



AIA Young Architects Award Jury
AIA
1735 New York Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20006-1310

Re: Nomination of Mindy Aust for 2016 AIA Young Architects Award

30 September 2015

Dear Colleagues:

I am extremely pleased to be submitting this nomination for an extraordinary young architect, Mindy Aust, AIA, LEED AP. I first met Mindy over 15 years ago, when she was a student in the B.Arch. degree program at Iowa State University, and I was her teacher in Professional Practice and in her final diploma project design studio. I knew then that she was an unusually thoughtful and talented designer. Since then, I have kept track of Mindy, and crossed her path whenever possible. As a young architect, Mindy has made significant contributions to the profession as a designer, architect, and AIA and community leader.

As a young designer, Mindy has already contributed her talents to an impressive array of buildings that have been published and recognized by state and regional AIA awards, an International Award from the RIBA, a Building Design and Construction award, a European LEAF Award, and others. She is a designer that makes manifest commodity, firmness and delight, making timeless architecture happen through her design talents and her people skills. A project illustrative of these traits is the Cedar Rapids Federal Courthouse, for which Mindy led the "Flood Recovery". This was a highly expedited project that, for many of us, could have turned into a clean-up assignment. She was able to convince the GSA to restore the building according to the original documents – removing 75 years of awful "improvements". The flood destroyed a lot of plastic laminate and she replaced it with the original walnut millwork. It really is beautiful, and a testament to her people skills. The project was awarded the firm's first American Architecture Award from the Chicago Athenaeum and recognition in the GSA's national awards program for "restoration", not clean-up. And it was all designed and delivered in 14 months.

In practice, and in her professional and community activities, Mindy is a calm, direct, thoughtful, observant, collaborative leader, with a ready laugh, and probing questions. She has served in many community and professional leadership roles, always bringing both strategic vision and the willingness to roll up her sleeves to any position. She has been a leader of Iowa Women in Architecture, the Iowa Architectural Foundation, the West Des Moines Historical Society, and soon will start her service as the AIA Iowa President, only the third woman to lead the chapter in its 110-year history.

I am proud to consider myself one of Mindy's mentors, but am even more proud to say how much I have learned from her. Mindy's unassuming and engaging approach to an ambitious life of design, practice, and service is inspiring. I enthusiastically endorse her for the 2016 Young Architects Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Schwennsen".

Kate Schwennsen, FAIA
Director + Professor

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