has always shown a willingness to share skills, knowledge, and expertise that very few in the firm possess. Furthermore, his insight is often shared with great patience and thoroughness that is not only appreciated but often invaluable to members of the profession with less experience.

Howard and I have been coworkers for nearly three years. Within that time, he has helped me through countless issues ranging from the highly technical to the broader philosophies of the practice. He is a designated resident expert in building code and architectural building systems within our studio and will often be referred to for additional information. Furthermore, throughout the course of this year alone, Howard has presented several building code 'lunch-and-learn' seminars to the benefit of both the emerging professionals and his seasoned peers.

Howard is not only a great technical resource but through his leadership and mentorship he also inspires everyone to be better designers and architects. Under his mentorship within the last year he has guided me towards completing my licensure and assisted the in-office young professionals group towards developing the firm's first Emerging Professional Summit, which provided opportunities for the office to learn from its' younger peers (even through a pandemic).

Howard is always ready to lend a helping hand and his willingness to do so is a constant reassurance that there are no issues too difficult to understand or resolve. He is a credit to our studio and I firmly believe that he elevates the architectural profession. I am happy to recommend him for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award.

Sincerely,



**AMADEUS ESCUDERO**

AIA, NCARB, FITWEL  
ARCHITECT

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June 5, 2020

AIA Ohio Awards Committee  
AIA Ohio

RE: Ohio Mentor Award – Howard Blaisdell, AIA

Dear Ohio Mentor Award Selection Committee:

This letter is to serve as a recommendation of highest regard for Mr. Howard Blaisdell to be awarded the Ohio AIA Mentor of the Year.

Howard and I have worked together on a \$32,000,000.00 Sports Complex project near Wheeling WV over the past three years. Howard was project architect for the firm of Moody Nolan in Columbus, Ohio that served as the lead design firm while the Mills Group was Architect of Record.

The project involved intensive client interaction along with leading a team of architects and consultants all spearheaded by Howard. My experience working with him was nothing less than superior. Howard's tactful but diligent style of leadership portrayed throughout the project influenced those working with him while earning much deserved respect and admiration. His mentoring will influence the career paths of not only the younger professionals but also those with peer experience, including me.

For this reason, I highly recommend Howard Blaisdell for the Ohio AIA Mentor of the Year Award. If you want to talk about this in more detail please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Victor R. Greco'.

Victor R. Greco, AIA, NCARB

“Designing on the principles of the past and preserving for the future”

The Mills Group Building  
88 high Street  
Morgantown, WV 26501  
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